

..... heard Board vice president Troy Scott recite the Elkhart Promise.

..... heard SSAC member Trevor Fine, a senior at Elkhart High School (EHS) and active member of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council (SSAC) and National Honor Society (NHS), inform the Board EHS is gearing up for the Midwest premiere of Mean Girls March 10 – 12, 2023. If a \$25 donation is made, you can receive a free ticket; more information about this can be found on EHS's social media platforms. There will be a pep rally tomorrow, January 25 at 7:45 a.m. to kick off Coming Home Week. There have already been multiple themed days and they are planning a volleyball tournament for students to make-up teams and just have fun. The upcoming NHS sponsored carnival will be held on February 11 at the Elkhart Freshman Division which will include food, games, and a silent auction for the community. They are still in need of silent auction items, so if you know of anyone who is interested in donating something for the silent auction, please contact the school.

In response to Board member inquiry, Mr. Fine explained SSAC is a group of EHS students selected each year to meet monthly with Superintendent Thalheimer to discuss issues going on in school. It provides students the opportunity to speak directly with Dr. Thalheimer about issues, both good and bad, and discuss potential action steps that can be taken to resolve these issues. NHS is an organization which you apply during your junior year and selection is random based on your application; its primary focus is service to the community, schools, etc.

In response to Board inquiry, Mr. Fine plans to attend Indiana University, majoring in Computer Science.

Board president Dacey Davis recognized outgoing Board member Babette Boling, with a plaque and thanked her for her service to Elkhart Community Schools. She went on to commend Mrs. Boling for her heart and passion for Elkhart Community Schools as well as the greater Elkhart community. Mrs. Boling encouraged everyone to increase their positivity and live their life in decades instead of single years , as it provides you with more of a sense of urgency. Each decade is unique and ECS needs to adapt to teach the children of this decade, making them the best they can be.

..... approved the following items under a consent approval:

- Minutes – January 10, 2023 – Annual Organizational Meeting
- Minutes – January 10, 2023 – Annual Board of Finance Meeting
- Minutes – January 10, 2023 – Regular Board Meeting
- Minutes – January 17, 2023 – Special Board Work Session

Claims in the amount of \$6,834,127.59.

Proposed school fundraisers in accordance with Board policy.

Accepted the following extra-curricular purchase requests: Elkhart High School Athletics to purchase video equipment for the diving team to be used for training purposes totaling \$5,861.27.

Gift Acceptance:

Accepted with appreciation the following donations made to Elkhart Community Schools (ECS): \$500 to EHS from Get Wet for A Vet to be used to purchase supplies, snacks, and equipment for students in the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC); \$2,240 to EHS Athletics in memoriam of Elkhart graduate, Garvin Roberson; a German Violin, with a fair market value of \$2,000, donated to Elkhart Community Schools' (ECS) music Department from Joellyn Keranen; 2007 Toyota Tundra, with an owner estimated value of \$3,600, donated to the Elkhart Area Career Center (EACC) from Doug Thorne to be used for training purposes for student in the Automotive Technology classes; pickleball equipment, with an estimated value of \$1,740, donated to Eastwood Elementary School from Mark and Debbie George; and hand tools, with an owner estimated value of \$1,000, donated to the EACC from Dave Geiger.

Conference Leave Requests

Approved overnight trip requests for EHS ElkLogics Robotics to travel to Lafayette, IN on March 24 – 26, 2023 for the FIRST Indiana Robotics Tippecanoe District Event and EHS Girls Wrestling to travel to Mooresville, IN on January 12 – 13, 2023 for the State wrestling competition.

Submission of the following grant: Physical Education Grant hosted by Teacher's Credit Union in the amount of \$1,000 to purchase updated physical education equipment for Roosevelt STEAM Academy.

Personnel Report:

Employment of the following two (2) certified staff: Dana Riddle, special education at PRIDE Academy and Sydnie Schultheis, physical education at Freshman Division.

Retirement of the following one (1) certified staff: Warren Seegers, digital media at the EACC.

Certified agreement regarding employment.

Agreement regarding services.

Employment of the following nine (9) classified employees: Tina Iavagnilio, food service at EHS; Alan Kist, bus driver at Transportation; Lori Laughman, food service at Cleveland; Monet Malone, secretary at ESC; Wendy Metzger, food service at North Side; Erika Smoker, social worker at Eastwood; Amber Stoneburner, paraprofessional at Freshman Division; Erika Sullivan, food service at Riverview; and Makita Washington, paraprofessional at EACC.

Leave for one (1) classified employee: Laura Walterhouse, paraprofessional at Roosevelt.

Revision to the resignation of the following one (1) classified employee reported on the January 10, 2023 Board Report: Jennifer Geers, registered nurse at EHS.

..... heard Dr. Mindy Higginson, director of elementary instruction, present the middle of the year Savvas data for kindergarten through sixth grade.

Kindergarten results showed increases in all areas, specifically scoring above 80% on early phonics skills. This is a strong indicator that Foundations is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. Bristol, Cleveland, and Feeser showed a high level of achievement and Feeser, Monger, and Riverview demonstrated large increases in growth.

First grade results showed an increase in all areas with Pinewood having the highest level of achievement and Beardsley, Bristol, Monger, Pinewood, and Woodland demonstrating a large increase in growth.

Second grade demonstrated an increase in all areas except one with Bristol and Riverview having the highest level of achievement and Feeser, Monger, and Osolo demonstrating the largest growth. Dr. Higginson explained in third grade, the test shifts and the students have to read the test rather than the test being read to them. The third grade scores were much lower, but all areas did see an increase. This is a great example of how teams can utilize eLearning days; teachers with higher scores can share what's working. Cleveland third grade had the highest level of achievement, and Cleveland and Monger demonstrated the largest growth.

Grade four scores showed improvement in all areas except one, but still need to be a bit higher. Dr. Higginson pointed out the score for paraphrasing/summarizing was much higher than other areas; she believes this is attributed to the Smeken's professional development. Monger and Riverview had the highest achievement and Eastwood showed the most growth.

Grade five results were a mix as five standards increased and five decreased. It will be important for the teams to look at the question types and passages and compare them to their Common Formative Assessments (CFA) to help gain an understanding of why their students struggled. In fifth grade, Monger and Riverview showed the highest achievement and Monger the largest growth.

Finally, grade six demonstrated an increase in all areas with the exception of one. Osolo and Riverview demonstrated the highest level of achievement and Eastwood the largest growth.

All grade levels had a writing prompt for the first time as a part of the MOY assessments which will be compared to the End of Year assessments. In closing, Dr. Higginson shared writing samples from second graders at Monger.

Cary Anderson, executive principal of EHS; Gail Draper, director of counseling; Frank Kurth, vice principal of EHS; and Krista Hennings, principal of School Without Walls (SWW), presented to the Board about four different areas including updates on the State of Indiana's recent changes to graduation requirements; graduation data for last year's cohort; current graduation data on the class of 2023; and efforts to maintain and improve graduation rates going forward.

Graduation requirements have evolved greatly from back in the day when students simply had to earn specific credits and pass the GQE/ISTEP. It is much more complicated for students, teachers, and administrators as it involves CTE pathways over a 3-year period, special credentialing for teachers, and required year-long classes which have ultimately eliminated elective classes from the schedule. These new requirements are not flexible or forgiving as students cannot go back and simply redo three years of high school if something

does not go as planned. Graduation requirements must include the checking off of three boxes. The first box is simply meeting diploma requirements for the CORE 40, CORE 40 with Academic Honors, or CORE 40 with Technical Honors. The second box is to learn and demonstrate employability skills by completing one of the following: Project-Based Learning experience, Service-Based Learning experience; or Work-Based Learning experience. Most students can fulfill this requirement through a Project-Based Learning experience which must include a challenging problem/question, sustained inquiry, authenticity, student voice/choice, reflection, critique and revision, and public product; these projects are mostly connected to a class project. Service-Based Learning experiences must include meaningful service, reflections, diversity, youth voice, partnerships, and duration and intensity. These types of projects are often done in partnership with service clubs, sports teams, NHS, JROTC, etc. Work-Based Learning experiences must include a clear work based learning partnership agreement and plan, authentic work experience, structured learning component, and culminating assessment and recognition of skills. Community partners play a big role in helping with Work-Based experiences for students.

The third box, postsecondary ready competencies, is the difficult one which requires students to complete one of the following: 1. Academic/Technical Honors Diploma requirements; 2. minimum benchmark scores for either the ACT/SAT/ASVAB; 3. Career-Technical Education (CTE) Concentrator, which can be earned at both the EACC and the high school (new requirement for Perkins V (cohorts of 2023 and 2024) must earn a C average in at least two advanced courses within a particular program of study); 4. Next Level Programs of Study (NLPS) can be used for the graduating class of 2023-2024 which include year-long Principles, Concentrator A, and Concentrator B courses within a program of study and specified by DWD earning a C average; 5. AP/Dual Credit or CLEP Exams earning a C average or better in at least three courses (if using to meet this requirement, one of the three courses must be in a core content area, if student is pursuing the liberal arts tracts must have at least one course from the Core Transfer Library, and all three courses must be part of a defined CTE sequence); 6. Locally Created Pathways which are developed in accordance with the framework adopted/approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE).

There is a waiver of postsecondary-ready competencies where a student must meet one of the following conditions to *qualify*: student attempted to achieve at least three separate postsecondary readiness competencies and was not successful, or a student transferred to school during senior year from a non-accredited nonpublic school or an out-of-state school and the student attempted to achieve at least one postsecondary readiness competency and was unsuccessful. *If a student qualifies*, they must maintain at least a C average throughout the high school career in course required to graduate; maintain school attendance rate of at least 95% with excused absences not counting against the rate; satisfy all other State graduation requirements beyond postsecondary readiness competency requirements; and demonstrate postsecondary planning (approved by principal) including: acceptance into college/occupational training program, workforce entry, or military enlistment. These waivers were utilized less than one-percent in the 2022 cohort.

It is so important for students to earn a diploma versus a Certificate of Completion; without a diploma, it can drastically limit future employment opportunities.

Board Policy 5460 – Graduation Requirements has been updated to reflect all the new changes and will be emailed to Board members for review. It will be presented for first

reading during the February 14, 2023 meeting. An updated waiver form will also be presented for review.

EHS's administration reviewed data from the 2022 Cohort. They are very proud of the hard work and dedication of their students, teachers, counselors, and administrators as they increased the graduation rate from 88.27% in 2021 to 93.79% in 2022.

The 2023 Cohort consists of 664 students and currently 88.4% are on track to graduate. Of all seniors, 398 seniors have completed and 266 seniors are working on completing the box 3 graduation requirement. The EHS administration tracks students in the "war room" where they have pictures of the students with corresponding information for each reflecting where they are right now, who is doing what to positively influence the students' progress, and to ensure staff knows every kid by name making a consistent effort to connect with students.

This year presents a new challenge with the "Perkins Shift" within the graduation requirements. The administration found a way through CTE online courses, but with Perkins V, this became more difficult and they had to figure out a new pathway for online students in SWW. This led to the creation of online pathways which fulfill the same requirements as in-person pathways; SWW is now required to be in-person with a teacher component for three hours. These online CTE pathways have also provided a path to those kids impacted by the pandemic "persistence" issue where students are not succeeding in their CTE pathways in-person and don't have the option under Perkins V to make up this requirement at the end. In response to Board inquiry the rigor and requirements for online are the same, just presented in a different format.

SWW has helped a lot of students over the finish line. They now offer two pathways, including Business and Education Professions. They have offered a minimester December 22 – January 6 allowing for 73 more students to complete their first semester pathway. Those who failed their pathway first semester can take the Business pathway second semester and in summer school, but there will be no additional funding for this. Summer school SWW will need two staff every day and will offer one pathway and one credit recovery. APEX was recently bought out by Edmentum and now offers more pathways which may be in line with EHS Schools of Study. The administration is looking into potential options.

Mr. Anderson closed by saying the EHS team has never been so tied together, including Bryan Hammontree, principal at Elkhart Academy, knowing their job is to help EHS kids, not to later say "I wish I would have."

In response to Board inquiry, the war room started out with 227 seniors, with 26 credits or less. Counselors spend time with all students but each student may have different needs which can make this time vary to some degree. Mr. Kurth probably spends more time with the at-risk students. In response to Board inquiry, the administration is working with Lisa Ernsberger, director of high ability, to help change the culture, raise the standards, and increase enrollment in honors, dual-credit, and AP classes. In response to Board inquiry, Mr. Anderson shared they did a demonstration for elementary and middle school administrators showing what went into making sure a student graduates. He suggested continuing to build out PRIDE in the elementary and middle schools in order to help bridge connections for students as they make their way to high school. An audience member expressed concerns

about the requirements moving towards dual credit offerings in the midst of a teacher shortage; who is going to teach the general education classes?

- heard Jon Chevalier, director of transportation; Michele Ernsberger, assistant supervisor; and Jason Inman, director of technology services provide an update on Stopfinder, the new parent engagement app which provides parents with real time information about buses in transit. The last school was brought on board January 24, 2023 and there is currently a 20 – 25% participation rate in use of Stopfinder. To inform parents about the new app, they have sent emails, made all calls, sent flyers home with students, and they plan to be present during parent teacher conferences to help promote awareness. This app not only provides the approximate time of pickup, but also sends notices when the bus is running late, broken down, or if a different bus number will be picking up your student. The app is bilingual and transportation has a support number with bilingual assistance between the hours of 5:00 – 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. In response to Board inquiry, they are meeting weekly to reevaluate and adjust the marketing plan to increase the participation rate; they have not tried texting information to parents but will look into it; and currently, school staff does not have access to Stopfinder. An audience member expressed concern about his granddaughter having to wait for thirty minutes plus because the bus was running late and the parents never received a phone call. Stopfinder may help with situations like this going forward but he wanted to bring attention to the incident. A second audience member informed the Board there is a Stopfinder webinar on YouTube. A third audience member encouraged the administration to use bus drivers to spread the word about Stopfinder as they are the first and last person from school the child sees.
- heard Lindsey Brander, assistant superintendent of student services, introduce Jessie Yost, a member of the ECS Parent Coalition, who informed the Board about the upcoming Be Bold Be Heard Community Culture Awareness Forum on February 23, 2023 at the Freshman Division in the Cafeteria from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. which is open to all of Elkhart County schools. In response to Board inquiry, she stated the group is struggling to get more buy-in.
- heard Beth Williams, director of federal programs, update the Board about the Summerscape programming for 2023 offered in partnership with Elkhart Education Foundation (EEF). The program dates will run from June 5 – June 23 and June 26 – July 21 (closed the week of 4th of July Holiday). This camp is for incoming students in grades kindergarten through grade six and will consist of a six-week program broken down into two 3-week sessions. Summerscape will be housed at Mary Beck, Pinewood, and Woodland Elementary Schools and will run from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. for students and 8:15 a.m. – 12:15 for project instructors (certified teachers). The first 3-week session will be STEAM focused Project Based Learning curriculum and the second 3-week session will be Aerospace in Connection with Education (ACE) curriculum. The Parks Department will offer extended care until 4:00 p.m. at each site location. In response to Board inquiry, the program is specifically for ECS students. EEF will be running the program and funding part of it. The majority of the funding is coming from ECS using Title I, ESSER, and Title IV funds. There were further questions about the hiring and if students outside of ECS could attend. Dr. Thalheimer agreed to reach out to Charmaine Torma, executive director of EEF, for further clarification.
- unanimously approved the 2023-2024 School Year Calendar as presented during the January 10, 2023 Board meeting.

- heard Brad Sheppard, assistant superintendent of instruction, present a new course offering for the 2023-2024 school year: Advanced Life Science: Foods.
- received the monthly financial report.
- received the monthly insurance update.
- heard audience member complain about the snow removal at Beardsley Elementary School and how it is tearing up the grass along the sidewalks. He also expressed concerns about the difficulty his special education student has using their Chromebook. In closing, he spoke of bullying in schools and how important it is for the resolution to include skill building for both the victim and the bully, but not at the victim's expense.
- heard audience member speak of traffic concerns at EHS.
- heard audience member speak of EHS students' pride in the "Mangy" Lion and the rich history and symbolism behind it.
- heard audience member speak of concerns she has for her student.
- heard Dr. Thalheimer remind Board members about the Board Work Session on Monday, January 30, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. covering the Community Survey Results. SchoolIQ will be holding staff interviews in all buildings across the district beginning , January 30.
- heard Dr. Thalheimer share that information about the feasibility study is available on the homepage of ECS's website. There will be focus groups on February 7 and 8, 2023, and online registration is available. Registration is not required to participate but it can be helpful. In response to Board inquiry, if a focus group participant wants to attend both sessions, they can split their time between the two.
- heard Ms. Davis ask a Key Committee member to provide an update about how the process is going so far. Alex Holtz, a teacher and Key Committee member, shared that it was going well; they were still in the information gathering stage and the process was still ongoing.
- heard Mrs. VonDerVellen share she had heard great feedback about the EACC Open House. They were very impressed with the opportunities available for students. She also shared the EACC welding students were helping to restore the River Queen, which is dry docked for repairs located out on County Road 17.
- heard Board member Doug Weaver congratulate the EACC for its successful Open House.
- heard Board member Jeff Bliler give a shout out to the EHS Girls Wrestling team heading to State finals.