

**SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
REGULAR SESSION MEETING
July 3, 2024**

The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on July 3, 2024, in the Board Room at Hobart High School, 2211 East Tenth Street, Hobart, Indiana.

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

Board Members Present:

Terry D. Butler
Rikki A. Guthrie
Sandra J. Hillan
Karen J. Robbins
Donald H. Rogers
Stuart B. Schultz
Kayla Davis, HHS student representative
Isis Fleming, HHS student representative

Board Member Absent:

Frank Porras

Administrators Present:

Peggy Buffington
Christopher N. King
William J. Longer
Michael Black

Administrators Absent:

Bob Glover
Jonathan Mock
Tim Krieg

EXECUTIVE SESSION: President Butler indicated that the Board did not meet in executive session prior to the regular session.

CALL TO ORDER: Terry Butler, President, called the meeting to order around 7:00 p.m.

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

AUDIENCE: The following were present in the audience:

Bradley Keehn, Joan Martin School and Hobart Middle School parent and his daughter
Ryan Gregory, Hobart graduate and new varsity girls basketball coach
High school student and girls basketball player
An unidentified gentleman

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Stuart Schultz moved and Karen Robbins seconded that the Board approve the work session and regular session minutes of June 20, 2024. Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: President Butler indicated there were no financial reports for the Board's consideration.

COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS: President Terry Butler 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 and Personnel Report Addendum were included in the electronic meeting information for the Board's consideration.

Dr. Buffington recommended approval and requested Board action.

Stuart Schultz moved that the Board approve the Personnel Reports as presented. Donald Rogers seconded.

In the discussion, Dr. Buffington was asked if the district's teachers were fully staffed for the coming year, and she indicated they were "close." Sandi Hillan expressed her thanks to Ralph Curtis for his service to the school district. Dr. Buffington mentioned he was a loyal, dedicated employee and would be missed.

Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

Dr. Buffington acknowledged Mike Black, Athletic Director, and noted he would be introducing a new varsity coach. Mr. Black thanked the Board for approving the personnel reports this evening, and he introduced Ryan Gregory, the new varsity girls basketball coach. Mr. Black commented that he has known Mr. Gregory since he was a student in high school and said he "was a basketball junky." He said that his father was the varsity girls basketball coach in Whiting and was now at Wheeler. Ryan knows how to "build a program from the ground up." He has been an assistant coach to his father and was the head coach at River Forest last year. Dr.

Buffington told Mr. Gregory that she had heard good things about him. Terry Butler mentioned seeing him years ago, “as a little guy” at the Hobart Girls Softball Field with his dad. Congratulations were extended to him. Mr. Gregory thanked the Board for the coaching opportunity and said he was “really excited to get going.”

The approved personnel items are as follows:

Supplemental Services Teacher Contracts –

Veterans School @ Mundell, June 10/June 27, 2024, Elementary Summer School: Kelly Bunda, 13 days, \$3,020.88; and Christa Wein, 13 days, \$2,044.06

Retirement Resignation –

Ralph Curtis, Service Center/Maintenance, effective August 1, 2024

Resignations –

Meghan Bakker, Joan Martin School/teacher, effective June 22, 2024

Shaun Doyle, Hobart High School/teacher, effective June 24, 2024

Request for Leave of Absence –

Nathaniel Lacny, Liberty School/teacher, FMLA, effective on or about October 14 until on or about November 15, 2024, (60 days maximum)

Adjusted Teacher Contracts – 2023-2024 –

Hobart High School, July 1, 2023/June 30, 2024: Scott Buhmann, JROTC, 260 days, \$113,665.96; and Brian Carroll, JROTC, 260 days, \$87,931.76

Teacher Contracts – 2024-2025 –

Hobart High School, July 1, 2024/June 30, 2025: Scott Buhmann, JROTC, 260 days, \$113,665.96; and Brian Carroll, JROTC, 260 days, \$87,931.76

Sharon Castellanos, Veterans @ Mundell/teacher, August 12, 2024/June 4, 2025, 184 days, \$61,359.00

Extra Duty Contract –

Hobart High School, October 21, 2024/March 1, 2025: Ryan Gregory, varsity girls basketball, \$7,030.00

Seasonal Employees –

Service Center/Buildings & Grounds:

Tristin Blowers, grounds helper, effective June 17, 2024, \$15.00 per hour until August 16, 2024; then return to being a substitute custodian at \$13.00 per hour

Jacob Lewis, grounds helper, effective June 17, 2024, \$15.00 per hour

Greg Sierra, summer grounds/custodial helper, effective July 1, 2024, \$15.00 per hour

Salary Adjustment –

Nathan Solich, Service Center/Technology Department, \$2,500.00 for the completion of Security+ certification in December, 2023, effective January 1, 2024

INTRODUCTION: 2024-2025 Hobart High School Student Board Representatives: Dr. Peggy Buffington welcomed and introduced Kayla Davis and Isis Fleming, the Board's new Hobart High School student representatives for the coming year. She said they are well known in Northwest Indiana, the state, and Innovate WithIN. They won the state competition two years ago with their company, Patchables. Dr. Buffington said, as ninth graders, they made it through local and regional competition and were the first-place winners at the state Innovate WithIN competition. She noted, “They have lofty goals” and “high expectations” for themselves and want to “impact” and “to change the world.” She said they are outstanding students and participate in extracurricular activities at the high school, and both of them were recognized as 2023 Women on the Rise sponsored by PNW’s Leadership Institute and Society of Innovators. Dr. Buffington noted that last year’s student representatives were recognized for their service at the last Board meeting. The student representatives serve for one year and are “the voice of our students.” They can participate in discussions of the Board, but they are not allowed to vote. Dr. Buffington said their company supported and donated to the Hobart Humane Society. Kayla indicated that from some of their company’s profits would be used to help the homeless by building homeless communities. Isis stated her commitment “with helping to make a difference.”

Dr. Buffington turned the meeting over to Sandi Hillan and Karen Robbins because they served on the interview committee. Mrs. Hillan congratulated them and noted they did a great job with their interviews, and she was looking forward to seeing what they do in the coming school year. Karen Robbins mentioned that she had worked with them before and commented they were “going places.” Other Board members welcomed them to the Board. It was noted that everyone knows they are busy with other activities, but they should just continue what they are doing to make a difference.

RECOMMENDATION: Student Textbook/Program Costs and Curricular Fees, 2024-2025:

Superintendent Peggy Buffington highlighted the 2024-2025 School City of Hobart Curriculum & Digital Curriculum Fees. She extended her thanks and appreciation to Tim Krieg, Director of Secondary Curriculum, for compiling the information and noted that Lori Anderson, Director of Elementary Education, and Chris King, Director of Technology, assisted in providing the costs for their areas. Dr. Buffington noted that last year, these costs were established after many hours of making cuts to existing fees to cover the expenditures needed with the state's underfunded revenue for "free textbooks." The state's effort to cover costs remains at approximately \$151.88 per student and still is not enough to cover all of the curricular needs. This was very evident last year at the high school level and remains so again this coming school year. This is also true for the middle school. Dr. Buffington said she would be asking the Board to adopt the fees for the 2024-2025 school year associated with this report so that it could be filed with the state when the appropriate data was requested by the Indiana Department of Education.

Dr. Buffington then explained that the report was divided into three areas, and those areas were for Elementary Schools, Hobart Middle School, and Hobart High School, as well as totals for the school district, and the information is as follows:

- Per HEA 1001, according to IC 20-18-2-2-2.7, each student in Indiana Public Schools is allocated approximately \$151.88. This funding is uniformly distributed across all students. The School City of Hobart reports an enrollment of 3,889 students for this allocation.
- The report showed the following:
 - Total Estimated Allocated Amounts per Enrollment
 - Elementary – \$257,588.48
 - Hobart Middle School – \$133,046.88
 - Hobart High School – \$200,025.96
 - Total Projected Costs
 - Elementary – \$235,269.73
 - Hobart Middle School – \$162,490.18
 - Hobart High School – \$271,835.88
 - The Total Difference (Estimated Allocation v. Projected Cost)
 - Elementary – \$22,318.75
 - Hobart Middle School – **-\$29,443.30 (in the red)**
 - Hobart High School – **-\$71,809.92 (in the red)**
 - SCOH Total for Grades K-12 (Estimated Allocation, per K-12 Enrollment – \$590,661.32
 - SCOH Total for Grades K-12 (Projected Costs – \$669,595.79
 - SCOH Difference for Grades k-12 (Estimated Allocation v. Projected Costs) – **-\$78,934.47 (in the red)**

Additionally, the Curricular Materials & Digital Curriculum Fees costs for 2024-2025 were broken down by school area (elementary, middle school, and high school) and then by grade/subject/department.

Dr. Buffington noted the elementary costs were in the green but said this probably would not be the case next year because ESSER funds were used for a six-year adoption and new laptop computers. However, there is a possibility that an adjustment may have to be made if the adoption cannot be funded with ESSER funds. She indicated that the Early College classes and the materials that go along with the classes at the high school are expensive, but she noted that since 2018 through this past school year 47,609 college credits were earned, and there was a total savings of \$7,517,451.18 for students and their families. She indicated that the report will not be turned into the state until sometime this fall. By that time, enrollment and ADM will be finalized for the 2024-2025 school year, and when the finalized report is sent to the state, it will be shared with the Board, as it was done last year.

Dr. Buffington asked the Board to adopt the fees associated with the 2024-2025 School City of Hobart Curriculum & Digital Curriculum Fees that will be filed with the Indiana Department of Education.

Stuart Schultz moved that the Board adopt the fees for the 2024-2025 school year associated with the report to be filed with the Indiana Department of Education. Donald Rogers seconded.

In the discussion, it was noted that the funds that are in excess of the state allocation would be taken from the Education Fund, and that might affect funds available for the Operations Fund. She noted that Dr. Krieg makes every effort to use digital textbooks at the secondary level and mentioned that Cengage was one of those companies. Mr. Butler was concerned that the state will soon be telling school districts, which textbooks/curricular programs the school districts can use. Mrs. Hillan noted this was already being done with the "Science of Reading."

There was lengthy discussion about the new high school diplomas. Dr. Buffington then expressed her concerns and felt that the diplomas were being "watered down." Because of the proposed changes, she felt students would take "the path of least of resistance." She outlined the Early College and career certifications that are available

here in our district. She mentioned that the colleges were not in favor of the proposed changes and said that they would probably have to remediate many students because they will not be prepared. Sandi Hillan said that students were being asked decisions at a critical time in their development. Dr. Buffington noted that even employers area confused about what's to be done with work-based learning and internships. She commented that there are three Buckets that need to be completed for graduation, and she felt that work-based learning was in the wrong bucket and should be removed from Bucket 2 and moved to Bucket 3. Terry Butler mentioned that where his daughter teaches, they were not able to find enough businesses that would commit to doing work-based learning/internships. Kayla Davis mentioned that her family moved to Hobart for the opportunities offered here that were not available where she had lived. She thought that some families would transfer their children to private schools, and students without parental guidance would choose the easiest way to graduate. Dr. Buffington asked everyone to make their comments known by the end of July through the website at the Indiana Department of Education.

Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT: Indiana Department of Education High Ability Program Grant:

Dr. Peggy Buffington presented information regarding the Indiana Department of Education grant award for the High Ability Program. The application was submitted by Dr. Tim Krieg, Director of Secondary Curriculum, and the total grant award was \$46,410.00. Last year's grant was \$31,089.00. Dr. Buffington was glad that the grant award was larger than last year, and she explained that the grant funds were used towards the salary of the district's math coach at the elementary level. The math coach works to raise student test scores. Dr. Buffington thanked Dr. Krieg for completing the application for the district.

Dr. Buffington requested Board action.

Karen Robbins moved that the Board accept the Indiana Department of Education High Ability Program Grant, as presented, and authorize the superintendent execute any necessary documents for the grant. Rikki Guthrie seconded.

In the discussion, the Board thanked Dr. Krieg for his work on the grant.

Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

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

- **REPORT: Teacher Evaluation Category Aggregate Report** – The aggregate of teacher evaluations categories listed by school and the school district was included with the electronic meeting information. Dr. Buffington indicated that the district has 98% Highly Effective and 4% Effective teachers in the school district. There are no teachers in Needs Improvement or Ineffective categories. She noted that teacher evaluations have four different domains plus their individual portfolios, which are 20% of their evaluation. Sandi Hillan commented that evaluations are done throughout the school year and requires the dedicated commitment of administrators and teachers, and she mentioned that student scores were also factored into the overall evaluation score. In addition, Dr. Buffington mentioned that parents need to be informed if their child is in a teacher's class who is in the Needs Improvement or Ineffective categories. She said the district has many staff members working hard for our students.
- **Donation from the Keehn children** – Karen Robbins acknowledged a donation for the Hobart Food Pantry in the amount of \$514.00 and commented the amount was almost double what the sister-brother team donated last year from sales and donations at their lemonade stand. Dr. Buffington told Abby that she was nominated for a BEOP award and asked if she had received it, and she said she had. Dr. Buffington told her she was very proud of her and her brother and their hard work with their lemonade stand. She told her that she would probably end up being a student representative at the high school and working on big fundraising drives. Abby told everyone that she likes to help people. Dr. Buffington thanked her for having a big heart for others, said she was a role model for other students to emulate, and thanked her for coming to the meeting.

COMMENTS: From the administration, Peggy Buffington thanked Chris King for all of the work he does with end-of-the-year state reports and his dedication and hard work in getting them done. In addition, technology rolled over students for the coming school year. Lastly, she thanked him for taking all of her phone calls during this time. She thanked Pat Schoon for the amazing relationship they have and for keeping her organized, and she commented that she had been driving Beth Black crazy, as well, getting ready for retreat. She said the district has hard working staff already working “to get school started.” She told the Board that she gave the directors, office staff, custodians, food services, and technology employees an extra day off for the upcoming holiday as a thank you for getting ready for upcoming school year. Chris King welcomed the new high school representatives on the Board and said he was looking forward hearing from them throughout the year. He hoped everyone has “a great and safe 4th of July.” Bill Longer concurred with Chris King's comments.

From the Board, Don Rogers welcomed the new student representatives to the Board. Karen Robbins was looking forward to working with the new student representatives, and she wished everyone “a happy 4th of July.” Stu Schultz welcomed the new student representatives and thanked Dr. Buffington and her administrative team for everything they do “to make everything happen.” Kayla Davis, HHS student representative, was happy to be serving on the Board and thanked them. Isis Fleming, HHS student representative, thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve, was excited about the coming school year, was happy to be serving on the Board, and was grateful for the opportunity. Sandi Hillan welcomed the student representatives and wished everyone “a happy 4th of July.” Rikki Guthrie welcomed the student representatives and told them the year would go by quickly, and she thanked Dr. Buffington and her team for “getting ready for the next school year.” She hoped everyone would enjoy their 4th of July with family and friends. Terry Butler inquired about a good spot to see the parade because he has visiting grandchildren who were looking for candy. Karen Robbins said they could join her group and Brad Keehn mentioned where his family would be. Jokingly, Don Rogers volunteered his yard but noted the parade does not go by his house.

There were no comments from the audience.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Board, President Butler adjourned the meeting around 7:52 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: The next regular session meeting is July 18, 2024.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

By _____
Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

By _____
Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

Submitted for Approval: July 18, 2024