

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART</b> <b>BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES</b> <b>REGULAR SESSION MINUTES</b> <b>April 17, 2025</b></p>
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The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on April 17, 2025, in the Board Room at Hobart High School, 2211 East Tenth Street, Hobart, Indiana.

**ROLL CALL:** President Rikki Guthrie asked Board Members to log in. The following Board Members and Administrators were present or absent as noted:

**Board Members Present:**

Rikki A. Guthrie  
Sandra J. Hillan  
Frank Porras  
Bradley Keehn  
David W. Kostbade  
Donald H. Rogers  
Stuart B. Schultz  
Kayla Davis, HHS student representative  
Isis Fleming, HHS student representative

**Administrators Present:**

Peggy Buffington  
Christopher N. King  
William J. Longer

**Administrators Absent:**

Bob Glover  
Jonathan Mock  
Tim Krieg

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** President Guthrie indicated that the Board met in executive session prior to the regular session. As published, the meeting was held in accordance with I.C. 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(1) where authorized by federal or state statute; (2) for discussion of strategy with respect to: (D) A real property transaction including: (i) a purchase; (ii) a lease as lessor; (iii) a lease as lessee; (iv) a transfer; (v) an exchange; or (vi) sale by the governing body up to the time a contract or option is executed by the parties; and (7) for discussion of records classified as confidential by state or federal statute.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Rikki Guthrie, President, called the meeting to order around 7:05 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** President Guthrie led everyone present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AUDIENCE:** The following were present in the audience:

Zack Johansen, high school teacher and varsity wrestling coach  
One high school student supporter for the high wrestling team  
Devon Key, ICU advisor at the high school and varsity boys basketball coach  
Two boys varsity basketball athletes  
Three girls varsity basketball athletes  
Jason Bailey, assistant boys diving coach  
Three boys varsity diving/swim athletes  
Four girls varsity diving/swim athletes  
Tomas Westberg, high school teacher and varsity girls wrestling coach  
Alfred DeBusk, JV girls wrestling  
Four girls varsity wrestling athletes  
Sarah Harness, bookkeeper at the high school and her son  
Mike Rogers, grandfather of a swim athlete and former school board member  
Unidentified family/friends of athletes being recognized

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Stuart Schultz moved and Bradley Keehn seconded that the Board approve the regular session minutes of April 3, 2025. Vote on motion: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS:** In the absence of Bob Glover, Business Manager, President Guthrie asked the student representatives to read the accounts payable voucher summary for April 17, 2025.

► **Vouchers for April 17, 2025** – HHS student representatives, Kayla Davis read the first portion and Isis Fleming read the last, as follows:

School Education \$964,210.59  
Education-form Curr. Mat. \$1,124.11  
Exempt Operating – Post 2009 \$79,874.62  
School Operations \$775,454.17  
Construction 0700 \$61,597.72  
School Lunch \$150,827.20

Self-Insurance Fund \$429,614.93  
Community Gifts and Donations \$2,611.30  
Building Brickies \$162.35  
SCOH Educational Foundation \$645.65  
SCOG Ed Fdn Legacy Grants \$2,023.08  
Pope Family Donation Fund \$3,500.00  
Early Years Initiative Grant \$626.00  
Literacy Achievement Grant \$1,733.00  
Secured School Safety Grant \$81,000.00  
High Ability \$11,200.00  
Career Coaching Grant \$1,220.64  
Title II Part A FY 24/25 \$3,488.50  
Clearing Accounts \$442,233.75  
Self-Insurance Clearing \$77,139.25  
Clearing/Flexible Benefits AF \$59,948.50  
Clearing/Ins. Account \$3,839.50  
Credit Card Fee Clearing \$2,737.50

for vouchers totaling \$3,156,812.36 with no transfers. The March payroll distribution by Treasurer Tracy Brumley was \$1,984,051.24.

Frank Porras moved that the Board approve payment of the vouchers for April 17, 2025. David Kostbade seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

The high school student representatives were thanked for reading the vouchers.

In addition, the Board received copies of the following monthly budget reports, dated March 31, 2025, with the electronic meeting information: Analysis by Object, Estimated Revenue by Account, Summary of Balances by Account-Object, and Summary of Receipts and Expenditures.

**ADDITION TO AGENDA:** Rikki Guthrie, President, indicated that an additional item was added to the agenda since it was published. It was the last agenda item and was titled, “OVERIGHT/EXTENDED STUDENT TRIP: Hobart High School JAG Students.”

**COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:** President Rikki Guthrie asked for comments on the listed agenda items. There were none.

**PERSONNEL:** In the absence of Jonathan Mock, Director of Human Resources and Compliance, Superintendent Peggy Buffington indicated the Personnel Report for April 17 was included with the electronic meeting information for the Board's consideration.

Dr. Buffington recommended approval and requested Board action.

Bradley Keehn moved that the Board approve the Personnel Report as presented. Seconded by Donald Rogers. Vote on motion: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

The approved personnel items are as follows:

**Contract for Extracurricular Services –**  
Hobart High School:

April 11/June 6, 2025: Katrina Lucas, softball, varsity girls assistant 1, \$3,322.00; and  
Kaitlyn Pecoski, softball, varsity girls assistant 2, \$3,322.00  
March 28/May 23, 2025: Catherine Nelson, dramatics specialist – children’s play, \$1,856.00  
March 28/June 6, 2025: Madison Price, volleyball, boys varsity, \$5,519.00

**Contracts for Extracurricular Services (Club Duties –**

Veterans @ Mundell, August 14, 2024/June 4, 2025: Sherry Finnerty, Girls on the Run, \$1,350.00

**Homebound Contracts –**

April 1/June 3, 2025: Janice Hamady, Algebra I, one hour per week and one hour for final exam,  
\$66.49 per hour  
April 1/June 3, 2025: Kim Floyd, ELA/math, two hours per week, \$53.98 per hour

**Resignation –**

Katarzyna Szponder, Liberty Elementary School/teacher (on leave of absence), effective April 4,  
2025

Request for Leave of Absence –

Pam Williams, Service Center/bus aide, unpaid medical leave, effective March 5/June 3, 2025

Classified Department – Adjustments of position, hours, and/or pay rate –

Kathleen Riley transferring from the Food Services Department to Liberty Elementary School, student supervisor/aide, part time, pay rate \$12.67 per hour, effective April 1, 2025

Food Services Department – Adjustments of position, hours, and/or pay rate –

Jennifer Brum transferring to salad bar/cashier position at the middle school, hours increased to 6, and pay rate remains the same, effective April 14, 2025

Angela Pollock transferring from Joan Martin School to Nutrition Manager position at the Service Center, hours and pay rate remain the same (8 hours and \$16.50 per hour), effective April 14, 2025

Michelle Smith transferring to cook position at the middle school, hours increased to 7½; and pay rate increased to \$14.85 per hour, effective April 2, 2025

New Employees –

Food Services Department:

Jessica Pierce, Joan Martin School/café manager, effective April 14, 2025, \$15.50 per hour

Service Center/Transportation Department:

Ashley Camp, driver trainee, effective April 9, 2025, \$17.35 per hour

Tracey Mitchell, bus aide/activity bus driver, effective April 7, 2025, \$16.68 per hour

Alissa Ramos, bus driver, effective April 14, 2025, \$21.14 per hour

Termination –

Randy Sylvester, Service Center/Transportation Department, head mechanic, effective April 14, 2025

**PRESENTATION AND RECOGNITION of 2025 Winter Athletes at Hobart High School:** Dr. Peggy Buffington welcomed Mike Black, Athletic Director, as well as coaches, the student athletes and their family members. She indicated that Mr. Black and the coaches present would be recognizing the achievements of this year's winter athletes. She was proud of all of their accomplishments.

Mike Black thanked the Board and Dr. Buffington for inviting them to the meeting. He mentioned that at the end of each sports season he prepares a video highlighting each of the sports teams as their "One Shining Moment." The presentation began with the video of the winter sports teams, and President Guthrie told audience members to feel free to take pictures from any place in the Board Room.

► **Girls Wrestling** – Tomas Westberg, varsity girls wrestling coach, highlighted the accomplishments of Ashley DeBusk, Academic All-State; Joanna Cantu, Academic All-State, and IHSAA State Finalist; Lena Raygoza, Academic All-State, and IHSAA State Finalist; Olivia McIntire, Academic All-State; and Alicia Salamanca, Academic All-State. The following were not able to attend the meeting: Gabriella Reyes, Academic All-Conference; Madeline Lams, Academic All-State; Makenna Rotz, Academic All-Conference; and Nora Hornak, Academic All-State. It was noted that this was the first year that girls wrestling was a sanctioned IHSAA sport.

► **Boys Wrestling** – Zack Johansen, varsity boys wrestling coach, acknowledged the accomplishments of the team and the individual accomplishments of team members, even though none of the team members were able to attend the meeting. Malcolm Manuel was acknowledged for his support of the boys wrestling team and was holding the team's state runner-up trophy. Those recognized are as follows: Aidan Costello, Academic All-Conference, Academic All-State, and Scholar All-American; Aiden Granger, First Team All-Conference, IHSAA State Finalist, and Academic All-State; Alex Tatum, Scholar All-American; Blake Doeing, Second Team All-Conference, and IHSAA Semi-State Qualifier; Cole Weber, All-Conference Honorable Mention; Daniel Mata, Semi-State Qualifier; Daniel McGill, Second Team All-Conference, and IHSAA Regional Champ; Daniel Olague, Scholar All-American; Deacon Caesar, All-Conference Honorable Mention, Academic All-State, and IHSAA Semi-State Qualifier; Dominic Rivera, First Team All-Conference, and IHSAA Semi-State Qualifier; Hayden Mancilla, Academic All-State, Scholar All-American, IHSAA Semi-State Qualifier, and First Team All-Conference; Hunter Przbylinski, Scholar All-American; Luke Juris, Second Team All-Conference, Academic All-Conference, Academic All-State, Scholar All-American, and IHSAA State Finalist; Mario Cadena, Academic All-State; Myles Necco, Academic All-State; Preston Perez, Academic All-State; Riley Owen, Scholar All-American; Ryder Goodpaster, Scholar All-American; Ryson Williams, Scholar All-American; and Seth Aubin, First Team All-Conference, Academic All-Conference, Academic All-State, Scholar All-American, and IHSAA Semi-State Qualifier.

- Boys Basketball – Devon Key, varsity boys basketball coach, highlighted the boys basketball season and the individual accomplishments of Brian Howard, Academic All-Conference; and Ryan Basham, First Team All-Conference. The following were not able to attend the meeting: Aidan Leonard, Second Team All-Conference; Felix Lopez, Academic All-Conference; and Paxson Hicko, All-Conference Honorable Mention.
- Winter Cheer – Mr. Black acknowledged that Brooke Royce was Academic All-Conference, and she was not at the meeting.
- Boys Diving – Mike Black recognized Aiden Bailey, Second Team All-Conference, and read comments about Aiden from Katie Rinas, varsity diving coach. Coach Jason Bailey, assistant boys diving coach, was also present.
- Boys Swim – Mike Black highlighted the accomplishments of the boys swim team and the individual accomplishments of Antonio Mandich, Academic-All Conference; and Evan Harness, First Team All-Conference 200 Medley Relay, 200 Free Relay, and 500 Free; and Second Team All-Conference 200 Free. The following were not able to attend the meeting: Christian Kertz, First Team All-Conference 200 Medley Relay, 200 Free Relay, and Academic-All Conference; Durgon Click, First Team All-Conference 200 Medley Relay, 200 Free Relay, 50 Free, and All-Conference Honorable Mention 100 Free; and Jaden Cano, First Team All-Conference 200 Medley Relay, 200 Free Relay, 50 Free, and 100 Back.
- Girls Diving – Mike Black recognized the accomplishments of Alyssa Meinert, Academic-All Conference; and Ellianna Crespo, Second Team All-Conference Diving, and read comments about them from Katie Rinas, varsity diving coach.
- Girls Swim – Mike Black acknowledged the accomplishments of Brogan McDonald, Second Team All-Conference 500 Free, Academic All-Conference. Manager Natalie Hostetler, Academic-All Conference, was not able to attend the meeting.
- Girls Basketball – Mike Black highlighted the team's accomplishments and the individual accomplishments of the following: Hallie Pendleton, All-Conference Honorable Mention, and Academic All-Conference; Kyla Butler, Academic All-Conference; and Taylor Pope, Academic All-Conference. Kurah Krucina, All-Conference Honorable Mention; and Ladan Weinman, Academic All-Conference, were unable to attend the meeting.

The Board congratulated the athletes for another great winter sports season, and on behalf of the Board and Dr. Buffington, certificates of recognition were presented to each athlete and coach when they were recognized. Mr. Black took the certificates for those not present and will see that they receive them. In addition, during the team recognitions, he highlighted the GPAs of many of the athletes, which showed that the student athletes achieve on the field and in the classroom. They are involved in many service-learning projects at school and for the community. Everyone is proud of the accomplishments, dedication, and efforts of our athletes.

Dr. Buffington thanked the parents and student athletes for attending the meeting. In addition, she thanked the student athletes for representing Hobart High School, as well as the Hobart community.

President Rikki Guthrie excused audience members from the meeting. No one remained in the audience.

**RESOLUTION: Food Services Employees Recognition Day:** Resolution No. 2025-12 was presented for the Board's consideration and recognized the Food Services Employees on May 2, 2025. Superintendent Peggy Buffington indicated that the school district has “an amazing group of people” that care for our students in the school cafeterias.

President Rikki Guthrie asked Secretary Frank Porras to read the title of Resolution No 2025-12 aloud, and he did so, as follows:

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-12

FOOD SERVICES EMPLOYEES APPRECIATION DAY

President Rikki Guthrie requested Board action and a roll-call vote on the motion.

Sandra Hillan moved that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2025-12, as presented. Seconded by Stuart Schultz.

In discussion, Brad Keehn commented that his children like their school lunches, and he has to replenish their lunch accounts regularly. Rikki Guthrie noted that the food services employees were very much like the school bus drivers who look out for the students, greet them, and offer smiles every day. Dr. Buffington noted that was true

at all the schools, as well as the catering department. She indicated that the Board would soon be hearing about the new plan for the summer meal program. Sandi Hillan commented that the food service employees were very much appreciated.

Vote on motion: Secretary Frank Porras called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Nay – No one. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

Resolution No. 2025-12, as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted, is as follows:

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-12

FOOD SERVICES EMPLOYEES APPRECIATION DAY

WHEREAS, nutritious meals at school are an essential part of the school day; and

WHEREAS, Hobart’s Food Service Department is committed to providing healthful, nutritious meals to the district’s students; and

WHEREAS, the staff who prepare and serve school meals helps nurture our students through their daily interaction and support; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that May 2, 2025, be designated *School Lunch Hero Day* in recognition of our food services employees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the School City of Hobart expresses its deepest appreciation to these valuable employees and commends their good work on behalf of our students.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of School Trustees urges the entire community to recognize and show their appreciation to the Food Services Employees of the School City of Hobart.

DATED this 17th day of April, 2025.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Rikki A. Guthrie, President

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank Porras, Secretary

**RESOLUTION: Teacher Recognition Day:** Resolution No. 2025-13 was presented for the Board's consideration and recognized Teacher Recognition Day on May 7, 2025. Superintendent Peggy Buffington noted that all of our teachers were appreciated for all that they do for their students. She noted their importance and said they were amazing and “provide excellent opportunities for our students,” and they are “preparing the future generation.” She “could not be prouder to work them.”

President Guthrie asked Secretary Frank Porras to read the resolution, aloud, and he did so, as follows:

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-13  
NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY

WHEREAS, great teachers make great public schools; and

WHEREAS, teachers work to open the minds of their students to ideas, knowledge and dreams; and

WHEREAS, a strong, effective system of free public school education for all children and youth is essential to our democratic system of government; and

WHEREAS, much of this country’s progress can be attributed to qualified and dedicated teachers; and

WHEREAS, teachers fill many roles, as listeners, role models, motivators, and mentors; and



WHEREAS, teachers should be accorded high public esteem, reflecting the value the community places on public education; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that teachers be recognized for this dedication and commitment to educating their students; and

WHEREAS, teachers continue to influence us long after our school days are only memories;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that May 7, 2025, be designated *National Teacher Appreciation Day*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the entire community of Hobart to recognize and appreciate the impact of teachers on our lives.

DATED this 17th day of April, 2025.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

BY \_\_\_\_\_  
Rikki A. Guthrie, President

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank Porras, Secretary

President Rikki Guthrie requested Board action and a roll-call vote.

David Kostbade moved and Donald Rogers seconded that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2025-13, as presented.

In the discussion, it was noted “you could not have good schools without good teachers.” Mrs. Guthrie noted that our teachers play multi-roles in the lives of their students and sometimes have to “step in for the parents.” Isis Fleming mentioned that all of her teachers have always been caring and have impacted her life. She was grateful for them and said they all deserved to be recognized and appreciated. Kayla Davis concurred with Isis’ remarks and indicated that Hobart’s teachers were “some of the best.” She mentioned that she came to Hobart in fifth grade, and it “was a big change” for her. She appreciated all of the assistance she received and the dedication of her teachers.

Vote on motion: Secretary Frank Porras called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Nay – No one. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

**RESOLUTION: School Nurse Appreciation Day:** Resolution No. 2025-14 recognized School Nurse Appreciation Day on May 7, 2025, and was presented for the Board’s consideration. Superintendent Peggy Buffington extend her appreciation to all of our school nurses for all that they do for our students. She noted she would not have been able to keep the schools open during the COVID pandemic and mentioned that Rikki Guthrie has filled in on occasion. She said the nurses were outstanding and provide excellent care to students and staff. The students love their school nurses who make sure they are healthy. She mentioned that the high school nurses also teach classes there and rotate their time in the nurse’s office. She said the CNA program continues to grow and that the CNA certification includes dementia care. Sandi Hillan said the anatomy/physiology class her daughter had taken in high school during COVID has served her well. She received credit for the class in her undergraduate studies but still had to take their course, and the same was true for her graduate work. She thought this was a testament to the coursework Hobart students receive.

Secretary Frank Porras read the resolution, as follows:

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
  
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-14  
SCHOOL NURSE APPRECIATION DAY

President Rikki Guthrie called for a roll-call vote on the motion.

Rikki Guthrie moved that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2025-14, as presented. Bradley Keehn seconded. Vote on motion: Secretary Frank Porras called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Nay – No one. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

Resolution No. 2025-14, as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted, is as follows:

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-14  
SCHOOL NURSE APPRECIATION DAY

WHEREAS, school nurses juggle a complex array of medical and social issues;

WHEREAS, for some students, the school nurse may be the only health care professional they see; and

WHEREAS, the school nurse interacts with other professionals such as teachers, doctors, administrators, school counselors, social workers, and coaches, as well as parents of students; and

WHEREAS, school nurses rise to the challenge and are healers, comforters, mentors, trainers, and role models; and

WHEREAS, school nurses focus on students, create healthy schools, are advocates, and are indispensable; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that May 7, 2025, be designated *School Nurse Appreciation Day*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the entire community of Hobart to recognize and appreciate the impact of school nurses on our students' lives.

DATED this 17th day of April, 2025.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

BY \_\_\_\_\_  
Rikki A. Guthrie, President

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Frank Porras, Secretary

**AUTHORIZATION: Transfer of Funds from the Education Fund to the Operations Fund:** Superintendent Peggy Buffington noted that for the budget year 2025, \$5,756,966.00 was approved for transfer from the Education Fund to the Operations Fund, and to date, \$0.00 has been transferred. She indicated that Bob Glover, Business Manager, was requesting that \$1,295,000.00 be transferred from the Education Fund to the Operations Fund, and this would leave a balance of \$4,461,966.00 available for transfer through the end of the calendar year.

Dr. Buffington requested Board action.

Bradley Keehn moved that the Board approve the transfer as presented and authorize the Treasurer of the School City of Hobart to transfer \$1,295,000.00 from the Education Fund to the Operations Fund. Frank Porras seconded.

In the discussion, Brad Keehn commented that it had to be done.

Vote on motion: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

The Authorization to Transfer, as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted, is as follows:

AUTHORIZATION TO TRANSFER \$1,295,000 FROM THE  
EDUCATION FUND TO THE OPERATIONS FUND

WHEREAS, the Board of School Trustees is the governing body of the School City of Hobart, Lake County, Indiana, and

WHEREAS, on October 16, 2024 the Board of School Trustees passed Resolution 2024-30 authorizing up to \$5,756,966.00 to be transferred from the Education Fund to the Operations Fund during the 2025 budget year, and

WHEREAS, to date, \$0.00 has been transferred leaving \$5,756,966.00 available to transfer.

THEREFORE, the Board of School Trustees authorizes the Treasurer of the School City of Hobart to transfer up to \$1,295,000.00 (one million two hundred ninety-five thousand dollars) from the Education Fund to the Operations Fund.

This authorization was approved by the Board of School Trustees on April 17, 2025.

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President, Board of School Trustees

ATTEST:

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Secretary, Board of School Trustees

**OVERNIGHT/EXTENDED STUDENT TRIP: Hobart High School JAG Students:** Dr. Peggy Buffington presented a request from Veronique Henry, JAG specialist at Hobart High School, for four of her students in grades 11 and 12 to attend the Jobs for America's Graduates National Conference in Indianapolis on April 24-25, 2025. The conference is a national competition and networking event for students to meet other JAG participants and professionals from all over the country. They will be attending a college/career fair and participating in employer workshops. There is no cost for the students. The group will leave Hobart on April 24 and return on April 25. In addition to Ms. Henry, there will be four other people from the JAG program attending the conference.

Dr. Buffington told the Board this was the first year for the JAG Program at the high school. She noted that Ms. Henry was "doing an amazing job." The class is an eclectic group of students who are having chances to look at different career options for them to pursue. As part of the class, they had to come up with project, and they decided they wanted every kindergarten student to have a new pair of tennis shoes. She approved them having a crowdfunding account like Audrey Amsler has used to purchase different musical instruments for her classes. She was proud of the students, and it provided them with a great learning experience. Dr. Buffington was very proud of the program but was afraid that it will be on the state's "chopping block."

Stuart Schultz moved that the Board approve the overnight trip request for JAG students to attend their national conference as presented. Donald Rogers seconded.

In the discussion, Mr. Keehn inquired whether the limousine company was insured and how they would communicate with parents? Dr. Buffington indicated the limousine company was insured, and they would use Parent Square to communicate with the parents.

Vote on motion: Secretary Frank Porras called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Nay – No one. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

**UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS:** The Board received the following information:

- School Information – weekly agendas from all of the schools, as well as the BricksCenter newsletter from the high school athletic department.
- TOO GOOD FOR DRUGS GRADUATION – This year's Too Good for Drugs Graduation for fifth graders will be held on April 30th at 6:00 pm in HHS Gym. Dr. Buffington invited Board members to the graduation. Anyone wishing to attend should email her, and they should be in the Field House by 5:45 pm. She commented she was "really proud of the SRO's and Debbie Matthys, Director of Social Emotional Learning" for all of their work on the program. She noted this was a great partnership with the Hobart Police Department.
- Upcoming Activities/Events – the latest list of upcoming activities/events. Dr. Buffington highlighted the upcoming activities/events, as follows:

April 14- May 9 – ILEARN Test Window for Third to Eighth Graders

April 16 – Makers & Innovators Showcase, HHS Field House, 6-8:00 pm

April 16 – Dedication of Mural @ Hobart Middle School honoring the legacy of Randy Griffith, PTLW Hallway @ 4:00 pm

April 20-26 – National Volunteer Week – "Celebrate Service"

April 24 – SCOH and Tri-Kappa Art Show, Hobart Middle School Café, 4-5:30 pm  
with Awards at 5:30 pm

April 24 – 30 – Hobart Student Leadership Week

April 25 – Hobart High School Prom

April 26 – Hobart Moose Lodge Bingo Fundraiser for the HHS Performing Arts  
Doors Open @ 5:00 pm and Bingo Starts @ 7:00 pm

April 30 – Too Good for Drugs Graduation, HHS Gym, 6:00 pm



**COMMENTS:** From the administration, Peggy Buffington told the Board that there were 97 entries at last evening's Maker's Faire in the Field House. She mentioned that some of the spectators came just to see what the Maker's Faire was, and they enjoyed seeing all of the projects the students had done. Dr. Buffington said the students are always excited to show off their projects when she and Chris King stop and visit with them. There were some philanthropists who were donating proceeds to non-profit groups, such as the Hobart Humane Society and St. Jude's Hospital, and one student donated her proceeds to her school to buy ice cream for students who did not have money to buy it. She said there were many excellent ideas and projects that were celebrated and indicated, "It was a great night." Dr. Buffington told the Board about the dedication of the STEM Program/Project Lead The Way/computer science wall at the middle school honoring the legacy of Randy Griffith, a PLTW teacher in the STEM Program, who passed away during the school year. She mentioned that Mr. Griffith taught every middle school student. Until he began the program, he did not know how to code, but he took all of the PLTW courses and never looked back. In addition, he sponsored the robotics team and the fishing club at the middle school, as well as being an avid guitarist. Since the STEM classrooms are in the area of the old athletic office when the building was the old high school and near the swimming pool, she felt the wall should be updated to reflect what the students were doing in this area now. She said that Hobart artist, Pete Cortese, was commissioned to do this, and he did an excellent job. There was a small dedication ceremony for the wall with Mr. Griffith's family and staff in attendance. In addition, she thanked Frank Porras for attending the dedication. She said the dedication let the Griffith family know how much Mr. Griffith was appreciated in the lives of middle school students. Dr. Buffington then told the Board about the All-District Elementary Music Program last Sunday in the auditorium at the middle school. She said it was outstanding program and with a large audience. The music teachers and students were surprised by the size of the audience. She said each school performed individually, but the highlight of the program was when all three schools performed together with the Liberty students providing the music on their ukuleles while the choirs sang. She said they all did an outstanding job, and she wished that the state legislators "would come and see what happens in the schools." She wished "Happy Easter" to everyone. Chris King concurred with Dr. Buffington's comments and said "the Maker's Faire was incredible." He mentioned that the event began in 2014, and the students are excited and proud of what they have done and cannot wait to show them to Dr. Buffington and him. He noted there were a wide range of projects and ideas. Dr. Buffington extended her thanks and appreciation to Chris King and the Technology Department for their assistance, as well as Becky Williams for her work in receiving, assigning, and setting up the booth spaces. Bill Longer wished everyone "Happy Easter."

From the Board, Dave Kostbade appreciated seeing the recognition of the athletes and how well they were doing in the classroom. He appreciated the dedication of the multi-sport athletes, as well as their participation in other school activities and clubs. He expressed his appreciation to the coaches and teachers for all they do. He complimented the food services staff for all they do. He wished everyone "Happy Easter." Don Rogers also enjoyed the recognition of the student athletes and said he was always amazed at the outstanding GPA's that so many of them have. Brad Keehn appreciated the recognition of the three employee groups and concurred with the comments about them. He reported on the Park Board and mentioned that they received a grant, which will be used to redo the bridge and some improvements at Festival Park starting as early as this fall. In addition, he said there are planned improvements at Brickie Bowl for new lights and turf. He wished everyone "Happy Easter." Stu Schultz mentioned that the turf may float away at Brickie Bowl if Duck Creek overflows and floods the field like it did some years ago. Even with the rich football tradition at Brickie Bowl, Dr. Buffington recalled that she never hesitated in moving the football field to the high school when it was built because of the last time Brickie Bowl was flooded. She noted that people were swimming in Brickie Bowl when they were trying to get the football equipment out of the building there. Stu Schultz mentioned he even had his boat there to help move the equipment. Kayla Davis, HHS student representative, stated she was looking forward to the coming senior class activities, such as Ivy Tech graduation, the senior parade, graduation practice, the cookout with the high school administrators, and pool day. She commented it would be "bittersweet" and a lot of fun for them. Isis Fleming, HHS student representative, mentioned that she had been reminiscing about all of the wonderful and caring educators Hobart has and commented that many of them were involved with her not just in the classroom but also in her life. She was "grateful to all of them." She remembered participating in a Maker's Faire and waiting to show off her artistic skills to Dr. Buffington and Mr. King. She appreciated the recognition of the employee groups and said the food services staff at the high school engages with the students and said their efforts are appreciated. She wished everyone "a Happy Easter." Frank Porras indicated that he attended the dedication service at the middle school and was surprised at how many people attended. Dr. Buffington said they came because of Mr. Griffith's teaching journey. Mr. Porras concurred that the mural was very nice. He said Tony Curatolo suggested that he visit the pool area, and Mr. Porras said Pete Cortese updated the area like he did at the high school. He was looking forward to the bingo fundraiser for the high school's performing arts on April 26 at the Moose Lodge so he could donate his money because he never wins. He hoped everyone would have "a nice Easter." Dr. Buffington said the middle school pool area needed a face lift and said that so many Hobart children learned to swim in that pool. She said the mural there is beautiful and said Pete Cortese did a great job. She recommended that Board members take the opportunity to visit the middle school to see the pool and STEM murals. Sandi Hillan said she was going to be "Debbie Downer" after all of the positive comments that have been made. She mentioned that through the years "a lot has happened in education," but

said, “It is a sad day for education.” She commented that she had been in Indianapolis this week and listened to talk radio that was very unpleasant to hear referencing educators. They do not value their educators as we do in our area, and they made disparaging comments about them. She said educators need to be supported “for the hard work they do” and “encourage them even on dark days. Mrs. Hillan highlighted the Title Com Conference that she attended this week in Indianapolis. One of the speakers started the Innovate WithIN Program and spoke about the program and how it began. She was curious whether he would mention Hobart, and Dr. Krieg assured her that he knew about us. He did speak about Hobart and noted the success of Kayla Davis and Isis Fleming, as freshmen students, and their success with their company, Patchables. Mrs. Hillan told Kayla and Isis that she was very proud of them and the success they have had with their company. AI was also mentioned at the conference, and she was proud of what is being done in the school district. Dr. Buffington told the Board that she had met with a journalist who had worked at the Washington Post and Time magazine and was writing a book about AI. She said that Sal Khan had recommended that he meet with her and visit the school district. She noted he was slotted to be here from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, but he did not leave until 3:00 p.m. His book will be about how AI is being used in a variety of different areas such as schools, businesses, the medical field, etc. and how it has changed those areas. Mrs. Hillan noted that at the vender fair when they saw she was from Hobart, they all knew Dr. Buffington was the superintendent and noted she was “the best of the best.” Mrs. Hillan mentioned that she shared Hobart’s Freshman Orientation information with Portage administrators, and they could not “believe what was offered here.” Dr. Buffington commented that has been a long process and noted that the pathways guide began in the 1999-2000 school year. She said, “It takes time and continuity with leadership” and being able to embrace change. Mrs. Hillan commented on the importance of visualizing and “not being afraid to go down that path.” There was discussion on how the different programs here have progressed, and Dr. Buffington mentioned that persuading teachers to join those journeys was of utmost importance because they were “the trailblazers” who learned about the specific areas and then they made the subjects interesting so their students wanted to learn about them. AI has made labs more interesting, and because of them, students are also developing interesting projects. Hobart shares with others and hopes after their visits, they will be able to replicate what we have. Rikki Guthrie reiterated what she had said about teachers “stepping in as parents.” They “trust, love all of them, encourage them,” as well as “correcting them.” She mentioned it was unfortunate that the state’s lawmakers were passing legislation because they feel students are being indoctrinated, which is not true. She mentioned the GPAs of the student athletes were amazing and said that was because of our outstanding educators. Dr. Buffington commented that the latest version of the state legislature’s budget bill was not looking favorable for the district. She has been speaking with state senators and representatives about the ramifications of the bill. She was hoping that they would do something like a protective tax waiver for school districts losing 50% or more of funding. She noted that the school districts in Northwest Indiana have the best teachers, and “We honor teachers in this district.” The legislators need come up with a solution, but she was not sure they want one. Dr. Buffington told the Board that after the referendum is over, there will some tough decisions to be made. She was planning to figure something out, like she did in 2009. Rikki Guthrie was happy the JAG Program was providing a service for another group of students. She reminded Kayla and Isis that she told them the school year would go by fast and noted it was the beginning of all the end of the year activities for them. She thanked everyone to her left and extended her appreciation those on her right.

Since no one was in the audience, there were no audience comments.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to come before the Board, President Guthrie adjourned the meeting around 8:57 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next regular session meeting is May 1, 2025.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Rikki A. Guthrie, President

ATTEST:

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Frank Porras, Secretary

Submitted for Approval: May 1, 2025