

**SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
REGULAR SESSION MEETING
March 21, 2024**

The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on March 21, 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
Sandra J. Hillan
Frank Porras
Karen J. Robbins
Donald H. Rogers
Stuart B. Schultz
Madelyn Burton, HHS student representative
Angelina Zepeda, HHS student representative

Administrators Present:

Peggy Buffington
Christopher N. King

Administrators Absent:

Bob Glover
William J. Longer
Jonathan Mock
Tim Krieg

Board Member Absent:

Rikki A. Guthrie

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
Audrey Amsler, music teacher at Veterans School at Mundell
Around 20 choir students from Veterans School at Mundell
Cristina James, parent and Dean of Students at Veterans School at Mundell
DeAnn Jennette, Brickies from the Start Program
Lauren Teykl, Band Director at the middle and high schools
Brendan Dinkins, Band Director at the high school
Andrew Rapata, Orchestra Director at the middle and high schools
Two high school music students
Many unidentified families and friends of the students performing at the meeting

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Frank Porras moved that the Board approve the regular session minutes of March 7, 2024. Karen Robbins seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: In the absence of Bob Glover, Business Manager, Dr. Buffington asked the student representatives to read the vouchers.

► **Voucher Summary for March 21, 2024** - Madelyn Burton and Angelina Zepeda, HHS student representatives, shared the reading of the Voucher Summary with Madelyn reading the first portion and Angelina reading the last portion, as follows:

School Education \$1,257,491.05
Exempt Operating – Post 2009 \$157,354.29
School Operations \$854,303.45
Construction 0701 \$55,565.27
School Lunch \$213,361.06
Curricular Materials \$5,792.82
Self-Insurance Fund \$454,029.77
Building Brickies \$1,705.63
SCOH Educational Foundation \$3,071.95
SAFE Supporting Addiction Free \$7,800.00
Title II Part A FY 2024 \$7,822.62
Explore, Engage, Experience \$10,727.04
ESSER III \$57,023.32

Clearing Accounts \$665,218.64
Self-Insurance Clearing \$145,209.47
Clearing/Flexible Benefits AF \$52,154.26
Clearing/Ins. Account \$14,581.41
Competitive Science of Reading \$2,500.00
Literacy Achievement Grant \$2,896.07
Construction 0700 \$27,907.06
SCOH Ed Fdn Legacy Grants \$1,620.00
Eat, Play & Learn Project \$85.00
Mindful Parent Connect Program \$365.00
High Ability \$1,839.00
Medicaid Reimbursement Federal \$1,048.60
Credit Card Fee Clearing \$2,838.46

for a total of \$4,004,311.24. The February payroll distribution by Dawn Powers, the school corporation's treasurer, was \$1,961,440.64.

Stuart Schultz moved and Donald Rogers seconded that the Board approve payment of the vouchers for March 21, 2024. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

In addition, the Board received copies of the following monthly budget reports, dated February 29, 2024, in their electronic meeting 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 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, Superintendent Peggy Buffington indicated the Personnel Report and Personnel Report Addendum were included in the electronic meeting packet for the Board's consideration.

Dr. Buffington recommended approval and requested Board action.

Sandra Hillan moved that the Board approve the Personnel Reports as presented. Stuart Schultz seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

The approved personnel items are as follows:

Correction to Personnel Report Addendum – March 7, 2024 –

Food Services Department – Adjustments of position, hours, and/or pay rate – Correct the pay rate for Jennifer Drangmeister from \$12.67 per hour to \$14.25 per hour

Contracts for Extracurricular Services –

Michael Black, Hobart High School/assistant boys track, February 12/June 1, 2024, \$4,236.00

Katrina Lucas Hobart High School/assistant girls softball, March 4/June 8, 2024, \$3,322.00

Contracts for Extracurricular Services (Club Duties) –

Joan Martin School, August 14, 2023/May 31, 2024: Jamie Edwards, 5th grade choir-spring, \$270.00; and Melissa Oakes, 3rd grade Iread tutor, \$108.00

Liberty School, August 14, 2023/May 31, 2024: Susan Moore, IREAD prep, \$216.00; Emily Palm, IREAD prep, \$216.00; Jennifer Scheldberg, IREAD prep, \$108.00; and Lesley Mancilla, Girls on the Run, \$756.00

Veterans School @ Mundell, August 14, 2023/May 31, 2024: Sherry Finnerty, Brickie Leaders, \$243.00; Dominique Shirey, Brickie Leaders, \$243.00; and Ellie Welsch, 5th grade iLearn, \$405.00

Hobart Middle School, August 14, 2023/May 31, 2024: Matthew Frankowski, fishing, \$810.00; Jane Griffith, robotics, \$810.00; Colin May, basketball, \$540.00; Randal Griffith, fishing, \$810.00; and Katie Rinas, diving, \$297.00

Hobart High School, August 14, 2023/May31, 2024: Tiffany Parrish, chess, \$675.00

Homebound Teaching Contracts –

March 4/April 10, 2024: Christina Puzzilla, reading, writing, and math, two hours per week, \$51.27 per hour

March 11/May 31, 2024: Kristina Walton, math, one hour per week, and three hours for ILEARN testing, \$60.19 per hour

March 12/April 5, 2024: Trevor Howard, ELA and math, two hours per week and six hours total for ILEARN testing, \$61.48 per hour

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

Shanna Terek, Hobart Middle School, from Class I custodian to Class IV custodian, and pay rate adjusted to \$19.24 per hour, effective March 18, 2024

Sharon Wrenn, Hobart Middle School, from Class II custodian to Class I custodian, and pay rate adjusted to \$16.38 per hour, effective March 18, 2024

Emily Rosenbaum, Service Center, from courier position to grounds assistant, and pay rate remains the same at \$16.64 per hour, effective April 8, 2024

Extra Duty Contracts –

Hobart High School, March 11/June 8, 2024: Kenny Walsh, varsity girls tennis, \$3,738.00; and Cade Brumley, JV girls tennis, \$2,084.00

Hobart High School, February 12/May 31, 2024: Cecelia Castillo, assistant varsity girls track, \$3,453.00

Extracurricular Club Duty Contracts –

Liberty School, 2023-2024 School Year: Kirsten Cooper, Girls on the Run, \$756.99

Veterans School @ Mundell, 2023-2024 School Year: Nicole Zybak, Brickie Leaders, \$243.00; Nicole Zybak, Girls on the Run, \$1,350.00; Nicole Zybak, volleyball, \$108.00; and Suzanne Tucker, STEM, 2nd & 3rd graders, \$270.00

Resignation –

Jeffrey Mitchell, Service Center/Transportation Department, school bus driver, effective March 25, 2024

Request for Leave of Absence –

Judy Connell, Liberty School, aide-student supervisor, extension of unpaid medical leave, effective March 14/May 31, 2024

Teachers Contract Adjustment(s) 2023-2024 –

Christopher Wells, Hobart Middle School, salary adjusted for a prep period purchase modification, \$81,891.77

PRESENTATIONS: March is Music in Our Schools Month: Dr. Peggy Buffington welcomed Audrey Amsler and her choir students from Veterans School and Lauren Teykl, Brandon Dinkins, and Andrew Rapata and two high school music students, as well as all of the family/friends of those performing at the meeting. She indicated that March is Music in Our Schools Month and that the Board passed a resolution at their last meeting commemorating the month.

Lauren Teykl, Band Director at the middle and high schools, spoke about the successes of the band and orchestra students at ISSMA (Indiana State School Music Association) at the middle school and high school levels, and she introduced Andrew Rapata, the new Orchestra Director at the high school and middle school, and Brandon Dinkins, Band Director at the high school. Dr. Buffington inquired about the drumline and was told that last year they had 17 students. It was noted Josh Gilbert and Felix Ortiz would be performing musical numbers. Josh performed on the marimba and Felix on the violin. It should be noted that Josh performed with four mallets, and Felix performed the same musical selection he did at the state ISSMA competition where he received a perfect score. They both did an outstanding job.

Audrey Amsler, music teacher at Veterans, was introduced, and her choir students performed two songs for the Board and audience. These students had an outstanding performance. An invitation was extended to everyone to attend the first ever Elementary Music Festival at the Hobart Middle School at 3:00 pm on April 27. Each elementary school will be participating in the program.

Dr. Buffington noted that the school district has a wonderful music program and the performances this evening were just a small sample of it. The program begins at the elementary schools, continues with a few more options at the middle school, and caps off at the high school with more options in the performing arts. She noted that at a recent the high school choir concert, songs from *The Phantom of the Opera*, were performed, and the light show that accompanied the performance was wonderful. She also noted that a year or so ago a beginning guitar student performed for the Board, and his performance was very soothing and stress relieving. On behalf of the Board and Dr. Buffington, Dr. Buffington and Madelyn Burton and Angelina Zepeda, student representatives, presented certificates of recognition to the students for their performances. The Board thanked the students for their excellent and outstanding performances.

President Terry Butler thanked all of the families for coming to the meeting and supporting their children. He invited the audience to stay for the rest of the meeting, but he excused anyone who needed to leave. Bradley Keehn and DeAnn Jennette remained in the audience

RESOLUTION: The Week of the Young Child: Superintendent Peggy Buffington presented Resolution No. 2024-6 for the Board's consideration. The resolution commemorates the Ready, Set, Go Association and the

School City of Hobart, as well as other organizations, in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in celebrating the Week of the Young Child, April 6-12, 2024. Dr. Buffington said the resolution covers the district's zero to kindergarten program, Brickies from the Start.

President Terry Butler noted that in the absence of Attorney William Longer and his counsel, they would proceed with the resolution, as they have done in the past. He asked the two audience members if it was okay for the Secretary to only read the title of the resolution. Both agreed that reading the title was sufficient.

Secretary Sandra Hillan read the title of the resolution aloud, as follows:

Resolution No. 2024-6

Week of the Young Child

President Butler called for a motion and a roll call vote.

Karen Robbins moved that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2024-6 commemorating the Week of the Young Child. Frank Porras seconded. Vote on motion: Secretary Sandra Hillan called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, and Butler. Absent – Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

In the discussion, Dr. Buffington welcomed DeAnn Jennette, Coordinator of the Brickies from the Start program, formally known as Building Brickies. She noted that the program does a wonderful job and mentioned that it was self-supporting with no funding from the state. She said the district believes in and knows the importance of early childhood education, pre-school, and full-day kindergarten. Dr. Buffington turned the meeting over to Mrs. Jennette.

DeAnn Jennette thanked the Board for their support of the Week of the Young Child, and she mentioned that she really enjoyed the musical presentations because she has a minor in music. She passed out a handout on the Brickies from the Start Program. Some of the highlights her presentation are as follows:

- Returns to a Unit Dollar Invested are Highest in Earliest Years
 - \$1.00 investment in early childhood yields a \$16.00 return
 - Increased high school graduation, college matriculation, and economic development & personal income.
 - Decreased special education/remediation, dependence on social welfare, crime-related costs and incarceration rates.
- Indiana Stats as of 2023
 - 501,432 children birth through age five
 - 19% of children birth through age five live in poverty
 - 65% of children birth through age five with all available parents in the workforce
 - Indiana ranks 45th in investment in early childhood education
 - 40.5% of 3-4 year olds are enrolled in pre-K
- Brickie from the Start Data from 2023-2024
 - Playroom attendance: 1,232
 - Monthly Event attendance: 551
 - Children screened – 74
 - 20/74 showed potential delays
 - 12/20 referred to early intervention
 - 8/20 receiving support from Parent Educator and being monitored
- 59 families received a total of 172 personal visits for parent education, referrals, and support.
- 11 families participated in the Mindful Parents/Mothers and Babies program, and they saw 65% decrease in depression and anxiety symptoms.
- 59 families referred for 75 different critical community resources to support on-going needs.
- 6 local preschools are verified Ready, Set, Go members.

Mrs. Jennette highlighted the activities they were doing during the Week of the Young Child, as follows:

- City-wide One Book, *Behind the Little Red Door* at the library, preschools and daycare centers, as one collaborative event
- April 3rd – City Council Proclamation and presentation to Brickies from the Start
- April 8th – Bubble Kick-off at the Early Learning Center with Dr. Buffington and Mayor Huddleston
- April 10th – Enjoy an adventure behind the “Little Red Door” at the Early Learning Center with many early childhood educators for all over the city.

During the presentation, it was noted that even though there is no state funding for early childhood education, the Indiana Department of Education refers other school districts wanting to start a program to Hobart to see how it

is done here. Mrs. Jennette highlighted some of the aspects of the program and mentioned that after COVID, many families did not want them to make home visitations so they adapted to having their monthly group sessions that are working out very well. Karen Robbins noted that the School City of Hobart Educational Foundation has supported this program from the beginning.

The Board thanked Mrs. Jennette for her presentation and her work with Brickies from the Start. She was excused from the meeting.

Resolution No. 2024-6 as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted is as follows:

Resolution No. 2024-6

Week of the Young Child

Whereas, the Ready, Set, Go Association and the School City of Hobart, as well as other organizations, in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children, are celebrating the *Week of the Young Child*, April 6-12, 2024; and

Whereas, these organizations are working to improve early learning opportunities, including early literacy programs, that can provide a foundation of learning for children in Hobart, Indiana; and

Whereas, this is a week to celebrate early learning, young children, their teachers, their families, and others who make a difference in the lives of young children in Hobart, Indiana, and deserve thanks and recognition; and

Whereas, public policies that support early learning for all young children are crucial to young children's futures;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the week of April 6-12, 2024, be designated as the *Week of the Young Child* in Hobart, Indiana, and

Be It Further Resolved that the Board encourages the community to work to make a good investment in early childhood in Hobart, Indiana.

Dated this 21st day of March, 2024.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART BOARD
OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

By _____
Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

RESOLUTION: Paraprofessional Appreciation Day: Dr. Peggy Buffington presented Resolution No. 2024-7 to recognize Paraprofessional Appreciation Day. The resolution designated April 3, 2024, as Paraprofessional Appreciation Day. President Butler asked Mr. Keehn, audience member, if it was acceptable for the Secretary to read only the title of the resolution, and he responded that it was.

Secretary Sandra Hillan read the title of Resolution No. 2024-7 aloud, as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-7

PARAPROFESSIONAL APPRECIATION DAY

President Butler requested Board action and a roll call vote.

Stuart Schultz moved that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2024-7 recognizing Paraprofessional Appreciation Day. Karen Robbins seconded.

In the discussion, Dr. Buffington indicated that our paraprofessionals were “hardworking, dedicated, and love our children,” and she extended her thanks and appreciation to them. Mrs. Hillan agreed with her and expressed her appreciation for paraprofessionals. She said they were “key to completing the work of the teacher” and had been a help to her.

Vote on motion: Secretary Sandra Hillan called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, and Butler. Absent – Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

Resolution No. 2024-7 as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted is as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-7

PARAPROFESSIONAL APPRECIATION DAY

WHEREAS, paraprofessional educators may be known as paras, instructional assistants, or teacher aides; and

WHEREAS, paraprofessionals perform a variety of teacher-related jobs and assist teachers in their classrooms; and

WHEREAS, paraprofessionals may assist students in completing assignments, work with students on supplemental enrichment activities, either in small groups or one-on-one, often work with students with special needs and disabilities; and supervise students outside the classroom, and

WHEREAS, the first Wednesday in April is Paraprofessional Appreciation Day, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart designates April 3, 2024, as *Paraprofessional Appreciation Day*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the School City of Hobart expresses its deep appreciation to these employees and values the outstanding job that they do on behalf of our students.

DATED this 21st day of March, 2024.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

By _____
Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Wellness Policy: Dr. Peggy Buffington said Board members need to acknowledge that they had received and reviewed a copy of the Wellness Policy each year. The wellness policy was included with the electronic meeting information for their review.

Dr. Buffington requested Board action.

Sandra Hillan moved that the Board acknowledges that the Board received and reviewed the district's Wellness Policy. Frank Porras seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

RESOLUTION: Ratification of Selection of Appraisers: In the absence of Attorney William J. Longer, President Terry Butler presented Resolution No. 2024-8 for the Board's consideration. The resolution would ratify and confirm action by the Superintendent in the selection of two appraisers, Jeff Vale and Randall Raynor, to appraise property, and authorized payment to them for their services. President Butler asked Mr. Keehn if it was okay with him that only the title of the resolution be read, and he agreed that it was.

Secretary Sandra Hillan read the title of Resolution No. 2024-8 aloud, as follows:

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
RESOLUTION NO. 2024-8

A Resolution Confirming the Selection
of Appraisers for Real Estate

President Butler requested Board action and a roll call vote.

Karen Robbins moved and Donald Rogers seconded that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2024-8, as presented. Vote on motion: Secretary Sandra Hillan called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, and Butler. Absent – Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

Resolution No. 2024-8 as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted is as follows:

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
RESOLUTION NO. 2024-8

A Resolution Confirming the Selection
of Appraisers for Real Estate

Whereas, the Board of School Trustees authorized the Superintendent to appoint appraisers for property in which it has an interest; and

Whereas, the Superintendent, with advice of the Board Attorney selected Jeff Vale and Randall Raynor, two qualified appraisers, to appraise said property; and

Whereas, the Board wishes to finally approve the appraisers selected, and to authorize payment for their services;

Now Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the action of the Superintendent in selecting appraisers for real estate is hereby ratified and confirmed, and payment for said services upon completion is hereby authorized.

Dated this 21st day of March, 2024.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

By: _____
Terry D. Butler, President

Attest:

Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

TABLED AGENDA ITEM FROM MARCH 7, 2024: OVERNIGHT/EXTENDED STUDENT TRIP: HHS Student Trip to Costa Rica: In the absence of Attorney William Longer, President Terry Butler indicated that this agenda item had been tabled at the March 7, 2024, Board meeting. Dr. Buffington forwarded an email from Mr. Longer that explained what needed to be done to do this. President Butler indicated the agenda item was being taken off the table, and he requested Board action to withdraw the motion from the table and rescind the original motion, which is as follows:

Original motion: Rikki Guthrie moved that the Board approve the extended trip request, as presented, and the Superintendent is authorized to cancel the trip at a later date if travel alerts/warnings and/or health alerts are issued by the US government. Frank Porras seconded.

Motion to rescind: Stuart Schultz moved to withdraw the agenda item and rescind the original motion. Frank Porras seconded.

President Butler requested a roll call vote.

Vote on motion: Secretary Sandra Hillan called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, and Butler. Absent: Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

Madelyn Burton asked what would happen if the Board found out their action was not correct, and President Butler indicated they would “redo it.”

OVERNIGHT/EXTENDED STUDENT TRIP: HHS Student Trip to Spain: Dr. Peggy Buffington, presented a trip request from Guillermina Freytes for high school Spanish students enrolled in Spanish 3 and 4 during the 2024-2025 school year to travel to Spain. The requested travel dates are June 8-15, 2025, and the students would be visiting Barcelona and Madrid. It would be an eight-day trip, and a tentative itinerary was included with the electronic meeting information. There would be up to 25 students traveling, and they are required to have a 3.0 GPA, have minimal tardies and absences, and no suspensions at the high school. The students will have practical use of the Spanish language as they travel in Spain learning about their culture, and history. Since the trip would take place in the summer of 2025, students would not miss any school work, and the students would present to classes the following school year. Mrs. Freytes would be in charge with Heidi Polizotto, high school teacher, and possibly other teachers in their department or other adults being chaperones, if needed. The group would be staying in hotels with breakfasts and dinners provided, but students would need to buy their own lunches/snacks. Mrs. Freytes is working with EF Educational Tours, and the estimated cost of the trip is \$4,109.00 for students and \$4,749.00 for adults. Students would be responsible for paying for the trip, and they have access to their unique and customized fundraising page through EF/Educational Tours. The cost of the trip does not change based on the number of students traveling.

Sandra Hillan moved that the Board approve the extended trip request, as presented, and the Superintendent is authorized to cancel the trip at a later date if travel alerts/warnings and/or health alerts are issued by the US government. Donald Rogers seconded.

In the discussion, Don Rogers inquired about the increased cost for this trip, and Dr. Buffington indicated that the students were not concerned about that aspect. She thought they were more excited about going to Spain than to Costa Rica. Terry Butler commented that if the French students wanted to travel, Quebec would be much closer than going to France. Dr. Buffington indicated that since world language teachers are getting scarce, students are encouraged to take Spanish. In addition, she mentioned that sign language was now being counted as a language at some schools.

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

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

- School Information – weekly agendas from all schools, except the middle school, and the weekly BricksCenter newsletter from the high school athletic department. Dr. Buffington indicated the Board could review the information at their leisure.
- Upcoming Activities/Events – the latest list of upcoming activities/events. Dr. Buffington highlighted the following upcoming activities/events, as follows:

March 25-29 – Spring Break

April 3 – Paraprofessionals Recognition Day

April 6 – 12 – Week of the Young Child

April 8 – Kindergarten Kickoff @ the Early Learning Center, 6-7:15 pm

April 8 – 12 – Kindergarten Registration online @www.hobart.k12.in.us/kindergarten

April 10 – Brickie Makers & Innovators Showcase, HHS Field House, 6-8:00 pm

April 15 – May 10 – ILEARN Test Window, 3rd – 8th grades

All students will complete English/LA and math testing. In addition, 4th and 6th grades will have a science assessment, and 5th grades will complete a social studies assessment.

Dr. Buffington commented about the state's annual assessment testing. She noted that the assessment practices keep changing the standards and the test's format and was why the results are what they are. She cited some test scores and percentages. The testing has become stressful for the elementary students, and this year especially for those third graders who do not pass I-READ. The state was "using children as pawns," and it's frustrating for staff and disappointing when their students don't meet the state's benchmark. Dr. Buffington commented that the district has other assessments that show that our students have shown growth in their learning.

COMMENTS: From the administration, Peggy Buffington said tonight's musical performances were "just fabulous." She mentioned that last evening at the high school, she attended the choir's performance that included songs from *The Phantom of the Opera* and said it was "very beautiful." Ron Seeley, a Hobart graduate, had a friend make lighting for the stage, and it was synchronized with the music. She said the senior citizens in attendance thought it was a stunning performance. Dr. Buffington said that the Hobart University Parent Night last week went very well, and some of the parents suggested that Madalyn Burton and Angelina Zepeda be included as presenters at the Freshman Orientation Program coming up after spring break. Even though Dr. Buffington and Danielle Adams do a great job, the parents thought the student representatives could speak about the benefits they had received from Hobart University and thought their children would take away more hearing about the high school experience from them. Both of the student representatives agreed to be part of the program, and Madalyn said she was also helping out with the clubs. Dr. Buffington thanked Madalyn for tutoring a student. She also noted that Angelina had helped a new student at the beginning of the year and thanked her for doing this. She noted that the student representatives were "amazing ambassadors." She thanked Pat Schoon and Chris King and noted it has been "super busy," but everyone had survived. She also noted that time was going to pass by very quickly after spring break. Chris King enjoyed the musical performances, and complimented the music teachers on their musical performances and how well the young students perform.

From the Board, Frank Porras loved the musical performances and noted that Josh Gilbert, who played the marimba with four mallets was amazing, as was Felix Ortiz on the violin and understood why Felix got that perfect score. Dr. Buffington told the Board the music department receives a small allowance to supplement their instrument program. She said that Kelly Rehlander's husband works for a music company so when they have larger instruments on sale, he makes the band department aware and that was how they were able purchase the marimba. Mr. Porras appreciated the recognition of the district's paraprofessionals on April 3 and commented on their importance in assisting teachers in the classroom. Don Rogers mentioned when he joined the Board, the guidance area needed assistance, but now "it's outstanding." He noted that band and orchestra programs were doing this, as well. Dr. Buffington said Mr. Rapata was the new orchestra director and noted the orchestra

numbers were around 60 students but sign-ups are not known for next year. She did not know whether they would be able to sustain them or not. She noted when the orchestra program was being discussed, the secondary music departments were not interested in adding it because they thought it would diminish the band program. She said that did not happen and said there was “something for everyone.” She noted that Chad Kollross, a former Board member, was “a big supporter” of the orchestra program when it started. Karen Robbins said this evening’s student performances were “amazing,” as were all of the elementary plays, and she complimented Josh Gilbert’s performance with the four mallets on the marimba. She noted her husband was recuperating from knee surgery that he had earlier in the month. The reason he had the surgery now, which is during her tax season, was he wanted his recuperation to be done so he could attend the Indy 500 in May. Stu Schultz agreed with what everyone had said and concurred that the musical performances were “fantastic.” He hoped everyone enjoys their spring break. Madelyn Burton commented that she was not musically inclined and said that Josh Gilbert’s brother was also a good musician. He told her his brother was phenomenal, and she agreed after hearing his performance this evening. In addition, she said that Felix Ortiz and the elementary choir’s performances were outstanding. Angelina Zepeda also complimented the performances of all of the students. She knew that Reggie Gilbert was a good musician, but his brother, Josh, was phenomenal. She noted that Felix Ortiz’ performance was also great and understood why he received a perfect score at state. She thought the performance of the elementary choir was incredible. Sandi Hillan complimented Audrey Amsler on preparing her students and also noted that her children had been her students. She thought the elementary music teachers prepare their students to learn and enjoy music as they continue their journey to the middle and high schools and thought Hobart’s program was amazing. Mrs. Hillan spoke about the state of Indiana’s annual I-READ testing over the last few years, and how continual changes were having damaging results on students. Now the legislators were possibly going to mandate retention of students who do not pass the test. She noted this was a social stigma for students who “don’t jump over this line.” The state just keeps moving the benchmark. Dr. Buffington agreed with her comments. Terry Butler said the Brickies from the Start program assists more with training parents than their children because first-time parents do not know what to expect. There was discussion about the new legislation pertaining to cell phones at school. She noted that time would tell, but she thought the district’s policy might still be acceptable because the proposed legislation gives teachers the discretion for what they want done in their classrooms. Everyone agreed “It was going to be a nightmare,” and that students were way ahead in figuring out how to maneuver around whatever safeguards that were proposed. Dr. Buffington mentioned that years ago, she and Don Rogers surveyed high school students to see if they had their cell phones with them, even though they were not supposed to have them. They told the students they wanted truthful answers, and no punishment would be involved. Around 99% of the students responded they had their phones with them. It was noted that students today use their phones more for finding information than talking with friends.

From the audience, Bradley Keehn was sorry he missed the choir’s performance of *The Phantom of the Opera* because he is a fan of the play. Dr. Buffington said their montage of songs was wonderful. She said the senior choir students asked Dean Wolff, Director of Choirs, to do this, and he agreed, even though they had done a similar performance not that long ago. Mr. Keehn commented on the student-testing program and said it was important that students have a consistent goal and not keep changing it for them. The students are smart, but they need the goal to remain constant. Mr. Keehn spoke about cell phones at school and noted that wherever you go you see adults and children continually looking at their phones. He said his son has a phone, knows there are rules for its use, and knows there are consequences if he would misuse the phone. Mr. Keehn commented that parents have the responsibility to make sure their children are not accessing inappropriate websites on their phones and/or computers. Dr. Buffington said that many parents are not using the parental controls feature on phones or computers, and because they are not using those controls, some elementary students have accessed and been exposed to inappropriate websites. Chris King noted the districts offers the parental controls at no cost to them. Mrs. Hillan mentioned that she did her internship at the high school back in the day when cell phones were not allowed and said the principals spent most of their days with cell phone issues. She noted the importance that cell phones are used responsibly and as adults, “We have to be models for ourselves.” Mr. Butler said people “are not talking to one another” but are looking at or using their phones.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Board, President Butler adjourned the meeting around 8:47 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: The next regular session meeting is April 4, 2024.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

By _____
Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

By _____
Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

Submitted for Approval: April 4, 2024.