

..... heard Board member Kellie Mullins recite the Elkhart Promise.

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

Minutes – February 28, 2023 – Regular Board Meeting

Claims in the amount of \$8,960,865.80

Proposed school fundraisers in accordance with Board policy.

Accepted the following extra-curricular purchase requests: Elkhart High School (EHS) Athletics to purchase a John Deere Gator to be used for softball, girls' soccer, girls' lacrosse, and girls'/boys' tennis totaling \$10,695.00.

Gift Acceptance:

Accepted with appreciation the following donations made to Elkhart Community Schools (ECS): \$2,500 to Woodland Elementary School (Woodland) from Elkhart Community Foundation, Ashley Martin and Bernerd Haskins Fund; backpacks, food, hygiene items and winter supplies valued at \$500 from Willow Shores Campground to be provided to students in need; RIT lice shampoo kits valued at \$3,000 to Woodland from Chapel Hill Missionary Church to provide to students in need; \$500 from Timothy M. and Sarah M. Myers through the Elkhart Community Foundation to EHS Theatre department to be used to purchase supplies, costumes, set construction, decorations, and student snacks for the upcoming musical production of "Mean Girls"; \$250 Patron Sponsorship donation to EHS Theatre department from Ivy Tech Community College to be used to purchase supplies, costumes, set construction, decorations, and student snacks for the upcoming musical production of "Mean Girls"; \$711 to North Side Middle School (North Side) from the 7-11 Project A Game program to be used to support the Husky Big 3 student reward program; \$500 to EHS ElkLogics Robotics from Priority-One Construction, Inc. to be used to purchase supplies, equipment, and competition entry fees; \$300 to EHS Athletic department from Phyllis Tubbs to be used to purchase a state ring for Lucas Byrd; \$10,600 to EHS Athletic department from Northern Indiana Volleyball Association (NIVA) to be used to assist in the growth and development of all athletic programs; \$1,350 to EHS from INOVA Federal Credit Union to be used to pay for a charter bus and lunch for students on the Science Central field trip; \$500 to EHS Athletics department from D&B Environmental, LLC to be used to purchase needed equipment, help with athletic fields, and any other needs to help with the growth and development of the track and field program; \$6,000 to EHS Athletic department from Linda Homo to be used to assist with the growth and development of the boys track team; \$1,575 to Mary Daly Elementary School (Daly) from Augustana Lutheran Church to be used to fund Community Circles facilitated by Center for Community Justice; \$2,000 to EHS Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) from Professional Dental Laboratory, LLC to be used to purchase supplies, snacks, equipment for the cadets and the Military Ball; and \$1,000 from Thomas Nickel - Golf Cart World to be used to purchase supplies, costumes, set construction, decorations, and student snacks for the upcoming production of "Mean Girls".

Conference Leave Requests

Approved overnight trip request for the West Side Middle School High Ability Cohort to travel to Indianapolis, Indiana on April 21 – 22, 2023 for the State qualifiers for National History Day; Elkhart Area Career Center (EACC) to travel to Indianapolis, Indiana on April 14 – 15, 2023 for the SkillsUSA State Conference; and EHS football team to travel to Syracuse, Indiana on July 31 – August 2, 2023 for team camp practice, leadership training, and team building.

Submission of the following grant: Technology Grant Application hosted by Department of Workforce Development in the amount of \$20,000 to be used for the purchase of new technology including laptops, testing programs and monitors for Adult Education; 2023 Digital Learning Grant hosted by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) in the amount of \$50,000 to be used for the continued work of Instructional Leadership in supporting Universal Design for Learning, supporting teachers with blended instruction using the iPads, and improving digital literacy by providing new learning opportunities for teachers and students; and IELCE Grant Continuation hosted by the IDOE in the amount of \$700,000 to be utilized for the operation of the Adult Education Programs.

Personnel Report:

Employment of the following one (1) certified staff: Kenneth Helbling, digital media at EACC.

Retirement of the following one (1) certified staff: Helene Dauerty, science at ETI.

Resignation of the following two (2) certified staff: Lemuel Cabang, special education at North Side and Stevi Weaver, career readiness at Pierre Moran.

Leave for the following one (1) certified staff: David Kriegel, automation at EACC.

Maternity leave of the following one (1) certified staff: Rachel Cason, art at Daly.

Employment of the following seventeen (17) classified employees: Shanel Bevier, food service at EHS; Heidi Brewton, registered behavior technician at Freshman Division; Dana Davila, food service at Woodland; Ellen Kohler, bus helper at Transportation; Eric La Grand, food service at West Side; Cynthia Miller, food service at Daly; Rebecca Morgan, food service at Commissary; Alexandra Neighbors, food service at North Side; Jennifer Phillips, secretary at EHS; Tina Ramer, bus helper at Transportation; Rebbecca Stratton, paraprofessional at HELC; Charlotte Sutton, food service at Beck; Helen Threet, registered behavior technician at North Side; Gary Toland, food service at EHS; Akida Walker Jr., custodian at Freshman Division; Constance Warner, bus driver at Transportation; and Deandra Wilson, bus helper at Transportation.

Leave for the following one (1) classified employee: Lakesha Washington, paraprofessional at North Side.

Resignation of the following three (3) classified employees: Maritza Banuelos, secretary at EHS; Chakiea Jackson, paraprofessional at EHS; and Rachel Orpurt, food service at EHS.

Termination of the following one (1) classified employee: Lucas Brownsberger-Keys, paraprofessional at Pride Academy.

- heard superintendent Steve Thalheimer provide an update on the Feasibility Study. The Key Committee met twice last week, the first meeting to review the demographics, survey information and how these results will affect the strategic planning process. The second meeting explored grade alternatives and configurations within buildings. The Key Committee will continue to meet next week to evaluate building capacity and grade structure. Information is available on ECS's website at <https://www.elkart.k12.in.us>. The public can also reach out to committee members with questions and concerns.

- heard Board president Dacey Davis provide an update on the Superintendent search. The Board has interviewed several search firms and could make a firm selection as early as this week. Once this selection has been made, the official search process can progress.

- heard assistant superintendent of exceptional learners, Tony England, and assistant superintendent of student services, Lindsey Brander, provide an update in areas related to behavior and expulsions. Mr. England shared Goal I/Tier I behavior information and the ability to apply PRIDE (Persistence, Respectfulness, Initiative, Dependability, and Efficiency) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) across the district and evaluate the PBIS system using a tool called School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET). SET originated from the Office of Special Education Programming through the Federal Department of Education. SET is a research-based outside evaluation tool which helps district building liaisons to collect products from the school, meet with building leaders, and conduct interviews. The information gathered will be applied to a rubric and calculating an overall score as well as a specific area score. The specific area score will guide the building to areas in need of improvement and identify the building's strengths, while the overall score will determine if they are ready to move beyond Tier I. Around spring break, schools will receive their assessment and discuss their Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) plan. Specific training will apply to those areas/schools of need. The next step in the process (by Fall of 2023) is the assessment for Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ). The BOQ assessment is more comprehensive and is completed on an annual basis. The BOQ is a self-assessment for buildings to measure the effectiveness of their school-wide PBIS. Ms. Brander focused on the targeted data from PowerSchool regarding student conflict. The conflicts measured were physical fights, bullying, verbal confrontation and physical confrontation. The goal is a 20% reduction in student-to-student conflict by the end of the school year. This goal is on track in regards to physical fighting. An uptick in bullying reports is expected as there will be an increased awareness as staff and students are trained to recognize and report such incidents. For tracking purposes, PowerSchool data entry will also need to be better maintained going forward and definitions and expectations clarified. In response to Board inquiry, Ms. Brander clarified fighting implies someone has been struck, whereas a physical confrontation is pushing or being aggressive in someone's personal space. Ms. Brander provided additional clarification on the definition of bullying and informed Board members that cyberbullying is not tracked separately from in-person bullying. Ms. Brander went on to provide an update on the Olweus training. Olweus is a program that came from Clemson, a nationwide leader focused on creating safe school environments. Olweus has been utilized by the district for approximately nine (9) years. A bully prevention coordinator was assigned at each building at the beginning of the year. All of the coordinators were trained in the fall and informed of the expectations surrounding this program. All building level staff will be trained on the scheduled eLearning day, April 18, 2023. Students will be asked to complete a questionnaire in May which will help the committee execute a plan for the following year's strategies. Mr. England returned

to review the PBIS process and what the district does for students who are being recommended for expulsion. Of the one hundred (100) student expulsion hearings held last year, ninety-five (95) were offered Alternative Education Plans; the other five (5) did not show and by default were expelled. Mr. England described a general pathway of how this point is reached. When an administrator requests an expulsion, the appropriateness of the expulsion is assessed. The parent then has a right to a hearing and if attended, will be offered an alternative education plan. Parents have a right to a hearing with an expulsion officer and are contacted to be made aware of this option. This school year, thirty-nine (39) students have been recommended for expulsion and placed in Alternative Education Plans. National data suggests fifty percent (50%) of students who have been expelled once will not graduate, and if expelled twice, that percentage increases dramatically. The goal is to provide the best plan possible for the success of the student.

In response to Board inquiry, Ms. Brander and Mr. England clarified this data was not specific to only student confrontation with other students, but could also be students who have engaged in conflict with staff. This specific data was pulled to track consequences and did not isolate who the confrontation was with. Ms. Brander agreed to specify that distinction in future updates to the Board.

- unanimously approved amended proposed changes to Board Policy 3421.01A – Professional Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans (Administrators) excluding three (3) administrative positions. The administration was directed to provide additional information so the Board could fully understand the rationale for the proposed changes.
- unanimously approved proposed changes and waived second reading of Board Policy 3422.12S – Employees in Miscellaneous Positions Compensation Plan.
- heard a bus driver express concerns about future cost reductions due to decreased student enrollment and request the district assess the need for 12 month positions in the transportation department.
- heard a bus driver speak of concerns regarding scheduled training on eLearning days interfering with other obligations as well as the recent reductions or changing of jobs in the Transportation Department.
- heard from ECS parent regarding the need to address bullying.
- heard ECS parent address the need for an interim Superintendent and requested the Board take action to restore community engagement.
- heard Board member Kellie Mullins give a rave review of “*Mean Girls*” and the incredible talent within the EHS Theatre Department.
- heard Board member Doug Weaver speak of the Winter Military Ball and the growing support for the AFJROTC program.