

..... heard Board secretary Doug Weaver recite the Elkhart Promise.

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

Minutes – May 23, 2023 – Public Work Session
Minutes – May 23, 2023 – Regular Board Meeting

Claims in the amount of \$10,030,897.00.

Proposed school fundraisers in accordance with Board policy.

Gift Acceptance

Accepted with appreciation the following donations made to Elkhart Community Schools (ECS): donation of one (1) EK Blessing Scholastic Trumpet (SN 437899), with a fair market value of \$295, to the Elkhart Community Schools' (ECS) music department from Jeanette Krabill; \$500 to EHS volleyball team from Jack and Angie Welter to help with the purchase of travel apparel and training equipment for the program; \$1,000 to the Pierre Moran athletic department from Brian and Amanda Jamison Charitable Fund of the Elkhart Community Foundation to help with the support and continued growth of the athletic program; \$1,000 to EHS cheerleading team from Lippert Components to assist with the growth of the program; \$500 to EHS volleyball team from Ron and Alicia Maure to help with the purchase of travel apparel and training equipment for the program; \$500 to EHS volleyball team from Notre Dame Federal Credit Union, care of Ronnie Bogle, to help purchase travel apparel and training equipment for the program; \$1,000 to the Teenage Parent Program (TAPP) from Paths to Quality to help where needed within the program; \$2,715 to EHS student activities extra-curricular account from Rod Williams to purchase supplies, equipment, and for student fees; \$500 to EHS from Simplified Tool, care of Katie Kessler, for the purchase of travel apparel and training equipment for the program; and \$1,000 to Elkhart Area Career Center, (EACC) from Unity Physicians Hospital, care of Jennifer Medich, to be used in the Surgical Services program.

Conference Leave Requests

Approved overnight trip request for EHS girls track and field team to travel to Bloomington, Indiana on June 2 – 3, 2023 for the State competition and EHS unified track team to travel to Bloomington, Indiana on June 2 – 3, 2023 for the State competition.

Personnel Report:

Approval of one (1) agreement for consulting services.

Approval of three (3) agreements related to compensation.

Appointment of the following one (1) certified employee: Sarah Flagg, assistant principal at Pierre Moran.

Employment of thirteen (13) certified employees for 2023/24 school year: Nathan Burkey, music at Pierre Moran; Heidi Brewton, special education intern at Exceptional Learners; Kathleen Coates, language arts at Elkhart High; Thomas Guthrie, science at Pierre Moran; Melanie Isenbarger, science at Elkhart High; Kathryn Lane, language arts at Elkhart High; James Martin, special education at Pierre Moran; Tina McConnell, special education at Beardsley; Dwight Mood, social studies at Pierre Moran; Katherine Myers, grade 3 at Daly; Nevaeh Prater, science at Elkhart Academy; Alejandra Puentes, grade 4 at Pinewood; and Yvette Wolter, science at Pierre Moran.

Retirement of the following three (3) certified staff: Kelly Brown, grade 5 at Beardsley; Michael Drews, business at Elkhart High; and Peggy Zimmerman, grade 1 at Pinewood.

Resignation of the following eleven (11) certified staff: Marissa Batt, social studies at North Side; Arianna Bontrager, special education at Pierre Moran; Kristin Buck, grade 2 at Bristol; Alexandria Cupery, kindergarten at Beardsley; Danielle Gaff, speech pathologist at Eastwood; Barbara Gingerich, childcare at EACC; Mallory Hill, social studies at North Side; Gabrielle Luster-Bartz, kindergarten at Osolo; Benjamin Polk, physical education at Beardsley; Joseph Rallo, social studies at North Side; and Ashley Schuman, special education at Bristol.

Unpaid leave of the following two (2) certified staff: Alexis Carroll-Troyer, kindergarten at Beck and Brittany Choler, social studies at West Side.

Death of the following one (1) certified staff: Todd Kelly, behavior support at Exceptional Learners.

Employment of the following seven (7) classified employees: Stacey Essex, secretary at Food Service; Marek Mazurek, reporter and assignment editor at WVPE; Kelzie Morgan, custodian at Osolo; Jeffrey Parrott, reporter and assignment editor at WVPE; John Stephens, business account manager at WVPE; Emily Wenzel, grant coordinator at ESC; and Kyle Workman, custodian at West Side.

Reassignment of the following one (1) classified employee to a certified position: Heidi Brewton, special education intern at Exceptional Learners.

Resignation of the following four (4) classified employees: Makyia Banks, bus helper at Transportation; Teri Shreiner, food service at Eastwood; Collette Sharp, BCBA at Eastwood; and Stephanie Slagel, food service at Pinewood.

Retirement of the following two (2) classified employees: Cindy Carroll, custodian at Eastwood and JoEllen Frend, bus driver at Transportation.

Termination of the following three (3) classified employees: Adam Hancock, mechanic at Transportation; Jacqueline Pietrzak, custodian at North Side; and Brigid Steinhagen, paraprofessional at Feeser.

..... Board member Kellie Mullins expressed condolences for two (2) ECS employees, Todd Kelly and Travis Jackson, recently who passed; a moment of silence followed out of respect for their families.

..... Board vice president Troy Scott read a prepared statement from BWP and Board members, which read as follows:

The primary responsibility of the school board is the hiring of the Superintendent. The Board of Trustees has held many executive sessions over the past several months to fill the position of superintendent. The Elkhart School Board hired BWP & Associates (BWP), a national search firm, to identify the best candidates. Since Indiana is on the leading edge of School Choice with the funding following the student, this element creates a competitive opportunity for the incoming leader. Elkhart School District is of good size and has some clear strengths as well as opportunities for improvement. The candidates that responded see the opportunities and how they can bring their experiences and capabilities to address the needs of our district; therefore, we received a high level of interest in this opportunity.

A Leadership Profile was developed based on input from over a thousand survey respondents, interviews with Board members, and multiple focus groups that were conducted by BWP. The information for the profile can be found on the ECS website.

The Board recognizes the importance of selecting the best highly qualified and visionary leader to guide our school district in the pursuit of academic excellence, student success, and with the necessary skills needed to "right size" our district. Because this is such a transformative hire, the Board has yet to reach a consensus on such an important leadership position.

In the short term, the Board anticipates appointing a highly qualified interim superintendent to serve the students, staff, and community of Elkhart Community Schools.

We will continue to provide updates to the community based on our progress.

The Board values the input and engagement of the community throughout this process.

The Board remains committed to providing a high quality education to all students in the Elkhart Community Schools District. We are confident that through collaborative efforts we will identify the best candidate to lead our district into a successful future.

..... Mr. Weaver made a motion, and Mrs. Mullins seconded it, for Mr. Frank Serge, the remaining available finalist, as determined to be a qualified finalist by the National Recruiting Consultant Company of BWP as well as the ECS Board of School Trustees, to be extended an offer of employment to serve as ECS's superintendent effective July 1, 2023 for a term of not less than three (3) years.

Prior to offering the opportunity for public comment, Mr. Scott reviewed the bylaws associated with public comment; specifically, commenting in regards to employees, or candidates in this instance. While community members have the right to address the Board regarding its employees (candidates), the Board will not discuss those matters during a regular Board meeting since these discussions might include confidential information. The Board encouraged community members to put their concerns regarding employees (candidates) in writing to Board president Dacey Davis or district counsel/chief of staff, Doug Thorne.

An audience member, who is a retired administrator of 47 years and has known Mr. Serge for 26 years, spoke to Mr. Serge's character as a dedicated parent, husband, and mentor actively involved in the Elkhart community, and a skillfully focused educator and administrator. He has witnessed all of this over the past 26 years but got an up close experience when he came to work as the interim assistant principal at PMMS.

An audience member shared she was excited to learn Mr. Serge was a candidate as he has been a longstanding member of the community and is invested in ECS. He has been a positive force at ECS implementing discipline, structure, high expectations, and always shows concern for both students and teachers.

An audience member, past parent and current Elkhart resident, commended Mr. Serge as his son was a successful graduate of Elkhart Central High School. During his son's time at Central, he witnessed Mr. Serge running a school that prepares students for future success; he walks his talk.

An audience member, ECS parent and employee, shared how Mr. Serge has transformed PMMS this school year. The building now has structure, discipline, and set behavior expectations which has allowed for teachers and students to focus on education. He fixes one thing and then moves on to the next. Mr. Serge has a vision to get kids back to grade level and be education focused.

An audience member, past student of Mr. Serge/ECS, an ECS parent, and active community member spoke of how Mr. Serge valued him as a person at a time when he did not value himself. Mr. Serge showed him compassion, demanded things of him he did not know he was capable of, lifted him up while pushing him to places he did not know he was capable of going. Mr. Serge took the time to invest in him and now he is giving back and investing in ECS kids today.

An audience member shared his disappointment in the Board and Elkhart community at large as he believes it is crazy to be arguing about things that are not going to make "us" better. Some of the most talented people live in Elkhart and there is no reason everyone should not be working together for the betterment of ECS and the Elkhart community. He was there to support Mr. Serge and thanked him for all he has done for him. He asked the Board and the community to put their differences aside and do what was best for Elkhart; we need to do better, just do better.

An audience member, born and raised in Elkhart, expressed disappointment in the Board as confidential information from the interviewing process has been revealed to the public

causing teachers, administrators, and the community to feel pressure to pick a side and for Dr. Thalheimer to have to continue to come to principals' meetings, put on a strong face, to be the leader the Board says he is not; and now the Board is not able to tell the teachers, administrators, and community who that leader is going to be. She expressed concern about the Board being broken, the negative impact this has had on others perception of the district, and emphasized it is time to do better.

An audience member who has a business in the community, children who attend ECS, and was a graduate of ECS, asked the Board to stop wasting money and suggested they name an interim superintendent to get on track. He expressed frustration with the Board after they completed a national search for superintendent, narrowed it to three qualified applicants, two applicants withdrew, and then they refused to hire the one remaining; this just does not make sense.

An audience member, parent and former employee who worked under Mr. Serge, spoke about how Mr. Serge was a leader and mentor who invested in him as an employee, always pushed and encouraged him to do better, and walked alongside him through it all. Mr. Serge saw things in him that he did not see in himself. This is the kind of leadership ECS needs now.

An audience member, graduate and longtime teacher/administrator of ECS, spoke of Mr. Serge as a mentor and friend, meeting all the qualities identified in the leadership profile approved by the Board. The Board is at a pivotal decision for this district and he encouraged them to vote for Mr. Serge as superintendent.

An audience member, principal of fourteen (14) years, has worked with Mr. Serge and found that they do not always agree, but he is always willing to talk about it and work with people. One thing for sure, Mr. Serge always has the best interest of students at heart. He spoke of the difficulty of staffing due to all of the unknowns; ECS needs a leader like Mr. Serge.

An audience member, graduate of ECS, said he appreciated the motion/second to hire Mr. Serge as the superintendent. ECS is breaking, but not yet broken; therefore, it is important to put appropriate leadership in place. Mr. Serge is engaged and known for being a collaborator, leader, friend, and visionary, always pushing to get things done for students which is what ECS needs right now.

An audience member, ECS mom and employee of PMMS, spoke of the impact Mr. Serge had on PMMS this school year. He has helped her grow as an employee as well as a parent and always has an open door policy for staff and students alike. His leadership would be great for ECS.

An audience member, who served ECS for thirty-seven (37) years, remembered a day when ECS was considered the Cadillac of education in Indiana and she was the luckiest person to work there. A vibrant community needs a vibrant school system. Over the years, she witnessed Mr. Serge's ability to be a problem solver in an effort to keep even the most difficult students in school. He has the inherent ability to form leadership teams, analyze data, and stay student focused. As a high school principal, he has been

exposed to all aspects of the district making him a qualified candidate. In closing, she asked for Mr. Serge to be appointed as superintendent.

An audience member, who is a product of Concord, always thought of Central as being the worst high school; that being said, she almost transferred her kids to Central because of the improvements Mr. Serge made during his tenure as principal. He is a person who has stayed involved with ECS, keeps coming back to help, and staff and students know and respect him. She hopes to have the opportunity to support Mr. Serge as superintendent.

An audience member shared that the Board has said they hired BWP and Associates to ensure they hire the most qualified superintendent; one with experience as a sitting superintendent, a doctorate, superintendent license, etc. She feels the Board is not being honest and transparent about the process and in the end, did not listen to the expert advice of BWP and Associates. She does not understand why superintendent experience and higher education did not have a higher priority through this process.

An audience member shared she worked hand and glove with Mr. Serge for twenty-nine (29) years and knows him well. He brought change to Central in everything from increasing academic opportunity to working with parents/students to address neighborhood problems that spilled over into school. Mr. Serge does not have to do this, but wants to do what is best for ECS and the Elkhart community to move this school district forward in the right direction.

An audience member shared, as an elected official, she understands what the Board is going through. She respects Mr. Serge as an educator, and is not for or against him being named superintendent. If the motion carries, we as a community will need to move on and work together in order to move our district forward. The word community contains the word "unity" and this process was supposed to provide just that, bringing the community together. Now the Board has a job to discuss how their decision can make this happen, moving ECS forward. She then thanked Dr. Thalheimer for all he has done for the district.

An audience member expressed his disappointment in the Board's actions and inability to find a candidate. He continued by saying they need to remove the politics, set aside personal feelings, and act in the best interest of the students. He reminded Board members of the School Board Member's Code of Ethics and expressed hope that their actions have not ruined ECS's chance of getting a superintendent.

Mr. Weaver agreed with the School Board Code of Ethics and would like to move forward with procuring the best professional leader available, as stated in the code. He encouraged the Board to bring school business back to the public by being open and transparent with the community. Mr. Weaver spoke about consensus, an agreement on some decisions by all members of a group, rather than the majority. There is currently only one (1) known and available candidate willing to take the risk to accept the superintendent's position based on current Board approval (4-3 split vote); the minority supports this qualified candidate whereas the majority of the Board does not have an available qualified candidate. Next, he addressed public concern regarding the qualifications of candidates making known the last two (2) finalists did not hold a

superintendent's license as this was not a requirement; although, both candidates were qualified and could obtain one from the Indiana Department of Education (confirmed by BWP). Next, Mr. Weaver referenced the leadership profile used in the superintendent search and the fact that Mr. Serge meets the criteria outlined in the profile. Prior to this meeting, BWP encouraged the Board to ground their assessment in discussions for the finalists in the profile as there was a consensus as a Board that all final candidates met said criteria. In closing, Mr. Weaver spoke about transparency and how the Board failed in providing such through this process; a meet and greet for finalists should have been offered. The Board relied on the experts to lead them through this process so they were able to make good decisions by adhering to the process. The Board agreed all finalists were qualified and are now backing out of their promise.

Board member Anne VonDerVellen explained this has been a journey for all Board members and they have learned a lot through the process. While evaluating the district's strengths and weaknesses, they realized there were big challenges to address including righting the size of the district to obtain financial viability as well as improving academic achievement. A lot of people fit the leadership profile, but in looking at the vision of the district, she wants ECS to be known for excellence in education, having outstanding programming and curriculum, and exceeding state averages in every category with an ultimate goal of becoming a Blue Ribbon School. She wants kids leaving ECS with the certifications needed to be successful, and those who want to continue their education, have what they need to be prepared for college. She wants students who are engaged and excited to attend ECS and a community, families, and staff who are proud to support their school district. Past in-state searches for superintendents did not get ECS where they needed to be which led to the decision to search nationally. She has learned a lot from the candidates and their accomplishments they shared over the course of interviews. The Board has listened to the consultants and have been working hard to find the best person to lead the district; the process is messy but working. She has the utmost respect for Mr. Serge, a true asset to this community and school district. There are things the district has been trying to achieve in this community for decades, and she believes it is time to bring in someone who is highly qualified with a lot of experience and a track record of success, bringing new ideas and perspectives. ECS needs a leader who can deal with big challenges i.e. buildings, transportation, and curriculum and instruction to name a few. At some point, the Elkhart community needs to start supporting their school system and parents need to start supporting their student's teachers and schools; this is a partnership and everyone needs to work together. The Board needs to ensure the right person is named superintendent; therefore, the Board needs to keep looking to find the best candidate. Naming an interim is the solution to provide the additional time needed to find that person.

Board member Jeff Bliler agreed the best candidate needs to be hired as superintendent which is why a national search firm was hired. To clarify for the public, there were twenty-two (22) applicants and six (6) of those applicants were selected to be interviewed. There was a request to have a seventh candidate slated outside of the original applicant pool, which was not Mr. Serge. Mr. Serge was one of the candidates brought to the Board by BWP and following the initial interview; he made it through to the three finalists. Mr. Bliler considered the following when making his decision: who will do the best job for students and the community; consider the other Board members' perspectives and what would be least damaging to the community; as a local official

representing a district, make the best decision for them; and last and most importantly, act in the best interest of kids by choosing the candidate who offers the most vulnerable students hope, protection, encouragement, and whatever else it took.

Board member Mike Burnett shared he has been entirely transparent from the beginning. He admitted this is new to him and he did not fully understand all that was involved in being a Board member. He knew he would be hiring a new superintendent and setting policy to benefit the majority of kids. He took the time to assure the public that none of this is politically motivated on his part. He approached the process from a business standpoint, looking at all candidates through a lens of who would be best for the kids, teachers, and administrators. Mr. Burnett clarified that Mr. Serge did make it into the final three, but there was strong opposition among some members. He was in turn offered a second interview out of respect for the other Board members. The profile specified there was a strong need for experience so the new superintendent could hit the ground running. In closing, Mr. Burnett admitted things could have been done better, but with the expedited timeline, they simply did not have time for additional vetting and community engagement. They wanted to get the superintendent in place in order to move the district forward. Mr. Burnett also wanted to assure the public that he was not influenced by anyone in making his decision. He looked at it from a business perspective, specifically looking for someone with experience in education, working their way from the ground up, and he will continue to do so as they move forward in the search for the superintendent.

Board president Dacey Davis spoke about the difficulty of this process and how disheartening it was to see the Board so divided. The Board has done their community, family, and staff a disservice based on where they are today. She still believes in the process as it has been very thorough. All the search firms interviewed encouraged the Board to find a permanent superintendent instead of an interim so the Board worked towards that goal meeting every Friday for the past months. They agreed as a Board there was a need for someone with proven experience and track record. She acknowledged leadership is not all about credentials but with the state of our school district. It was not enough to just know Elkhart; the new superintendent needed to be prepared and well-versed in all areas including human resources, operations, finance, curriculum and instruction, discipline, and so much more. There were good candidates, but unfortunately the one who was extended the offer declined, and the other two just did not meet the needs of our district. She expressed great respect for Mr. Serge, but feels he is not the best candidate for the superintendent position. She believes the process is working and the Board needs to set their differences aside and move forward with the search.

Mr. Scott shared he heard things tonight about Mr. Serge which brings a feeling of great pride in this district. To hear all the stories about the life-changing influence Mr. Serge had on his students and the great things he accomplished across his career, it is clear he made a difference, touched the future, and should be proud. Mr. Scott believes Mr. Serge has a place at ECS to continue to impact students at the student, academic, or district level. He also heard things that saddened him this evening. There was a process in place which allowed for the Board to meet collectively across several Fridays. They hired a firm to help them in the superintendent search. All Board members had input as things were discussed and decisions were made as a group. There has been a

lot of talk about transparency, but what happened tonight with the motion that was made, was not transparent, was not an agenda item, and fully undermined the process. The agenda item was Superintendent Search Update and he was not aware a Board member was planning to bring a motion; that is not transparency. The actions tonight were not a part of the process and never discussed with the full Board. Mr. Scott still believes in the process. He wished the process led to a decision they all could agree on, but it didn't. That being said, the process in place is a good one and should continue to be followed as the Board searches for the right superintendent to turn this district around.

Mrs. Mullins questioned the publication of the timeline shown during the presentation by BWP during the May 9th Board meeting at the Freshman Division. She and other Board members were not aware this timeline was going to be made public; this timeline unnecessarily rushed this process. Mrs. Mullins spoke of the process and how BWP provided the Board with six (6) candidates, all of which would make ECS a success. Mr. Serge was among those candidates and BWP spoke highly of him based on what they heard from the community and school staff. At this point, an interim superintendent is going to be necessary. Is it going to be one or two people? Is it going to be someone from the community? This process has become very uncomfortable and social media has been horrible, but in the end we have two men sitting in this room having to live through all of this negativity, along with their families; it is not fair. Dr. Thalheimer, who is trying to figure out what his next steps are while having to listen to this noise as the Board navigates through this process, and then there is Mr. Serge, who has many in the community who love him, but also has many who do not, which has been quite clear on social media. People have been saying Mr. Serge is a polarizing person; but in actuality, the Board polarized Mr. Serge. The Board will be appointing an interim superintendent. Whether the Board offers Mr. Serge a superintendent's contract or not, the Board owes it to the community to appoint him as interim. Mrs. Mullins continued, some found tonight's motion to be disrespectful, but she explained it was her way of being heard. She feels the Board's past actions failed Dr. Thalheimer and have continued to fail the community within portions of this search process believing members have used the process to protect themselves.

Mr. Weaver expressed concern as he did not know there could be a motion this evening which is why he requested the Superintendent Search Update be added to the agenda; it was vacant of such prior to his request. His purpose for this was to allow for public input and make them aware of the lack of consensus across the Board. He reiterated that the Board was guided by BWP to use the profile to ground their decision making through the search process. Why? Because the public's input, as well as the Boards, is baked in the profile. All of the final candidates met the criteria set by the profile and there is only one remaining; therefore, the Board should hire the one remaining. If Board members were not willing to follow the process through to the end, they should have hired an interim superintendent from the beginning. In closing, Mr. Weaver apologized to Mr. Serge, and added the Board owed him a public apology as well.

Mr. Bliler added his intention was not to mislead the public with the motion that is on the table. Obviously, this conversation was necessary and in turn brought to light the need to go the route of hiring an interim superintendent. He believes the motion should not be tabled; there should be a vote in order to allow for transparency.

Mr. Weaver added that he felt the public was heard tonight and encouraged anyone who did not feel heard to complete a form and speak at the end of the meeting.

Mr. Scott agreed all Board members are aware it is necessary to hire an interim but there is a need for them to consider as a group what this looks like and to speak with individuals who have done this before.

Mr. Scott made a motion to postpone consideration of the motion on the floor, with no date certain, naming Frank Serge as superintendent for a term no less than three years and Board member Mike Burnett seconded the motion.

Mr. Bliler asked Mr. Weaver to clarify his intention with the motion. Was he intending to name Mr. Serge as the superintendent or as the interim superintendent? Mr. Weaver confirmed it was to name Mr. Serge as superintendent. Mr. Bliler then suggested the Board vote on the original motion made by Mr. Weaver to put members on the record.

Mr. Weaver made a motion to amend the motion to bring it back for Board consideration during the June 27, 2023 meeting, and Mrs. Mullins seconded the motion in order to ensure this motion was not forgotten.

Mr. Weaver added he does not want to delay and wants a date certain as the next school year is beginning on time in August and a superintendent needs to be in place.

An audience member suggested, with all the back and forth between Board members, taking the two weeks and coming back on June 27, 2023 to get it done; the public wants an answer.

An audience member commented that the Board hired a superintendent search firm and now they are not accepting what they recommend. Does the Board trust the company they hired or not?

An audience member encouraged the Board to not rush the vote, get themselves together, and listen to their constituents before making a decision. It's too important to rush.

The motion to amend the motion to bring it back for Board consideration during the June 27, 2023 meeting did not carry.

The motion to postpone consideration of the motion on the floor, with no date certain, naming Frank Serge as superintendent for a term no less than three years carried.

..... Mr. Weaver made a motion to cancel the noticed executive session on June 13, 2023 due to the late hour, and Mrs. Mullins seconded the motion. Mr. Scott informed the Board there are guests waiting to participate in the executive session who will be providing the Board with an opportunity to ask questions regarding interim superintendents. He added members need this time to discuss next steps.

Mr. Weaver and Mrs. Mullins both expressed concerns about not being aware of the guests being a part of the executive session.

The motion to cancel the executive session did not carry.

- unanimously approved proposed revisions to Board Policy 3422.12S – Employees in Miscellaneous Positions Compensation Plan with the addition of the assistant supervisor of food services position, as presented during the May 23, 2023 meeting.
- unanimously awarded the Request for Proposal (RFP) of food, commodities, fresh produce, supplies, bakery and dairy supplies, for a grand total of all RFPs being \$4,922,296.04, to the lowest, most responsive and responsible bidders including Gordon Food Service, Stanz Foodservice, Commercial Foods, Piazza Produce, Wallace Packing, Daxwell, Form Plastics, Alpha Kreamo Bakers, and Dean Foods.
- unanimously approved the dedication of the right-of-way for the River Greenway Project. Tony Gianesi, chief operating officer, confirmed this project was designed to connect the neighborhood south of the railroad tracks at Goshen Avenue to the river walk along Goshen Avenue and Jackson Boulevard.
- unanimously approved an exception to facility usage under Policy 7510 for the family of Travis Jackson to use the Elkhart High School Freshman Division auditorium and cafeteria for a memorial service and post service meal on June 17, 2023. Mr. Weaver inquired about security for the event. Mr. Scott expressed sympathy for the family and acknowledged this is a very emotional time but expressed concerns about the liability risks to the district as well as the costs associated with waiving this policy for such events. Mr. Gianesi confirmed the family was working with ECS’s insurance carrier to purchase liability insurance covering the event and the additional cost to the corporation would be between \$1,500 – \$2,000 for the day. The Board requested the administration bring this policy to the Board in the future for further discussion and potential changes.
- heard one (1) audience member speak regarding the superintendent search.
- heard one (1) audience member speak about leadership in transportation.
- heard one (1) audience member ask about the status of early release for next school year.
- heard one (1) audience member speak about having a service dog at Bristol.
- heard five (5) audience members celebrate Dr. Thalheimer:
 - Expressed appreciation for his ability to work with both teachers and administrators alike. He had a way of saying things and was truly a gift who touched many in his time at ECS.
 - Thanked him for his weekly communication with staff and continuous support of staff and students, always leading with poise and class.
 - Thanked him for his service and for stepping in during a time when the Elkhart community was so divided. They expressed their sadness that Dr. Thalheimer is leaving and for all that happened during tonight’s meeting.

- Thanked him for his amazing service to ECS during which he always managed to put students and educators first; this has not gone unnoticed. It is not easy to find a superintendent who truly understands public education and the community for which they work. She thanked him for always putting ECS's wellbeing first as he led the district through some very difficult times. His choices have not always been praised by all, but his thoughtful grace and dedicated efforts have not gone unnoticed.
- Spoke of when the Board was searching for a new superintendent during the 2018-2019 school year and interim superintendent Mark Mow asked for a general consensus from the ETA of what they wanted in the next superintendent. This list included the following: embrace diversity completely and celebrate differences both in students and staff; consult teachers before making changes that impact instruction and include teachers in designing or revising of programs; a leader with a consistent message for staff and ensure the administrative staff would adhere to it; not to have too many initiatives all at once and provide resources distributed to all buildings, not just the high school; acknowledge the importance of the PLC process and have prior experience at all levels; put students and staff first, not community politics; and be loyal and appreciative of all staff members' contributions, listening to opposing views, and understanding the value in doing so. Dr. Thalheimer has been this person and done all of these things. She thanked him for his time and effort towards the betterment of students and staff, not to mention the positive impact he has had on the community. She has witnessed his diligence of pounding the pavement around Elkhart educating citizens about the importance of the referendum (two times), observed his willingness to meet with any person at any time for any reason, appreciated his knowledge of finance, curriculum and instruction, and his willingness to collaborate with the ETA on legislative matters impacting public schools. Throughout the pandemic, his guidance and frequent reminder to just take a deep breath helped to keep staff calm during such difficult times. On behalf of the ETA, she wished Dr. Thalheimer the best on all future endeavors. They are sad to see you go.

..... heard Dr. Thalheimer speak of conversations he had over the past few weeks and how he is humbled by the trust people put in him to implement change during a time when the district was in need of a lot of individual and institutional health. The conversations around the merger had fractured people leaving them feeling like they were not listened to, and the elementary staff felt as if they were denied and ignored. Due to the state of the district, he began his tenure by doing a lot of listening and then moved forward with a plan. He asked a lot of the ECS staff during his tenure, but the kids of ECS' deserved a lot. He thanked the school family for doing all the work necessary in the midst of an unprecedented time in public health; it is something he will always cherish and value about the ECS family. He thanked the Board for providing him this opportunity and supporting the things being done. The work going forward is not for just one person, so it is up to all of ECS employees to carry forward collaboration and PLCs, the continuation of the development of the EL program, the reboot of high ability, and to further develop the Schools of Studies. All of these things are bigger than just him, and he hopes people feel they can work together and continue to collaborate because there are excellent people doing excellent work at ECS. He closed by thanking ECS for one of the highest honors of his professional life.

- heard Mr. Weaver speak of the Catherine Wolf Awards Banquet recognizing a female athlete from each school and then congratulating the Catherine Wolf Award winner, Aldey Keim. The Tim Bringle Awards Banquet is being held on June 14, 2023.
- heard Mrs. VonDerVellen thank Dr. Thalheimer for his service and expressed appreciation for his heart always being with the kids and what is best for them.
- heard Mrs. Mullins thank Mrs. Thalheimer for sharing Dr. Thalheimer with ECS. She added she was sorry to see him go but excited for him and wished him the best.
- heard Mr. Scott thank Dr. Thalheimer for his service, leadership and for making his mark on ECS; he made a difference.
- heard Ms. Davis thank Dr. Thalheimer for the way he has handled himself through this difficult time and wished him nothing but the best.
- heard Mr. Bliler thank Dr. Thalheimer and wish him the very best.