

**SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
REGULAR SESSION MEETING  
March 7, 2024**

The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on March 7, 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  
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  
William J. Longer  
Maggie Kreag  
Jenn Caddick

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 meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Terry Butler, President, called the meeting to order around 7:02 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  
Alisha Gorman, NISEC District Director  
Nicole Luttmann, NISEC Behavior Interventionist at Joan Martin School  
Rachel Evans, NISEC teacher at Joan Martin School  
Rachel Boncela, NISEC teacher at Joan Martin School  
Melissa Oakes, NISEC teacher at Joan Martin School

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Frank Porras moved that the Board approve the executive session and regular session minutes of February 15, 2024. Donald Rogers seconded. Vote on Motion: Aye – Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Abstain – Porras. Motion carried 6-0 in favor with one abstention.

**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, 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. Seconded by Rikki Guthrie. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

The approved personnel items are as follows:

Contracts for Extracurricular Services –  
Hobart Middle School, August 14, 2023/May 31, 2024:  
    Laura Weller, Math Coach-MS., \$757.00  
    Jennifer Young, English Coach-MS, \$757.00  
Hobart High School, August 14, 2024/May 31, 2024:  
    Gregory Crouch, E-Sports HS4, \$3,322.00  
    Guillermina Freytes, Spanish Club, 331.56

Ben Horjus, Academic Competition Coordinator-HS, \$2,691.00; and E-Sports HS2, \$3,322.00  
Christopher King, E-Sports HS1, \$3,322.00  
Katrina Lucas, Math Academic Superbowl HS, \$1,515.00 and Honor Society-HS, \$2,176.00  
One returning contract that was not included with other returning contracts submitted on  
December 7, 2023  
Early Learning Center @ George Earle, August 14, 2023/May 31, 2024:  
Amanda Rosenbaum, System Facilitator – 25%, \$377.25

Contracts for Extracurricular Services (Club Duties) –

Joan Martin School, August 14, 2023/May 31, 2024:  
Jennifer Extin, 3rd Grade Iread tutor, \$108.00  
Kimberly Floyd, 3rd Grade Iread tutor, \$135.00  
Angela Golub, 3rd Grade Iread tutor, \$135.00  
Nicole Leonard, Girls on the Run. \$1,620.00  
Stacey Reardon, 3rd Grade Iread tutor, \$135.00  
Veterans School @ Mundell, August 14, 2023/May 31, 2024:  
Delinda Pierce, 3rd Grade Iread tutor, \$189.00  
Hobart Middle School, August 14, 2023/May 31, 2024:  
Jane Griffith, ELA Homework 2, \$810.00

ECA Resignation –

Eric Schreiber, Hobart High School/assistant track, effective February 15, 2024

Requests for Leave of Absence –

Dennis Leonard, Service Center/school bus driver, medical leave, beginning on February 26 until on  
or about April 5, 2024  
Brooke Paschen, Hobart High School & Administration Office/Director College & Careers, FMLA,  
February 14/May 16, 2024 and medical leave, May 17/June 14, 2024

Homebound Teaching Contracts –

February 5/May 31, 2024: Stephanie Franco, English, two hours per week, \$54.24 per hour; and Jill  
MacDonald, Algebra I, two hours per week, \$74.56 per hour  
February 24/March 23, 2024: Carol Fonner, ELA, math, and ILEARN, two hours per week and  
six hours total for ILEARN testing, \$52.69 per hour  
February 1, 2024/February 1, 2024: Guillermina Freytes, Spanish, one hour to make-up work,  
\$65.41 per hour  
February 12/March 31, 2024: Guillermina Freytes, Spanish, two hours per week, \$65.41 per hour  
February 19/May 31, 2024: Brian Richter, ELA, math and ILEARN, two hours per week and six  
hours total for ILEARN testing, \$56.81 per hour  
February 26/April 1, 2024: Stacey Reardon, ELA/math, two hours per week, \$49.09 per hour  
February 19/May 31, 2024: Heather Phillips, ELA, math and ILEARN, two hours per week and six  
hours total for ILEARN testing, \$66.65 per hour

Resignations –

Ava Allen, Hobart Middle School/pool guard, effective March 8, 2024  
Melissa Catania, Hobart High School/food services, effective February 21, 2024  
Sabrina Fletcher, Veterans School @ Mundell/instructional aide, effective February 20, 2024  
Shari Miller, Hobart High School/food services, effective February 26, 2024  
Elizabeth Neely, Veterans School @ Mundell/instructional aide, effective February 27, 2024  
Melissa Shinneman, Veterans School @ Mundell/instructional aide, effective February 20, 2024  
Michelle Strick, Hobart Middle School/food services, effective March 15, 2024  
George Villareal, Hobart Middle School/custodian, effective May 10, 2024  
David Razo, Hobart Middle School/food services, effective March 5, 2024

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

- Compensation adjustments for Food Services staff for certifications earned with the implementation of Department of Defense Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program by strengthening their skills by earning certification from ServSafe, recognized by the National Restaurant Association, effective February 26, 2024, for the following staff members:
  - Angela Pollock, an additional \$1.25 per hour making her pay rate \$16.50 per hour
  - Kristy Murchek, an additional \$1.00 per hour making her rate \$14.85 per hour
  - Michelle Smith, Jennifer Brum, Anna Panousopoulos, Hayley Bradford, Brittany Robison, Jennifer Drangmeister, Sara Ford, Jennifer Kaiser, and Nikita Martin, an additional \$1.58 per hour making their pay rates \$14.25 per hour
- Rehire of Taylor Chitwood, Hobart Middle School/Food Services – dining room attendant, \$12.67 per hour, effective February 28, 2024
- Carrisa Aspros transferred to Veterans School from the high school, hours adjusted to 5.5 from 3.5, and hourly rate remains the same, \$12.67, effective February 26, 2024

- Jennifer Drangmeister, transferred to new position of cashier at Hobart High School, hours reduced to 3.5 from 4, hourly rate remains the same, \$14.25 per hour, effective March 4, 2024

Service Agreements –

Hobart High School:

August 16, 2023/May 31, 2024: Sharon Autterson, Special Education Department Chair, \$1,465.00

November 13, 2023/May 31, 2024: Julia Snoreck, Prep Period Co-Teach, English 10, \$3,039.36

Extracurricular Club Duty Contracts –

Joan Martin School/2023-2024 School Year:

Elizabeth Heim, Dodgeball, \$135.00

Jennifer MacDonald, Girls on the Run, \$1,620.00

April Young, Dodgeball, \$135.00

April Young, Girls on the Run, \$1,620.00

Extra Duty Contracts –

Hobart High School, November, 2023, fall play:

Lindsay Foerg, assistant director, \$1,476.00; and Noelani Howland, vocal director, \$515.00

Hobart High School, March 11/June 12, 2024, boys golf:

Gary Roach, varsity, \$2,933.00; and Devon Key, junior varsity, \$984.00

Hobart High School, March 4/June 8, 2024, softball:

Amaya Hostetler, junior varsity, \$3,200.00

Hobart High School, March 4/June 1, 2024, unified track:

Kriste Bell, \$3,061.00; Kelly Butler, \$3,061.00, and Jackie Keefe, \$3,061.00

Hobart High School, February 26/May 25, 2024, boys volleyball:

Jason Snyder, junior varsity, \$3,664.00

New Employees –

Monica Gonzales, Joan Martin School, food services, effective February 29, 2024, \$12.67 per hour

Sara Lindsay, Early Learning Center @ George Earle/food services–elementary manager, effective February 15, 2024, \$16.50 per hour

Aaron Hall, Service Center/Transportation Department, school bus trainee/driver, effective March 12, 2024, \$17.35 per hour; and upon completion of CDL, \$21.14 per hour

Teachers Contract Adjustment(s) 2023-2024 –

Nanelle Hairston, Hobart Middle School, prep period compensation of \$4,359.34 for quarters 3 and 4//Total contract salary \$60,210.34

Crystal Kistler, Hobart Middle School, prep period compensation of \$2,872.54 for quarter 3//Total contract salary \$80,929.54

Eric Schreiber, Jr., Hobart High School/Early College Dual Credit supplemental amount of \$5,000.00 beginning second semester//Total contract salary \$65,293.00

**RESOLUTION AND PRESENTATION: March is Disabilities Awareness Month and Joan Martin Administrators/Staff Presentation:** Superintendent Peggy Buffington welcomed Principal Maggie Kreag and Dean of Students Jenn Caddick and some NISEC (Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative) special education staff members from Joan Martin School to the meeting. It was noted that the Board would consider Resolution No. 2024-4 recognizing March as Disabilities Awareness Month before their presentation.

President Butler asked Secretary Sandra Hillan to read the resolution aloud, and she did so, as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-4

DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed March as National Disabilities Awareness Month on February 26, 1987, and

WHEREAS, the proclamation called for people to provide understanding, encouragement, and opportunities to help persons with disabilities to lead productive, and fulfilling lives, and

WHEREAS, everyone wants and deserves to enjoy life, feel productive and secure, and

WHEREAS, in the month of March extra steps are taken to raise awareness about the supports and rights of the people with disabilities and to celebrate their contributions to our communities and society as a whole.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart designates the month of March as *Disabilities Awareness Month*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the School City of Hobart encourages all individuals, agencies, and organizations to be supportive of those with disabilities and encourages them to observe the month of March with appropriate observances and activities directed toward increasing public awareness of the contributions and the potential of those with disabilities.

DATED this 7th day of March, 2024.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART  
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

Rikki Guthrie moved that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2024-4, March is Disabilities Awareness Month, as presented. Seconded by Stuart Schultz. Vote on motion: Secretary Sandra Hillan called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

Dr. Buffington turned the meeting over to Maggie Kreag and Jenn Caddick for their presentation and assisting them with the presentation were Nicole Luttman, Rachel Evans, Rachel Boncela, and Melissa Oakes. Alisha Gorman, NISEC District Director, was present in support of their presentation. It was noted that the special education program was expanded at Joan Martin School, and the school now houses four self-contained classrooms for our students, as well as for students from Lake Station and River Forest at the elementary level. The four rooms are the ASD rooms for grades K-5; Life Skills 1 grades K-2; Life Skills 2 grades 3-6; and the SEL/Emotional Disabilities room grades K-5. All of these rooms are staffed with a classroom teacher, behavior interventionist, and paraprofessionals to support the students. They work together to create inclusion opportunities for the special needs students with their peers in the General Education setting in specials, small group instruction, recess and/or lunch.

This year, Tammy May, Professional Development Coordinator, received a grant through RoboKind, and the students from the ASD and Life Skills rooms have started to work with the robot who has been named Milo. He assists the students in learning social emotional strategies and much more. Dr. Buffington interjected that Milo is a little leery looking and kind of resembles “Chuckie.” No one had any pictures of him to show the Board. It was noted that the Technology Department was involved in setting parameters for Milo and tested him out on a number of different scenarios that could happen working with students. Everyone was very grateful to Tammy May for her work on the grant to get Milo. Milo is very calm in his speech pattern, and the students have responded to him very well. Nicole Luttman and Julie Vraniskoski have taken the lead rolls with these lessons, and Ms. Luttman shared more about how Milo is used with the students with autism. In addition, it was noted that all of the special education teachers have worked together to secure individual grants. The grant funds were used to purchase materials for the new Sensory Room, the fifth room that is utilized throughout the day by all of the special needs students, as well as other students that have disabilities and the need to have sensory breaks. Most of the time, after a student has taken a sensory break, they are able to return to their classroom and continue they day. Rachel Evans and Rachel Boncela shared how Sensory Room benefits their students and really shifted how they work with students when they become heightened. There is a variety items available to students in the Sensory room and a few are a drop swing, a swivel chair, and yoga ball.

Mrs. Caddick told the Board this is the second year of the school's Best Buddies Club that is led by Melissa Oakes and her. She said the membership has grown from 42 kids to a little over 60 students of which around 31 are students with special needs. Students meet once a month during the school day. Last year, they made Valentine's Day cards for nursing home residents. This year for Easter, they will be making placemats that will be laminated. The students and residents have a great interaction, and it is an enjoyable time for everyone. One of the club's fundraising projects is for “Ben's Blue Bags” that is a partnership with Hobart's First Responders. They are working to so that every first responder with the Hobart Police and Fire Departments has a blue bags that have items that the first responder could use to calm persons with disabilities such as a communication card, whistle, head phones and so forth. There is a training session and overview on how to use these tools and techniques to assist them and those with disabilities in emergency situations. Their goal was to distribute 30 bags. They had 18 bags done so far.

In the discussion, the Board expressed their appreciation for all that they do for their students and were pleased with what was being done at the school. They noted the importance of what the staff was doing and how that will be of help to all of their students as they progress in school and life. Mrs. Guthrie suggested they apply for a grant from the Hobart Educational Foundation (HEF) for the Ben's Blue Bags program. She noted HEF requests grants from the staff each year. They missed the grant cycle for this year but should keep this in mind for next school year. Karen Robbins suggested that they fill out a grant application now so that it could be

considered at their next meeting. She felt that since their bingo fundraiser did so well, they probably would be able to assist them with some funding at this time. Mrs. Hillan mentioned that having weighted stuffed animals would be a good addition to the Sensory Room, and it was mentioned that this would be another good idea for HEF funding. It was noted that the Unified Track Program is a huge success at the high school, and Hobart's team won their sectional last year. It was noted they are making a difference that will have lifelong ramifications. Madelyn Burton noted when she was a fourth grader at Joan Martin School, a Buddy Program was formed, and she said those friendships that were made continue to this day.

President Butler extended the Board's appreciation for their presentation and thanked them for attending the meeting. He told them they were welcome to stay for the remainder of the meeting but excused anyone who needed to leave. Mr. Keehn was the only person remaining in the audience.

**RESOLUTION: March is Music in Our Schools Month:** Dr. Peggy Buffington presented Resolution No. 2024-5 celebrating March as Music in Our Schools Month. President Butler asked Mr. Keehn if it was okay to just read the title of the resolution, and he concurred that it was. Attorney Longer also agreed it was okay to just read the title of the resolution.

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

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-5  
Music in Our Schools Month

President Terry Butler requested Board action.

Karen Robbins moved that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2024-5 celebrating March as Music in Our Schools Month. Donald Rogers seconded.

In the discussion, Dr. Buffington highly recommended that everyone attend a performance of *The SpongeBob Musical* this week. She attended last weekend and said it was outstanding and spectacular. It is nothing like the cartoon. She said the senior citizens thoroughly enjoyed the show. Madelyn Burton said her grandmother always attends the plays, and she just loved it. Dr. Buffington extended kudos to Chris Conner for all of his work with the production. In addition, she commented that the musicals at Veterans and Joan Martin School were excellent. Mrs. Hillan liked the comment that Mrs. Amsler included in her email. It was a statistic from the US Department of Education and says, "Schools that have music programs have significantly higher graduation rates than those without music programs (90.2% compared to 72.9%)."

Vote on motion: Secretary Sandra Hillan called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

Resolution No. 2024-5, as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted, is as follows:

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-5  
Music in Our Schools Month

WHEREAS, since 1985, March has been officially designated by the National Association for Music Education as Music In Our Schools Month®, encouraging communities across the nation to focus on music education; and

WHEREAS, music education is part of a well-rounded education for every student as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this celebration is to raise awareness of the lasting positive impact of music education on the academic, personal and professional growth of our students; and

WHEREAS, music education shapes the way our students understand themselves and the world around them, allowing for a deep engagement with learning; and

WHEREAS, Music in Our Schools Month reminds us that school is where all children should have access to music; and

WHEREAS, music educators, students and communities throughout Indiana demonstrate the importance of quality music education programs to the lives of young people

WHEREAS, the state of Indiana joins our music students, educators and communities in celebrating the power of music education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of School Trustees does hereby proclaim the month of March Music In Our Schools Month and encourages our citizens to celebrate and acknowledge everyday but especially in March that Music Education is an essential part of every student's well-rounded education.

DATED this 7th day of March, 2024.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

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Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

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Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

**OVERNIGHT/EXTENDED STUDENT TRIP: HHS Student Trip to Costa Rica:** Dr. Peggy Buffington presented a trip request from Guillermina "Guille" Freytes for high school Spanish students enrolled in Spanish 3 and 4 during the 2024-2025 school year. Students would need to have a 3.0 GPA with minimal tardies and absences, and no suspensions at the high school. Students studying Spanish would get to have practical use of the language. Knowing Spanish is beneficial in Costa Rica, and they will learn about their culture and history. Students will present to classes the following school year. The trip would take place in the summer of 2025 so students would not miss any school work, and up to 25 students would be able to travel. Mrs. Freytes would be in charge and Heidi Polizotto, high school teacher, and possibly other teachers in the department would chaperone, if needed. It would be a nine-day trip, and a tentative itinerary was included with the trip request. The group would be staying in hotels with breakfasts and dinners provided, but students would need to buy their own lunch/snacks. Mrs. Freytes was working with EF Educational Tours, and the estimated cost of the trip is \$3,209.00. Students would be responsible for paying for the trip, and a customized fundraising page through EF/Educational Tours would be available for students to get donations from family and friends to assist students with funding the cost of their trip.

Dr. Buffington recommended approval of the overnight-extended trip to Costa Rica.

Rikki Guthrie moved and Frank Porras seconded 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.

In the discussion, Don Rogers expressed his concern that the trip was not safe at this time. Sandi Hillan was "nervous with the location." Terry Butler commented that there had been a recent citizens' uprising there. He noted that it was a beautiful place, but when family members vacationed there five or six years ago, they were restricted where they could go and primarily stayed at their resort. He wondered if there was another country they could visit. Dr. Buffington told the Board that the original request had included Panama, but she would not approve that. She indicated that the travel alert for Costa Rica was yellow, the same as it is in Europe. It was noted that the Board had already approved an overnight-extended trip to Paris and Italy. Dr. Buffington noted that the European trip was the first out-of-the country trip she had recommended since she became superintendent in 2008. Dr. Buffington was asked what yellow meant, and she said it means caution. The other color alerts above yellow are orange and red.

A question was raised as to whether this agenda item could be tabled to the next meeting. Attorney William Longer indicated that a motion to table could be made and would supersede the original motion. The motion moves the item to the next meeting's agenda, and because of the motion to table, no vote was needed on the original motion.

Karen Robbins moved to table the agenda item. Donald Rogers seconded.

In further discussion, Mr. Butler inquired if there was a minimum number of students needed for the trip. Dr. Buffington did not know but did know that 25 would be the maximum number. He said that usually the teachers' trips were at no cost to them and were included as part of the cost to students. It was noted by a couple of Board members that Dr. Buffington could cancel the trip, if there were travel alerts/warnings and/or health alerts issued by the US government. Since the motion was being tabled, Dr. Buffington asked for clarification as to what the Board wanted to know for the next meeting. The response was is there another destination they could go to, and is there a minimum number of students needed for the trip?

Vote on motion to table: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, and Butler. Nay – Guthrie. Motion carried 6-1 in favor.

**RECOMMENDATION: 2024 Summer School Course Recommendations:** Dr. Peggy Buffington highlighted the proposed 2024 summer school course offerings for the high school and elementary schools, and noted a flyer about the high school courses and instructions on how to sign up for the classes was included with the electronic meeting information. The classes being offered are as follows:

- At the high school, government, economics, health, physical education, world history, US History, language arts, band, Aspire, and Edmentum (online)
- At the elementary schools, June 10-June 27, 2024, from 9-11:00 am for IREAD remediation for second and third grade students. Dr. Buffington was waiting to see what this year's legislative session mandates regarding IREAD remediation before finalizing elementary school program.

Dr. Buffington indicated that there would not be any summer school for the middle school or the other elementary grades because it has been difficult to get the programs staffed in previous years. She does have enough staff to cover the elementary summer school.

Dr. Buffington noted the reimbursement for summer school was unknown at this time and would be determined by the Indiana Department of Education at a later date because reimbursement is based on state-wide participation in summer school programs offered.

Dr. Buffington requested Board action for authorization to provide the programs and for the approval of the summer programs.

Rikki Guthrie moved that the Board authorize and approve the 2024 Summer School programs, as presented. Seconded by Stuart Schultz. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Robbins, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 7-0 in favor.

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

- February ADM Report – Superintendent Peggy Buffington highlighted the February 2024 ADM information. The ADM dropped 32 students, and she noted a couple of reasons why this happened. One was residency where students were not living within the district boundaries, and another was some students and/or parents think the district is too strict. She expressed her thanks and appreciation to Chris King for all of the work he does with the ADM reports with the student management system and the Indiana Department of Education's data exchange. She indicated that the February enrollment was 4,008. The Comparison ADM Year-to-Year from 2005-2006 through 2023-2024 P2, Comparison ADM 2024 P1-ADM 2024 P2 by Grade, and the February 2004 Approve Membership Counts were included with the electronic meeting information.

Dr. Buffington mentioned areas of concern with enrollment district-wise. Since Merrillville dropped out of NISEC, special education classes were added at Joan Martin School, and the enrollment at Veterans School at Mundell was now 580 students. She noted a couple viable housing developments such as Cressmoor that could have around 450 housing units and a couple of other subdivisions on 61st Avenue that could have around 165 units between them. In addition, Dr. Buffington mentioned that the assessed value of homes has increased substantially in Veterans district. She indicated that she wants to wait until the end of the legislative session to see if there were any changes regarding referenda. She stated that room space at the elementary schools and the middle school is of prime importance and would eventually affect the high school. She noted that a couple different scenarios were mentioned at a work session, and she would like to revisit them after legislation was finalized. Dr. Buffington also noted that when the high school was built, they planned for future building off the educational wings.

- School Information – weekly agendas from all of the schools and the weekly BricksCenter newsletter.
- Upcoming Activities/Events – the latest list of upcoming activities/events. Dr. Buffington highlighted the following upcoming activities/events, as follows:

March 4-15 – IREAD Test Window for grades 2 and 3

March 6 – All Test Day at Hobart High School – Dismissal @ 12.45 pm // Dr. Buffington noted that the high school had 93% participation. She complimented Danielle Adams and Debbie Matthys and the rest of the crew for a great job.

March 8 and 9 – *The SpongeBob Musical*, HHS Performing Arts Center, 7:00 pm

March 14 – Hobart University Parent Night @ HHS Board Room, 6-7:00 pm, Enter Door 1  
Dr. Buffington reminded everyone that this presentation was open to anyone wanting to find out about Hobart University and the Early College and Careers Program at the high school.

March 18 – 22 – Disabilities Awareness Week

March 25-29 – Spring Break

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

April 8 – 12 – Kindergarten Registration online @[www.hobart.k12.in.us/kindergarten](http://www.hobart.k12.in.us/kindergarten)

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

**COMMENTS:** From the administration, Peggy Buffington told the Board that the high school had visitors from the Indiana Department of Education who visited two classes and one class at the middle school examining how artificial intelligence (A-I) was being used in those classes. She was proud of the staff and their students for using A-I for their benefit. She noted that one of the high school teachers has said that Khanmigo has made her a more innovative teacher. Dr. Buffington explained a process the teacher used with Khanmigo that affected her lesson plans from her first hour class to her last hour class. Dr. Buffington appreciated seeing the affirmation of A-I as it is used in the classroom and all of the great things that are being accomplished with it. Dr. Buffington told the Board that the school district has been part of news articles in *The Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* with Sal Khan and Hobart piloting his Khanmigo tutoring program. She appreciated that staff and students have embraced the Khanmigo tutoring program. The state visitors were able to observe from a student's perspective how students interact with the tutoring aspects of Khanmigo. Chris King commented about the Buddy Program at Joan Martin School, thought it was amazing, has seen the benefits of it, and how gen ed students interact positively with their special needs peers. He remembered a prior Buddy Program at Joan Martin and said you can still see their positive interactions currently at the high school. This was firsthand knowledge for him because of the esports program and the teams' interactions with gen ed and special needs students.

From the Board, Frank Porras noted that six wrestlers competed at semi-state, and three advanced to state competition. Two juniors, Seth Aubin and Aidan Costello, and Aleks Tatum, a freshman, competed, and Aidan Costello placed third. This was the seconded straight year he had medaled at state competition. Mr. Porras commented that the team has a number of underclassmen so prospects looked good for next few years. Don Rogers said that special education teachers are amazing. He noted that a couple special needs students are helping out at the Hobart Food Pantry, and he and Karen Robbins said they were doing a good job. Mrs. Robbins thanked Rikki Guthrie for all of her efforts at the bingo fundraiser for the Educational Foundation where \$4,941.00 was raised. Mr. Keehn was asked if he or his family members won anything, and he said they didn't. He did note that his wife has almost every color bingo dauber. Stu Schultz thought the special needs teachers were amazing, has a special needs family member, and knows the importance of people in assisting them. He extended his thanks and appreciation to everyone for the plant and condolences for the loss of his mother. Madelyn Burton explained her journey the past few weeks concerning her college plans. She was accepted into the Kelly School of Business at Indiana University, and after recent in-person interviews, she received a full-ride scholarship that covers all expenses (room and board, tuition, books, etc.). She noted that there are special eight-week business programs that include travel to different destinations that are also covered by the scholarship. Everyone offered their congratulations to her, and Dr. Buffington told her she "was confident" and "never doubted" that she would not get the scholarship. She told her that everyone was proud of her and her accomplishments. Madelyn commented about the Best Buddies Program that was at Joan Martin School when she was there. Fourth and fifth graders were buddies with the special education students, and she said those friendships have continued on and are still in place at the high school today. Angelina Zepeda was waiting to hear about possible scholarship opportunities and still had not chosen the college/university she will be attending. Dr. Buffington noted that Angelina has been very involved with the area Hispanic organization and assisting area students with scholarship opportunities. She was looking forward to hearing where Angelina will continue her secondary education and said everyone was proud of her accomplishments, as well. Sandi Hillan told the student representatives that they "are amazing," and she was proud of both of them. She noted she could not "wait to see what the future holds" for both of them. Mrs. Hillan commented that she has a friend with a special-needs child, and the friend sent her a thank you note, because she was a school board member. In it she expressed her gratitude and appreciation at being able to see her child walk at graduation. She never thought she would ever see her child do this, and she was very grateful and appreciative that the school district provided this opportunity for her child. Mrs. Hillan said she was also proud because she had a special-needs sibling. Mrs. Hillan also appreciated the celebration of March being Music in Our Schools Month and the importance of the arts for students and commented the arts classes are often the first classes considered when cuts are talked about. Mr. Butler thought this was not always the case anymore. Rikki Guthrie thanked Karen Robbins and HEF members for working to raise \$4,941.00 and said "it was a great night" with a good turnout. Mrs. Guthrie commented that the special education teachers were special, and she appreciates everyone's efforts, especially the unified track program. She told Don Rogers "he was the best" and thanked him for the popcorn. Dr. Buffington said that he popped 700 boxes, and she presented him with a BEOP (Being Excellence On Purpose). The popcorn was a reward to students for reaching goals on the testing that has been done. There is one more and if the benchmark is reached the students who achieved this will be getting Kona Ice.

From the audience, Bradley Keehn complimented Madelyn Burton and Angelina Zepeda on their successes and noted they just did not happen by chance. Those endeavors happened because they worked hard to achieve them. He noted that his daughter participates in the Buddy Program at Joan Martin and said it was a great program. His daughter is compassionate and patient with her buddy, and he thought the program would reach beyond school. In addition, he mentioned that his son was a sixth grader who has "a ton of energy." He has participated in different sports and has not really focused on anything. However, he is in band, and they recently had their concert. He noticed that his son was very focused on his instrument during the concert. The Board thanked him for his comments.



From the Board, Terry Butler finished up the comments noting that his wife has been out-of-town helping with a grandchild that had a health issue. She was supposed to be gone three days that has now extended into three weeks. Cooking for three has been difficult because they do not all like the same things. It was suggested that he pick up some prepared meals at Costco. Dr. Buffington mentioned her last Cooking Voice and Choice and the little mishap that happened, but everything worked out fine. Rikki Guthrie said her daughter participated this time and brought home the recipes. She said Easter treats were going to be made. Mr. Butler commented that his sister-in-law was working in another area school district. Finally, it was mentioned that Barb Mathis and her wonderful smile were seen in the building. Everyone was glad she was back to work.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to come before the Board, President Butler adjourned the meeting around 8:44 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next regular session meeting is March 21, 2024.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

Submitted for Approval: March 21, 2024