

**SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
REGULAR SESSION MEETING  
January 23, 2025**

The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on January 23, 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  
Bob Glover  
Christopher N. King  
William J. Longer

Administrators Absent:

Jonathan Mock  
Tim Krieg

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** President Guthrie indicated that the Board met in executive session prior to the regular session and noted the meeting was held in accordance with I.C. 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(1) where authorized by federal or state statute; (3) for discussion of the assessment, design, and implementation of school safety and security measures, plans, and systems; 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 7:06 p.m.

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

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

Jake Paulson, Commander for the Hobart VFW Post, and his wife, Heather Paulson, a teacher at Joan Martin School  
Katie Albertin, teacher at Hobart Middle School  
Cathy Nelson, teacher at Hobart High School

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Stuart Schultz moved that Board approve the regular session minutes of January 9, 2025. Seconded by David Kostbade. Vote on motion: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried: 7-0 in favor.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS:** President Guthrie asked the student representatives to read the voucher summary.

- Vouchers for January 23, 2025 – Kayla Davis and Isis Fleming, HHS student representatives, shared the reading of the accounts payable voucher summary with Kayla reading the first portion and Isis the last portion, as follows:

School Education \$1,046,179.89  
Education-form Curr. Mat. \$1,929.62  
Exempt Operating – Post 2009 \$89,388.71  
Debt Service \$5,440,074.22  
Referendum Debt – Post 2009 \$890,500.00  
School Operations \$563,213.49  
Construction 0700 \$189,028.32  
School Lunch \$133,515.81  
Self-Insurance Fund \$287,829.09  
Community Gifts and Donations \$4,005.05  
Building Brickies \$850.84  
SCOH Educational Foundation \$30.38  
Pope Family Donation Fund \$300.00  
SAFE Support Addiction Free \$280.00  
Teacher Appreciation \$0.00  
Connectivity Grant \$5,275.00  
Title II Part A FY 24/25 \$3,488.50  
Clearing Accounts \$486,327.40  
Self-Insurance Clearing \$76,739.87  
Clearing/Flexible Benefits AF \$81,392.44

Clearing/Ins. Account \$3,762.66  
Credit Card Fee Clearing \$2,288.25

for vouchers totaling \$9,306,399.54 and repayment of tax anticipation warrants from the Exempt Operating – Post 2009 Fund in the amount of \$995,756.00. The December payroll distribution by Tracy Brumley, the school corporation's treasurer, was \$1,019,016.97.

Stuart Schultz moved that the Board approve payment of the vouchers for January 23, 2025. Seconded by Donald Rogers. Vote on motion: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried: 7-0 in favor.

In addition, the Board received copies of the following monthly budget reports, dated December 31, 2024, in their electronic Board packet: Analysis by Object, Estimated Revenue by Account, Summary of Balances by Account-Object, and Summary of Receipts and Expenditures.

**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, Dr. Peggy Buffington indicated the Personnel Report was included with the electronic meeting information for the Board's consideration.

Dr. Buffington recommended approval and requested Board action.

Donald Rogers moved and David Kostbade seconded that the Board approve the Personnel Report as presented. 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:

Resignation –

Cailin LaBreck, Hobart Middle School/teacher, January 31, 2025

Request for Leave of Absence –

Teresa Williamson, Service Center/bus driver, unpaid medical leave, beginning January 23 until on or about March 5, 2025

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

Kelly Butler transferring to Class II custodian at the high school, hours remain same, pay rate adjusted to \$18.20 per hour, effective January 13, 2025

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

Sarah Greene transferring from a classified position, recess aide at Joan Martin School to the Transportation Department as a school bus trainee, \$17.35 per hour, effective January 6, 2025

New Employees –

Custodial Department:

Tyler Cantu, Hobart High School/Class I custodian, effective January 10, 2025, \$16.38 per hour

Food Services Department:

Morgan James, Veterans @ Mundell/food services, effective January 16, 2025, \$12.67 per hour

Transportation Department:

Ariol Crosby, Service Center/bus driver trainee, effective January 15, 2025, \$17.35 per hour

Greg Kalwinski, Service Center/bus driver–part time, effective January 13, 2025, \$21.14 per hour

**SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION MONTH:** Superintendent Peggy Buffington told the Board that the gifts before them and some thank you messages from some of the classes were on the sign-in table were from the Early Learning Center for the Board in appreciation of January being School Board Appreciation Month.

**RECOGNITION: VFW RECOGNITION:** Dr. Peggy Buffington welcomed and introduced Jake and Heather Paulson, representing Hobart's VFW Post. She turned the meeting over to the Paulson's who would be making an award presentation from the Hobart VFW Post. Mr. Paulson extended the VFW's appreciation for the middle school and high school's participation in their two scholarship programs, the Patriot Pen, an essay, and Voice of Democracy, 3-5 minutes speech, respectively. The cooperation with the schools works very smoothly thanks to Katie Albertin at the middle school and Cathy Nelson at the high school. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Katie Albertin, Cathy Nelson, and Peggy Buffington, and they thanked them for supporting their two scholarship programs. In addition, Dr. Buffington mentioned that Mrs. Paulson deserved a certificate, as well, for all of her efforts coordinating everything with the two schools.

Dr. Buffington mentioned that the annual Veterans Day Ceremony held at Memorial Park with the middle school essay winners reading their speeches was always a special occasion. In addition, she mentioned that all of the schools have special programs recognizing veterans for their service. She told the Paulson's that they needed to visit Veterans School to see their murals and told them to contact her to setup the visit. Mr. Paulson told the Board that the winner of this year's Patriot's Pen won first place at the district level and advanced to state competition. In addition, it was noted their Voice of Democracy first-place winner, who was a Merrillville High School student, won first place at the district level and was advancing to state, and both of them earned additional scholarship monies. The Board thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

**RESOLUTION: School Counselor Appreciation Day:** Superintendent Peggy Buffington presented Resolution No. 2025-1 for the Board's consideration. The resolution pertained to National School Counseling Week, which is February 3-7, and designated February 5 as School Counselor Appreciation Day.

Secretary Frank Porras read the title of Resolution No. 2025-1, as follows:

Resolution No. 2025-1  
School Counselor Appreciation Day

President Rikki Guthrie called for Board action and a roll call vote.

Stuart Schultz moved that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2025-1 designating February 5 as School Counselor Appreciation Day. David Kostbade seconded.

In the discussion, Dr. Buffington pointed out that our counselors do an amazing job and noted they have even more responsibilities since COVID. She noted the counselors were preparing for next year and indicated she was thankful for all that they do. She commented that when the high school was built the counseling office was prominently placed for easy access for the students. She noted the old high school's guidance office was harder to find. Rikki Guthrie indicated the counselors were available throughout the day, and she appreciated all of their efforts for students. Sandi Hillan commented that school counselors know their students, their backgrounds, and when the SEL component may be needed. She said parents also depend on our counselors, and she appreciated all that they do.

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. 2025-1, as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted, is as follows:

Resolution No. 2025-1  
School Counselor Appreciation Day

Whereas, National School Counseling Week has been designated as February 3 through 7, 2025, and

Whereas, school counselors are employed in public and private schools to help students reach their full potential, and

Whereas, school counselors are actively committed to helping students explore their abilities, strengths, interests, and talents as these traits relate to career awareness and development, and

Whereas, school counselors help parents focus on ways to further the educational, personal and social growth of their children, and

Whereas, school counselors work with teachers and other educators to help students explore their potential and set realistic goals for themselves, and

Whereas, school counselors seek to identify and utilize community resources that can enhance and complement comprehensive school counseling programs and help students become productive members of society, and

Whereas, comprehensive developmental school counseling programs are considered an integral part of the educational process that enables all students to achieve success in school,

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that February 5, 2025, be designated as *School Counselor Appreciation Day*.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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Rikki A. Guthrie, President

ATTEST:

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Frank Porras, Secretary

**OVERNIGHT STUDENT TRIP: JROTC 2025 Marksmanship National Championship Competition:**

Dr. Peggy Buffington presented and recommended approval for JROTC cadets to attend the 2025 Marksmanship National Championship Competition at Camp Perry, Ohio, on February 13-16, 2025. Four JROTC cadets will compete with other cadets from around the country, and the competition consists of shooting a three-position air rifle course over a three-day period. The cadets will leave after school on February 13 in a district activity bus and will stay three nights in Port Clinton, OH. The cadets will return to Hobart on February 16, 2025. There will be no cost for the cadets other than incidental expenses and snacks along the way. Their lodging and meals will be paid from JROTC funds.

Dr. Buffington requested Board action.

David Kostbade moved that the Board approve the overnight student trip for JROTC to attend 2025 Marksmanship National Raider Competition at Camp Perry, Ohio, as presented. Seconded by Donald Rogers. Vote on motion: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried: 7-0 in favor.

**OVERNIGHT/EXTENDED STUDENT TRIP: Key Club State Convention:** Superintendent Peggy Buffington presented a request from Heidi Polizotto, sponsor of the high school's Key Club, for five Key club members to attend the state leadership convention at the Crown Plaza Hotel at the Indianapolis Airport, IN on February 27/March 2, 2025. They will travel either by a school activity bus or with their parents, and Mrs. Polizotto will be in charge. The club members participate in workshops to learn more about servant leadership and will bring back what they learned. Hobart's Key Club has been very active at the state level. Dr. Buffington mentioned that the local Kiwanis Club was willing to provide insurance for Mrs. Polizotto to drive the students, but she denied that request because of liability concerns. Dr. Buffington noted that she monitors weather conditions during the winter months, and if the conditions are not conducive, she might have to cancel the trip because the safety of the students is very important. Mr. Keehn asked Mr. Longer whether the Board needed to authorize the superintendent to be able to cancel trip, and Mr. Longer responded that they did not because Board Policy authorizes the superintendent to do so.

Bradley Keehn moved that the Board approve the overnight study trip for the Key Club to attend their state leadership convention in Indianapolis, as presented. Frank Porras seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried: 7-0 in favor.

**OVERNIGHT-EXTENDED STUDENT TRIP: Hobart High School Youth and Government:** Dr. Peggy Buffington presented the request of Colin May, middle school teacher and sponsor of the high school's Youth and Government club, for club members to attend this year's Youth and Government Program in Indianapolis. The Youth and Government program is a program of the Indiana Alliance of YMCA's. This year, fourteen Hobart High School students will take part in the statewide program that features a mock legislature and court. High school students from throughout the state who have an interest in public policy will be in attendance. All Hobart students must sponsor a state bill that they write on their own. Students present and debate their bill in the state capitol and actually have the chance to do this in the Indiana Statehouse. In addition, students have the opportunity to participate in the Supreme Court, Press program, or run for elected office. Hobart students have been successful in being elected to state offices and placed on important state committees. Dr. Buffington indicated that students will travel by school bus, leaving on Friday, February 21, and returning on Sunday, February 23. Students will stay at Hilton Hotel and be chaperoned by Colin May and Kathy Workman from the Hobart YMCA. Dr. Buffington mentioned that the Educational Foundation contributes to the cost of the trip to reduce the cost of the trip for students. She indicated that it was "a great experience for students" who are interested in state government and is an amazing experience for them. In addition, she commented that she would be monitoring weather conditions for this group and noted that one year the group had to stay an extra night because of weather conditions.

Dr. Buffington requested Board action.

Stuart Schultz moved that the Board approve the overnight-extended student trip for the Hobart Youth and Government students, as presented. Bradley Keehn seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Kostbade, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried: 7-0 in favor.

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

- School Information – weekly agendas from the Early Learning Center, Liberty School, Hobart Middle School, and Hobart High School.
- Upcoming Activities/Events – Dr. Buffington indicated that February 14 and 17 was the Presidents Day break.

**COMMENTS:** From the administration, Peggy Buffington mentioned that tomorrow Khan Academy would be announcing that Hobart was a Khanathon National Champion. The Brickies topped the Leaderboard in the “AI Explorers Category.” Hobart had the highest percentage of students actively using Khanmigo. She was proud of the work the staff and students had done. She noted the importance of the Computer and Engineering Pathways for our students and the career opportunities that will be available for our students because of AI. She mentioned that in the “60 Minutes” broadcast about AI, one of our students indicated they learned how to ask good questions to get the answers. She noted that was a good skill to learn, as well as embracing AI and learning to use it appropriately. Since Bob Glover missed the last meeting, he extended his welcome to Dave Kostbade and Brad Keehn and was looking forward to working together. Chris King commented the counselors were doing a great job. He said everything was going well. Bill Longer mentioned that he had filed the Oaths of Office at the county for Frank Porras, Brad Keehn, and Dave Kostbade, and he had given each of them a copy for their personal files, and he gave Pat Schoon copies of everything. Dr. Buffington mentioned to the Board that she and Mr. Longer will be closing on the Wisconsin Street property tomorrow afternoon. In addition, she informed Board members that there would be a work session prior to the regular session meeting on February 6 at 5:00 pm to review Board Policy updates and after that there will be discussion about the potential bond issuance this year.

From the Board, Dave Kostbade extended his apologies for missing the last meeting, noted he was recuperating from hip surgery, and appreciated the support he received. He thanked Dr. Buffington for having the Mayor do his Oath of Office separately from the other Board members. He was excited to be a part of the Board. Don Rogers welcomed Dave Kostbade. He asked Dr. Buffington about implementing an energy conservation program, felt that turning off unneeded lights at all of the building facilities would be a great beginning, and thought there would be “massive savings” with a plan in place. Dr. Buffington noted that in 2009 the engineering students prepared a plan for conserving energy in the schools, and she felt the students should be involved again and should work with Felix Perry, Director of Support Services. Brad Keehn extended his appreciation for the guidance counselors and noted their importance for the students, which then benefits their parents. He wished the JROTC good luck with their competition and noted their successes. Stu Schultz extended his thanks and appreciation to the Early Learning Center for the Board’s gifts. Kayla Davis appreciated the recognition of the school counselors and commented that she “loved her counselors.” She mentioned her counselors are very hands-on, know everything that she needs, were very helpful, and respond to any of her concerns in a timely fashion. She spoke about upcoming Student Council fundraisers. First, the Valentine’s Day Kids Camp on February 14 that will be held at the high school. It will run from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm with games, crafts and movies with snacks and lunch provided, and the cost was \$40.00. The second, was Paint Your Heart Out! It will be held on February 7th at the high school and will have refreshments and desserts “while painting with loved ones.” The costs are as follows: Adults \$20, Students \$15, and children 12 and under \$10.00. Dr. Buffington asked her to send her information about the latter fundraiser so it could be included in the district newsletter, *Focus on Education*. Isis Fleming thanked Kayla for mentioning the fundraisers. She extended her appreciation to the Board for approving the upcoming student trips and mentioned she would be attending the Youth and Government trip for the first time. Isis thanked and extended her appreciation for the recognition of the school counselors and mentioned how her counselor had personally helped her. She was appreciative and knew that all of the counseling staff were there for their students. Frank Porras thanked Mr. Glover for all of the financial information and graphs he presented at the Board of Finance meeting, and he appreciated that the interest earned had increased. Sandi Hillan mentioned all of the school newsletters have a common thread throughout them in communicating with parents and noted the importance of doing so. She extended her appreciation for all the work put into doing this. Rikki Guthrie thanked Mr. Glover for the graphs and information from the Board of Finance meeting. She hoped the JROTC does well at their competition. She extended her appreciation to the school counselors and noted that her daughter will be working towards CNA certification next year and thanked her counselor for assisting her in that decision, as well as the other areas assistance. Mrs. Guthrie mentioned the counselors were available to their students and dedicated to them.

Since no one remained 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 7:45 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next regular session meeting is February 6, 2025.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

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

ATTEST:

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

Submitted for Approval: February 6, 2025