

NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE SESSION
OF THE
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Elkhart Community Schools
Elkhart, Indiana

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2026

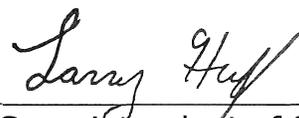
Time: 9:00 a.m.

Purpose: Reference Indiana Code Section 5-14-1.5-6.1-(b)-

(6) With respect to any individual over whom the governing body has jurisdiction.

(11) To train school board members with an outside consultant about the performance of the role of the members as public officials.

Location: ETHOS Innovation Center
1025 North Michigan Street
Elkhart, Indiana 46514



Superintendent of Schools

Posted and electronically delivered to News Media on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, and electronically delivered to Board Members and School Attorney on Friday, January 9, 2026.

Notice of Public Meeting on Superintendent's Contract

The Board of School Trustees of the Elkhart Community Schools ("Board") will hold a public meeting on Tuesday, January 27, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the J.C. Rice Educational Services Center located at 2720 California Road, Elkhart, Indiana, to discuss and hear public comments including objections to and support for the proposed terms of the employment contract between the Board and the Superintendent of Schools, as required by the terms of I. C. 20-26-5-4.3. This public meeting will be held during the regular school board meeting. The Board anticipates taking a vote on the proposed contract at this same meeting.

Summary of Proposed Superintendent's Contract

1. **Term:** A three (3) year term beginning July 1, 2026, and concluding on June 30, 2029, with a one (1) year extension unless notice given on or before January 1, 2029.
2. **Annual Base Salary:** \$195,000.00. Beginning on July 1, 2027, and for each employment year thereafter, an increase in annual salary by an amount that is equivalent to the highest dollar or percentage salary increase (whichever is greater) that is approved by the Board for any group or subgroup of teachers within the ESC bargaining unit.
3. **General Administrative Benefits:** equivalent to those provided to other full-time administrative employees.
4. **Retirement Benefits and Deferred Compensation:** Contribution to the Indiana State Teachers' Retirement Fund in the amount the Superintendent would otherwise be required to pay. Effective July 1, 2027, a contribution to the Superintendent's 403(b) account in an amount equivalent to 12% of the Superintendent's annual salary. Thereafter, the annual contribution will increase by an additional 1% per year.
5. **Vehicle Allowance:** \$10,000.00 per employment year.
6. **Cell Phone Stipend:** A monthly cell phone reimbursement stipend of \$150.00 per month.
7. **Business and Professional Expenses:** Reimbursement for ordinary expenses incurred in service of ECS, cost of attendance at pre-approved professional conferences, and cost of membership in recognized professional organizations.
8. **Physical Examination:** Any uninsured cost of an annual physical examination.
9. **Unused Vacation Days:** Beginning on July 15, 2027, compensation at per diem rate for up to 30 unused vacation days.
10. **Unused Sick Days:** Beginning on July 15, 2027, compensation at per diem rate for up to 30 unused sick days.
11. **Severance Benefit:** At the time of separation from employment, compensation at per diem rate for all accrued, but unused paid leave days.
12. **Duties:** Defined to include normal responsibilities of a superintendent, as detailed by policy and state law.
13. **Professional Liability:** ECS to indemnify and hold harmless the Superintendent from liability related to the scope of employment.
14. **Miscellaneous:** provisions regarding annual performance evaluation, contract termination, and other non-monetary terms consistent with Indiana law.
15. **Accumulated Sick Days:** Up to sixty (60) sick days accumulated during prior employment with an Indiana school corporation are eligible for use during each employment year once the annual allotment of sick days has been exhausted.

AGENDA FOR
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING

Elkhart Community Schools
Elkhart, Indiana

January 27, 2026

CALENDAR

Jan	27	9:00 a.m.	Executive Session Board Retreat, ETHOS Innovation Center
Jan	27	5:00 p.m.	Public Work Session, J.C. Rice Educational Services Center
Jan	27	6:00 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting, J.C. Rice Educational Services Center
Feb	10	5:00 p.m.	Public Work Session, J.C. Rice Educational Services Center
Feb	10	6:00 p.m.	Regular Board Meeting, J.C. Rice Educational Services Center

- A. CALL TO ORDER
- B. THE ELKHART PROMISE
- C. INVITATION TO SPEAK PROTOCOL
- D. PUBLIC COMMENT
- E. MOMENT OF PRIDE – SSAC
- F. CONSOLIDATION UPDATE – Policy Analytics
- G. EXCELLENCE OF ELKHART
- H. CONSENT ITEMS:
 - Minutes – January 13, 2026 – Annual Organizational Meeting
 - Minutes – January 13, 2026 – Annual Board of Finance Meeting
 - Minutes – January 13, 2026 – Regular Board Meeting
 - Claims
 - Fundraisers
 - Extra-Curricular Purchases
 - Gift Acceptances
 - Overnight Trip Requests
 - Conference Leave Requests
 - Personnel Report
- I. PUBLIC HEARING AND APPROVAL OF SUPERINTENDENT’S CONTRACT FOR THE 2026 – 2027 SCHOOL YEAR
- J. APPROVAL OF DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT’S CONTRACT FOR THE 2026 – 2027 SCHOOL YEAR

K. OLD BUSINESS

Contracts – The administration presents contracts for final consideration.

- AdTec

Board Policies – The administration presents proposed revisions to the following Board policies for final consideration:

- Board Policy 3220.01C – Teacher Appreciation Grants
- Board Policy 3413S – Support Staff Working Hours, Compensatory Time, and Overtime
- Board Policy 6700 – Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”)

L. NEW BUSINESS

Contracts – The administration presents contracts for initial consideration.

- Ivy Tech Community College
- Radio Research Consortium

Cancellation of Teaching Contract

Finance Update

Insurance Update

M. BOARD MEMBER APPRECIATION

N. INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

From Superintendent and Staff

From Board

O. ADJOURNMENT

MOMENT OF PRIDE



1.27.26

Brendan Scott
Camryn Tyrakowski

Speech and Debate

- Second Annual Kevin Ong Memorial Tournament - November 22
- 1st Place - Radio Broadcasting
- 2nd Place - Varsity Dramatic Interpretation
- 2nd Place - Novice Discussion
- 3rd Place - Team World Schools Debate



Blood Drive

- November 25
- National Honor Society
- 85 units of blood!
- Next one is March 10



Madrigals

- December 6
- Highest Level of Choir
- 3 course meal
- Orchestra - singing and speaking



Band and Choir

- December 11
 - Winter Celebration Concert
 - Symphony, Wind, Chamber Choir, Golden Choral
- December 15
 - Band & Orchestra Winter Concert
- December 16
 - Choral Wintersong Concert



Students doing good things

- Bring Change to Mind
 - December 15
 - Final Exam Stress Relief Bags
 - And Dogs!
- Toys for Tots - SG
 - Through annual Marine Corps program
 - Boxes at every building on both campuses
 - Filled 3 boxes
- Many groups worked Ugly Sweater Run



Students doing good things

- Jr. Reps to Cleveland, Woodland, and Daly
- Student Body Officers to transportation
- FFA collections for ECHS
- Society for Better Earth
- Athletes to Santa Breakfast



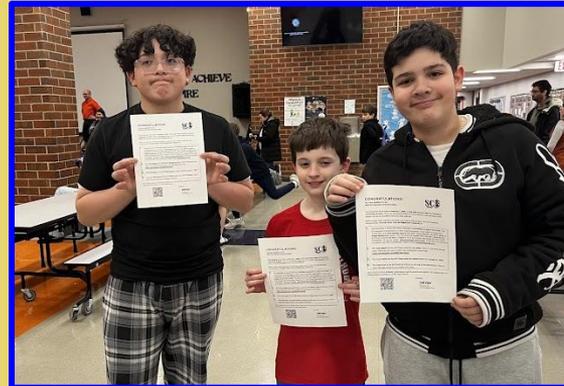
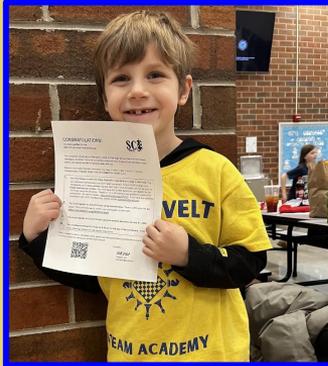
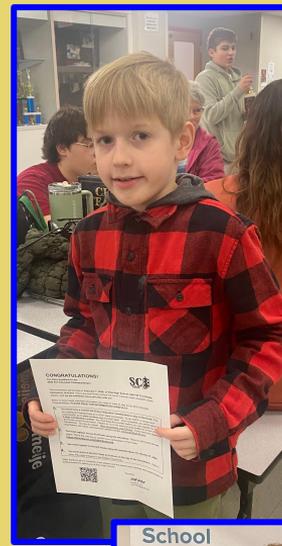
Cocoa/Cookies/Movie Night

- December 17
- Student Government hosted a movie night at ETI
- Grinch
- Cocoa and Cookies



CHESS

- December ECS tourney
 - 60 participants
 - Elliot Burns, overall champion
- Individual Regionals - January 6
 - 8 qualified for state February 7 @ Pike
 - 3 EHS, 2 WS, 1 PMMS, 1 Roosevelt, 1 EW



Bowling

Conference Champions

- Sectionals - January 10
 - Boys Team Champion
 - Individual -
 - 1st - Wyatt Skipper
 - 2nd - Lucas Claxton
 - 5th - Colin Albright
 - 6th - Kollin White
- Regionals - January 24



Health and Strength Center

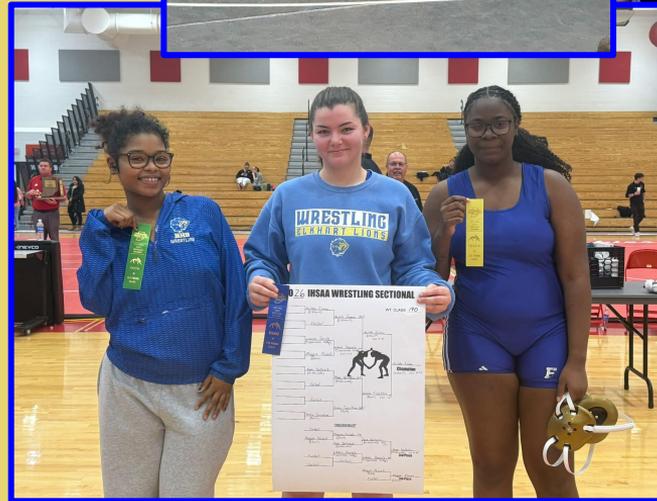


- Ribbon Cutting January 13
- 475 students over 2 days



Sports

- Girls Wrestling
 - Kalista Inman - Sectional Champion
 - Zoe Hunt also qualified for Regionals
- Boys Wrestling
 - 4th Place at NIC January 17



Sports

- Girls Swim & Dive
 - NIC January 17- 5th place
 - Sectional February 5/7
- Boys Swim
 - NIC January 31
- Cheer
 - 3 National Showcases
 - February 2 - 6 pm
 - @ Freshman Division



All State Music

- January 17 - Purdue Ft. Wayne
- Choir
 - Sean Dickerhoof
 - Corgan Hammond
 - Jaden Mikel Detwiler
 - Malaya Martinez
 - Lucy Kristoff
 - Luna Londono



All State Music

January 17 - Purdue Ft. Wayne

- **Band**

- Madelyn Fletcher- Flute
- Allison Hochstetler-Norris- Clarinet
- Ren Hunt- Alto Sax
- Josue Andres-Sanchez- Trumpet
- Grey Stutsman- Trombone

- **Junior Band**

- Arthur Todillo - Alto Sax - Alternate
- Ben Baltazar - Trumpet



Miguel Gallegos

- All American Soccer -honored January 17 in Philadelphia
- Currently in Italy playing for Juventus Residential Academy
- Has played soccer for 14 years
- Plans to get into a good college or go Pro
- Proud to have received an honor never awarded at Elkhart before



Rising Stars of Indiana

- Four Juniors recognized for academic achievement
 - Isaac Huff - ETI
 - Kaelyn Cobb - HPS
 - Alexis Sheets - ETI
 - Cordelia Padgett -A&C
- Indiana Association of School Principals
- Increases visibility and scholarship opportunities for students



Roberta Di Francisca

- Palermo, Sicily, Italy
- Cheerleader
- Excited to experience snow and cold
- Looking forward to Prom and Graduation



Upcoming Events



- Solo & Ensemble January 31
- Chess State
 - Individual February 7
 - Team March 21
- Swim & Dive Sectionals
 - Girls February 5 and 7
 - Boys February 19 and 21
- Cheer to Florida February 4-9

Upcoming Events



- Boys Wrestling Sectional January 31
- Basketball Sectionals
 - Girls February 3, 5, & 7
 - Boys March 3, 5, & 7
- Academic Letter Banquet February 11
- Coming Home Week February 17-20
 - Dance February 21
- FAFSA Parent Meeting - February 24
- Gymnastics Sectional February 28
- Board Appreciation Month - JANUARY! THANK YOU!

Excellence of Elkhart

January 27, 2026



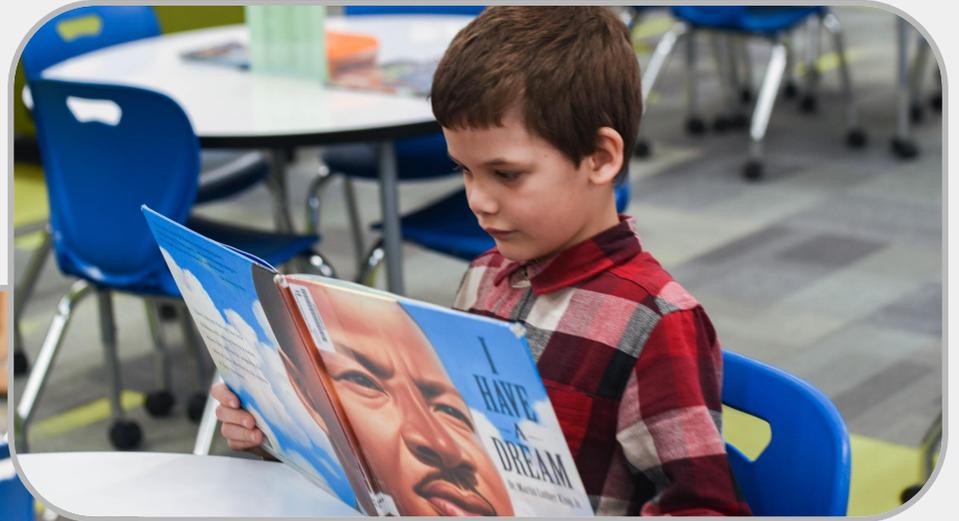
Excellence of Elkhart

ACADEMICS • ARTS • ATHLETICS



ACADEMICS

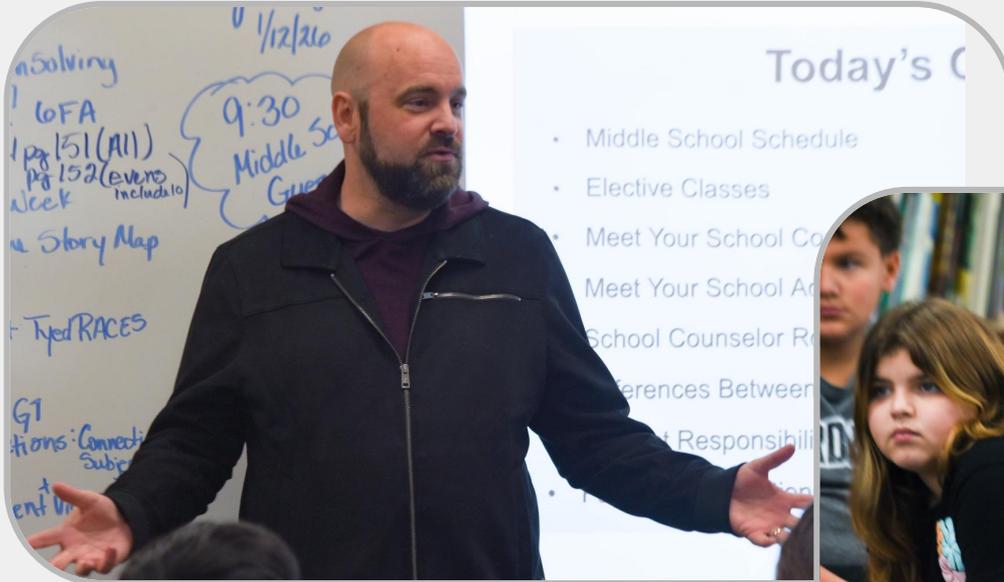
Monger MLK





ACADEMICS

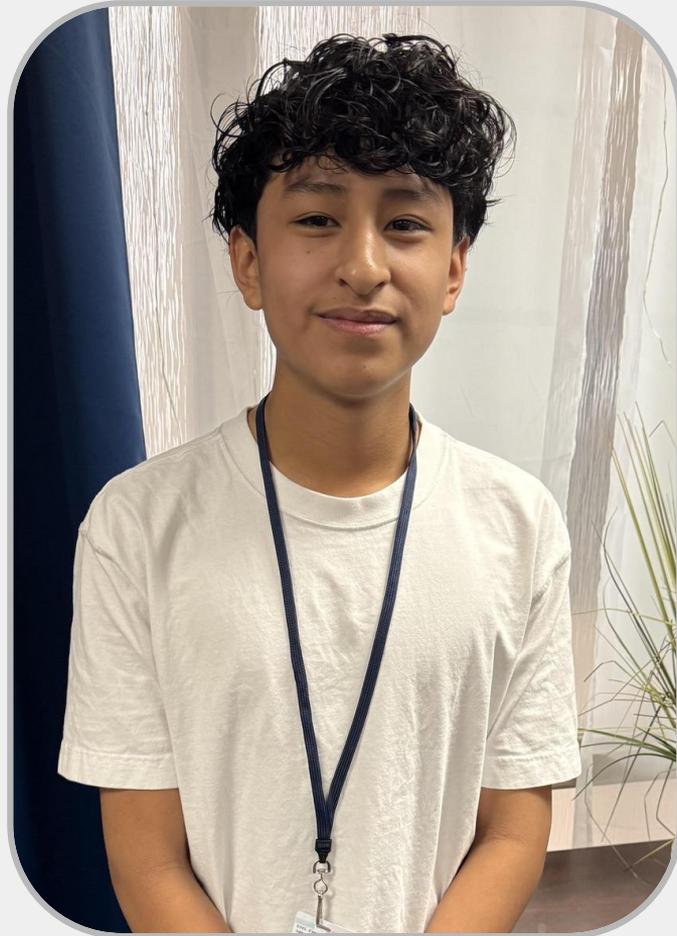
5th Grade Preparing for Middle School





ARTS

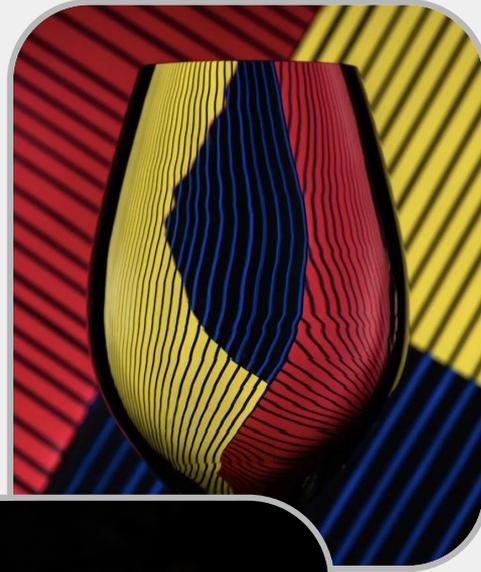
**Benjamin Baltazar,
Freshman Division**





ARTS

Scholastic Art Awards



80 YEARS OF WOMEN'S FASHION 1920-2000

1920
With women fighting for the vote at the time, Hemlines rose dramatically, and dresses often featured dropped waists and straight, tubular skirts. In vogue with the flapper dress and its fringed details. Accessories like long necklaces and pearl jewelry completed the look, reflecting the spirit of liberation.

1930
The 1930s continued to move feminine look, with longer hemlines, defined waists, and softer lines. Dresses featured details like ruffles, draping, and subtle embellishments, as seen in the skirt and the fitted bodice of the model. Modesty and sophistication became key ideas of the decade's trending fashion.

1940
Due to rationing restrictions, tight bodices, practicality and modesty became key. However, shoulders, waists, and skirts that fell just below the knee, often came to define the era. Double-breasted, asymmetrical and cinched styles were prominent through tailored details and pattern accessories.

1950
The 1950s showcased a return to feminine styles, with defined waists and fuller skirts, often adorned with polka dots, as seen with the model. Fitted bodices, blouses, and elegant accessories like gloves and pearls completed the look that defined the decade. This era showcased a glamorous and refined aesthetic.

1960
The early 1960s marked a return of the full-skirted look of the previous decade, often showcasing playful patterns like polka dots, as shown in the model. However, a shift towards simpler, more youthful styles was emerging, with shorter hemlines and less elaborate detailing. This period brought the miniskirt and the pill with the upturning front hem.

1970
The 1970s embraced diverse and expressive styles, with bold colors, patterns, and relaxed fits like bell-bottom jeans. High-waisted flared pants, like the bell-bottoms shown in the model, were immensely popular, often paired with fitted tops or blouses. This era celebrated individuality and a free-spirited aesthetic.

1980
The 1980s showcased a more casual and relaxed aesthetic, moving away from the bold look of the previous decade. Oversized clothing, particularly in tops and pants, were popular, often paired with metallic finishes, as seen in the model. This era favored a more understated and effortless style.

1990
The 1990s continued a more casual and relaxed aesthetic, moving away from the bold look of the previous decade. Oversized clothing, particularly in tops and pants, were popular, often paired with metallic finishes, as seen in the model. This era favored a more understated and effortless style.

2000
The early 2000s saw a return to fitted silhouettes, often featuring low-rise jeans and crop tops, as seen in the model. This decade showcased a more vibrant and expressive approach to fashion, with a mix of styles and individualistic elements. This era incorporated elements from previous decades while establishing its own distinct look.



ATHLETICS

Gymnastics





ATHLETICS

Cheer Heads to Nationals





FUTURE HAPPENINGS

- **Jan 31:** Wind, Percussion, String Solo & Ensemble
- **Jan 31:** Wrestling Sectionals
- **Feb 2:** EHS Cheer Nationals Showcase
- **Feb 4:** EFD Parent Night

**As always, you can
stay-up-to-date by
following us on social
media**



ElkhartCommunitySchools



Elkhartschools



Elkhart Community Schools



ParentSquare



MINUTES OF THE
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
OF THE
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Elkhart Community Schools
Elkhart, Indiana

January 13, 2026

J. C. Rice Educational Services Center, 2720 California Rd, Elkhart – 6:03 p.m.			Time/Place
Board Members Present:	Troy E. Scott Douglas K. Weaver Kellie L. Mullins	Mike Burnett Dacey S. Davis Eric Ivory Anne VonDerVellen	Roll Call
Board President Troy Scott called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.			Call to Order/Pledge
By unanimous action, the Board elected Troy Scott to serve as president, Kellie Mullins to serve as vice president, and Mike Burnett to serve as secretary of the Board of School Trustees for 2026.			Election of Officers
Three Board members: Dacey Davis, Troy Scott and Douglas Weaver, publicly disclosed potential conflicts of interest. (Codified Files 2526-095)			Conflict of Interest
By unanimous action, the Board adopted an organizational resolution naming Ronda Ross, treasurer; Erica Purvis, deputy treasurer; copy fees; officers and members of the Board of Finance shall be the same as the officers and members of the Board of School Trustees; Board member compensation; cash management provider is Lake City Bank; Legal Counsel is Barnes & Thornburg; legal notices to be published in the Elkhart Truth and Goshen News; mileage rate is \$.725; and bond amounts. (Codified File 2425-096)			Resolution of Board of School Trustees
The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:08 p.m.			Adjournment

APPROVED:

Signatures

Troy E. Scott, President

Mike Burnett, Member

Douglas K. Weaver, Vice President

Dacey S. Davis, Member

Kellie L. Mullins, Secretary

Eric Ivory, Member

MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF FINANCE

Elkhart Community Schools
Elkhart, Indiana
January 13, 2026

J.C. Rice Educational Services Center, 2720 California Road, Elkhart – at approx. 6:08 p.m.	Time/Place
Board Members Present: Troy E. Scott Douglas K. Weaver Kellie L. Mullins Mike Burnett Dacey S. Davis Eric Ivory Anne VonDerVellen	Roll Call
Board President Troy Scott called the annual meeting of the Board of Finance to order.	Call to Order
By unanimous action, the Board adopted a resolution authorizing the Treasurer of Elkhart Community Schools to invest funds from the depository balance instead of from a specific fund balance in accordance with the provisions established by Indiana Code 5-13-9.6. (Codified Files 2526-097)	Resolution
Board members were provided an investment history report, reflecting no investment activity during 2025, and the Investment Policy.	2025 Investment History and Policy
Per Indiana Code 5-13-7-8, Superintendent or designee needs to provide a report to the Board of Finance to assess the financial condition of the school corporation. Ronda Ross, Chief Financial Officer, presented the financial indicators report.	Financial Indicators
Ms. Ross presented the corporation’s financial indicators as required by the Distressed Unit Appeals Board. She noted that all Indiana school corporations are required to present their financial condition using the State’s fiscal indicator metrics.	
Ms. Ross reviewed the eight fiscal indicators and explained that the data primarily reflects 2024 financial information, with limited inclusion of 2025 ADM data. She highlighted declining student enrollment, fund balances, and annual deficits and surpluses, noting these indicators align with information previously shared with the Board.	
Ms. Ross stated declining enrollment, combined with current staffing levels in the Education Fund, has resulted in the continued use of cash balances and fund reserves. She emphasized the need for strategically aligned staffing adjustments to ensure both short-term financial stability and long-term sustainability.	
The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:13 p.m.	Adjournment

APPROVED:

Troy E. Scott, President

ATTESTED:

Kellie L. Mullins, Secretary

Signatures

MINUTES
OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Elkhart Community Schools
Elkhart, Indiana

January 13, 2026

J.C. Rice Educational Services Center, 2720 California Road, Elkhart, Indiana 46514 – at 6:13 p.m. Place/Time

Board Members Present:	Troy E. Scott Kellie L. Mullins Douglas K. Weaver	Mike Burnett Dacey S. Davis Eric Ivory Anne M. VonDerVellen	Roll Call
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Board President Troy Scott called the regular meeting of the Board of School Trustees to order. Call to Order

Board Secretary Kellie Mullins recited the Elkhart Promise. The Elkhart Promise

Mr. Scott provided an overview of naming of the next Superintendent, noting that Dr. Larry Huff had announced his resignation, but will remain with the district through the conclusion of the school year. The Board determined it was important to begin the superintendent search immediately to ensure continuity of leadership and to allow for collaboration during the transition period. Naming of New Superintendent

Mr. Scott further explained the Board conducted an internal search and reviewed qualified applicants, engaging in thorough discussion regarding the future needs of the district, including consolidation efforts, academic improvements, and financial alignment. He stated the Board reached a consensus decision intended to position the district for continued progress and stability.

Mr. Scott announced the Elkhart Community Schools (ECS) Board of Trustees approved Michele Riise as the district’s next Superintendent, effective July 1, 2026.

Mr. Scott shared that Mrs. Riise brings more than thirty-eight (38) years of experience in public education and currently serves as Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools. Her professional background includes service as a teacher, principal, central office administrator, and superintendent. Her experience includes improving student achievement, strengthening instructional systems, and maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Mrs. Riise will continue to work closely with Dr. Huff throughout the transition period to ensure continuity in leadership, decision-making, and district operations. Mrs. Riise has already worked collaboratively with Dr. Huff, the Cabinet, and district staff, particularly in relation to ongoing consolidation efforts.

Mrs. Riise has previously served as superintendent in two (2) districts and as an assistant superintendent overseeing academics, human resources, and operations. Her experience includes strategic planning, district consolidation efforts, and major facility projects.

Mr. Scott expressed the Board's appreciation to Dr. Huff for his leadership and stated his continued service during the transition will support district stability and long-term success.

Contract negotiations are underway, and a public notice of the proposed contract will be provided, with the goal of Board consideration at an upcoming meeting.

Three (3) audience members addressed the Board during public comment regarding the need for computers for Computer Science, transportation continuity and safety, and the Elkhart Tenured Site SA Report.

Public Comment

Ms. Adrienne Carrier of Barnes & Thornburg presented a resolution initiating the first step in a multi-step approval process for the financing of two proposed projects. She explained the proposed Series 2026A bonds would fund renovations at district elementary schools, and the proposed Series 2026B bonds would fund renovations at district secondary schools. Ms. Carrier noted the financings are structured consistent with prior bond issuances used to address long-term capital facility maintenance and improvements.

Resolution

Ms. Carrier stated the resolution authorizes a total par amount of \$13,730,000, to be repaid over a 20-year term, and provides for public hearings to be held at the February 24, 2026, meeting of the Board of School Trustees as part of the continued approval process.

By unanimous action, the Board approved the Resolution Preliminarily Approving 2026A District-wide Elementary School Facility Renovations and Equipping Update Project and 2026B District-wide Secondary School Facility Renovations and Equipping Update Project as presented. (Codified File 2526-098)

Ms. Latosha Bonds, Principal of the Elkhart High School (EHS) Freshman Division, provided an update on instructional priorities and student supports at the Freshman Division. She stated that the school's focus includes relationship-building, attendance, rigorous instruction and assessment, and parent communication, with the overall goal of fostering academic and personal excellence for all students.

EHS Freshman Division Report

Ms. Bonds reported that all freshman students participate in PSAT testing and engage in weekly practice questions in English Language Arts and mathematics to build familiarity with assessments. She also shared that students have opportunities to enroll in Principles courses aligned with graduation requirements, noting that students must earn a C+ or higher. She highlighted that 599 freshmen completed a project-based learning assignment, fulfilling Box 2 of graduation requirements.

Ms. Bonds reported the Freshman Division's current attendance rate of 93.31%, noting continued efforts to improve attendance through district protocols, student recognition, and family engagement. She emphasized ongoing celebrations of perfect attendance and consistent communication with families.

Ms. Bonds discussed transition supports for students moving from eighth grade to high school and from the Freshman Division to the grades 10–12 campus and Career Center. These supports include parent information nights, eighth-grade visits, campus tours, and college visits.

Ms. Bonds highlighted student engagement opportunities, including participation in athletics, performing arts, and a variety of clubs and activities. She noted recent successes in choir, student organizations, and building-based clubs designed to foster belonging and community.

Ms. Bonds shared that the Freshman Division emphasizes student celebration and recognition. She reported that 328 students met the ABC criteria—attendance of 95% or higher, no behavior referrals, and completion of first-semester credits—and will be recognized accordingly. She also noted ongoing PBIS celebrations.

Ms. Bonds concluded by expressing appreciation for the Freshman Division staff and acknowledged members of her administrative and instructional team present at the meeting.

Dr. Huff commended Principal Bonds for her presentation and leadership at the EHS Freshman Division. He highlighted the inclusive culture being created for both students and staff and emphasized the importance of building a school environment where students want to attend and remain engaged.

Dr. Huff specifically noted the Freshman Division's improved attendance rate, stating that increased attendance reflects positive student engagement and contributes to improved student outcomes. He recognized the efforts of the teachers and staff in creating meaningful experiences for students and acknowledged the recognition of the 328 students meeting attendance, behavior, and academic criteria.

Dr. Huff concluded by thanking Principal Bonds and her team for their

work in supporting students during a complex transition year and for their continued commitment to student success.

Mr. Phil Shults, Executive Principal of EHS, provided an update reflecting on his first semester in the role and shared an overview of progress and priorities across EHS, including the Freshman Division. He stated that a key focus has been aligning practices across campuses, with shared priorities in relationship-building, attendance, instruction, assessment, and parent communication.

EHS (10-12)
Campus Report

Mr. Shults highlighted student academic growth, particularly PSAT performance trends in mathematics and English Language Arts, noting significant reductions in the number of students scoring below proficiency and corresponding increases in students achieving proficiency as they progress through grade levels. He emphasized that these gains reflect increased familiarity with assessments and consistent instructional practices.

Mr. Shults reported on credit accumulation and graduation readiness, noting the importance of closely monitoring student progress toward graduation, particularly for the Class of 2029, which is subject to updated graduation requirements and state accountability measures.

Mr. Shults shared that attendance has improved by approximately two percent compared to the same time last year and described ongoing efforts by school administrators to engage families and reinforce district attendance expectations. He also noted the implementation of student incentives to encourage improved attendance.

Mr. Shults highlighted postsecondary readiness efforts, including FAFSA support events, college admissions visits, and partnerships with postsecondary institutions. He reported that more than 700 students earned over 5,000 dual college credits during the first semester, resulting in significant cost savings for students and families.

Mr. Shults provided an overview of student participation and success in athletics, performing arts, and extracurricular activities, including conference and state recognitions. He also shared examples of student clubs and service activities that support student engagement and community involvement.

Mr. Shults emphasized the importance of recognizing and celebrating students and shared the school's approach to frequent student recognition. He also recognized José Nava as a Lilly Endowment Community Scholar and noted his acceptance to the University of Notre Dame.

Mr. Shults concluded by expressing appreciation for the EHS administrative team, faculty, and staff and acknowledged those present at the meeting.

Dr. Huff commended Mr. Shults for his presentation and first-semester leadership at EHS. He highlighted Mr. Shults' intentional reflection, clear focus, and strong connections with students and staff. Dr. Huff noted the clarity of the PSAT data explanation, Mr. Shults' data-informed approach, and the personal emphasis reflected in his leadership. He congratulated Mr. Shults on a successful first semester and expressed confidence in continued progress.

Board Member Anne VonDerVellen expressed appreciation for the work of Mr. Shults and the EHS leadership team, including former Executive Principal Cary Anderson. She highlighted the district's 95% graduation rate, noting that it exceeds the state average, and commended the focus on PSAT preparation beginning in ninth grade. She emphasized the importance of high expectations, support for students, and thanked the staff for their collective efforts.

Board Member Eric Ivory noted that despite leadership transitions, expectations for EHS will remain consistent and clearly communicated, and he expressed appreciation for the continuity of focus.

Mrs. Mullins commended Mr. Shults for his visible presence, engagement with students, and collaborative leadership with the administrative team. She noted the positive feedback from students regarding his accessibility and involvement and praised the strong sense of community and teamwork evident across the high school campuses.

Wendy Wood, Director of Communication, shared some of the wonderful things happening in ECS during the Excellence of Elkhart, highlighting Academics, Arts, and Athletics.

Excellence of
Elkhart

In the area of Academics, at the EHS Freshman Division, librarian Ms. Magers hosted a pop-up library in the cafeteria prior to winter break, providing students the opportunity to select books to read during the break. This initiative supported reading for enjoyment and student engagement.

Additionally, EHS reported a 95.1% graduation rate, with 795 students earning diplomas, 10,074 college credits completed, 83 career and technical certifications earned, and an estimated \$2 million in annual savings for students and families.

In the area of Arts, at Woodland Elementary School, second-grade students read *Just Snow Already* and created illustrations and written reflections describing their ideal snow day. Students showcased creativity through depictions of snowmen, sledding, and snow-day activities.

Prior to winter break, West Side Middle School presented its annual musical, *Wildcats on Broadway*. Students performed a variety of show

tunes, demonstrating confidence, creativity, and collaboration.

In the area of Athletics, EHS Girls' Basketball Team defeated LaPorte, with the varsity team winning 62-35 and the junior varsity team earning a 48-10 victory. The EHS Boys' Swim Team also recorded multiple wins, defeating Marian 137-16, Washington 137-21, and St. Joseph 91-84.

Some upcoming events across Elkhart Schools include:

- January 19: no school for Martin Luther King Jr.
- January 22: Elementary, Vex Robotics Competition
- January 25: Gentleman and Scholar Spelling Bee
- January 31: Wind, Percussion, String Solo and Ensemble

For more information about Elkhart Schools, follow us on social media and the ECS website.

By unanimous action, the Board approved the following consent items:	Consent Items
Minutes – December 16, 2025 – Regular Board Meeting	Minutes
Payment of claims totaling \$17,493,226.00 as shown on the January 13, 2026, claims listing. (Codified File 2526-099)	Payment of Claims
Proposed school fundraisers in accordance with Board policy. (Codified File 2526-100)	Fundraisers
Extra-curricular purchase request: EHS Boys Track and Field Special Fund to purchase pole vault poles from MF Athletic for \$3,324.00; EHS Baseball General Fund to purchase a windscreen from Pioneer Athletics for \$4,510.50; EHS Softball General Fund to purchase a windscreen from Pioneer Athletics for \$2,425.75; and EHS Athletic General Fund to purchase an interactive display and mount from John L. Lindstedt for the Health & Strength Center for \$9,873.50.	Extra-Curricular Purchases
The following donations were made to ECS: \$10,000 from Monger Elementary PTO to Monger Elementary Extra-curricular Account to provide student enrichment, staffing for after-school programming, incentives, and other student and or staff needs; \$5,000 from an anonymous donor to EHS Boys Basketball Team to be used to assist with the growth and development of the team; \$10,000 from an anonymous donor to EHS Boys Basketball Team to be used for the growth and development of the team; \$1,000 from Julie Weaver to EHS Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) for costs associated with the Military Ball; donation of a 1970 Porsche MFR's ID #4702911811, with an owners estimated value of \$5,000, from Tom Abbott to the EACC to be used in the Automotive	Gift Acceptances

Technology program for training purposes; \$5,000 from C&E Excavating, Inc. to EACC in appreciation for a promotional video created by the Audio/Video Production class to be used to cover costs to expand and enrich educational opportunities for students; \$500 from Big C Lumber, care of Caitlin Stone, to EHS to be used to purchase supplies, equipment and expenses related to robot construction and attending competitions; and \$500 from Michaels Italian Restaurant, Inc. to EHS to be used to purchase supplies, equipment, and expenses related to robot construction and attending competitions.

Confirmation of the following Overnight Trip Requests: EHS Cheerleading, to participate in the National High School Cheerleading Championship in Orlando, Florida on February 4 – 9, 2026; EHS Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), to participate in the Indiana State Leadership Conference for FBLA in Muncie, Indiana on March 13 – 15, 2026; EHS Marching Band and Orchestras, to participate in Disney’s instrumental clinics, in Orlando, Florida on April 4 – 9, 2026; and EHS Japanese Exchange, to participate in the Elkhart/Yamate Gakuin Exchange Program, in Yokohama, Japan on July 17 – August 1, 2026.

Overnight Trip Requests

Confirmed submission of the following grants: Henkin Grant, hosted by Elkhart Educational Foundation (EEF), totaling \$3,036.66, used to create an after-school music club for 4th and 5th grade students, and 2026 NCCER COABE Grant, hosted by NCCER-National Center for Construction Education and Research, totaling \$20,000, used for tools, safety equipment, training kits, classroom supplies, and other associated start-up costs. (Codified File 2526-101)

Grants

Personnel Report

Administrative appointment of the following one (1) certified staff effective on July 1, 2026:
Michele Riise – Superintendent of Schools

Administrative Appointment

Employment of the following four (4) certified staff effective on date indicated:
Aylin Arriaga – ENL at Roosevelt, 12/15/25
Erikson Conkling – Mathematic at North Side, 1/5/26
Carol Fish – Psychologist at Exceptional Learners, 12/15/25
Judith Genewick – Grade 3 at Osolo, 2/2/26

Certified Employment

Transfer of the following four (4) certified staff effective January 5, 2026:
Billie Jo Etchason – Technology Integrator at ESC to Grade 3 at Feeser

Certified Transfers

Jeffrey Lindke – CAD at Career Center to Computer Science at Pierre Moran
Cortney Moreno – Instructional Coach at ESC to Kindergarten at Osolo
Elizabeth Quick – Technology Integrator at ESC to Math at West Side

Resignation of the following seven (7) certified staff effective on date indicated:

Certified Resignation

Seth Barnett – Machine Trades at Career Center, 2/6/26
Benjamin Chacko – Art at West Side, 12/19/25
Denise Copeland-Boyd – Special Education at Freshman Division, 12/19/25
Edward Hiar – Alternative Programs at Elkhart Academy, 12/19/25
Sophia Hummer – Language Arts at North Side, 12/19/25
Amber Kosar – Advertising Design at Career Center, 12/19/25
Angela McCaskill – Dental Health at Career Center, 1/7/26

Unpaid leave request for the following one (1) certified staff effective on dates indicated:

Certified Unpaid Leaves

Emily Clinton – Grade 5 at Osolo, beginning 1/19/26 and ending 2/19/26

Job description revision for the following one (1) certified administrative position:

Certified Job Description Revision

Deputy Superintendent

Employment of the following four (4) classified employees effective on date indicated:

Classified Employment

Esperanza Arms – Custodian at Osolo, 3/3/26
Tammara Barnes – Paraprofessional at Freshman Division, 3/3/26
Ana Victoria Santos – Secretary at Transportation, 2/27/26
Amani Simon – Paraprofessional at Career Center, 3/2/26

Transfer the following six (6) classified employees effective in the 2025 – 2026 school year:

Classified Transfers

Matthew Damer – Substitute Teacher at ESC to Paraprofessional at Monger
Pamela Dennis – Custodian at Freshman Division to Custodian at Cleveland
Todd Johnson II – Substitute Teacher at ESC to Paraprofessional at Elkhart Academy
Eric La Grand – Custodian at Elkhart High to Head Custodian at Eastwood

<p>Vantha Seth – Custodian at Beck to Custodian at Roosevelt Desiree Wright – Bus Driver at Transportation to Dispatcher at Transportation</p>	
<p>Employment of the following three (3) substitute teachers effective in the 2025-26 school year: Darcy Burns – Substitute Teacher Caden Miller – Substitute Teacher Shylah Mattison – Substitute Teacher</p>	<p>Substitute Teachers</p>
<p>Employment of the following two (2) claims employees effective in the 2025-26 school year: Brian Crouse – HSE Teacher at Adult Ed Al Haynes – Custodial Substitute at Building Services</p>	<p>Claims</p>
<p>Resignation of the following ten (10) classified employees effective on date indicated: Rebecca Allard – Custodial Substitute at Building Services, 12/8/25 Andrew Baney – Custodian at Cleveland, 12/30/25 Carl Burgess – Bus Driver Substitute at Transportation, 12/19/25 Cari Byler – Social Worker at North Side, 1/9/26 Joedward Bynum Jr. – Custodian at Elkhart High, 12/19/25 Candace Farver – Dispatcher at Transportation, 12/10/25 Sharron Lewis – Bus Driver at Transportation, 1/16/26 Shaylah Mattison – Paraprofessional at Cleveland, 1/9/26 Zeai Opaczweski – Technical Assistant at Cleveland, 12/19/25 Kayla Turpin – Paraprofessional at Beck, 12/17/25</p>	<p>Classified Resignations</p>
<p>Retirement revision of the following one (1) administrator effective on date indicated: Brian Buckley – Athletic Director at Elkhart High, 2/13/26</p>	<p>Administrator Retirement Revision</p>
<p>Retirement of the following one (1) classified employee effective on date indicated: Brenda Shaffer – Food Service at Commissary, 1/13/26 with 13 Years of Service</p>	<p>Classified Retirements</p>
<p>Termination of the following two (2) classified employees effective on date indicated: Nichole Blume – Substitute Teacher at ECS, 1/13/26 in accordance with Policy 3139.01S, 3162ACS Casey Neely – Bus Driver at Transportation, 1/13/26 in accordance with Policy 3139.01S, 3162ACS</p>	<p>Classified Terminations</p>

<p>By unanimous action, the Board approved the following contracts: Crowe, LLP; Barnes & Thornburg, LLP; University of Notre Dame du Lac; Professional Benefit Administrators, Inc.; City of Elkhart; AllOne Health Well, LLC; and Soliant Health, LLC. (Codified File 2526-102)</p>	<p>Contracts for Final Consideration</p>
<p>The administration presented contracts with AdTec and enFocus for initial consideration and requested to waive second reading for the enFocus contract.</p>	<p>Contracts for Initial Consideration</p>
<p>By unanimous action, the Board approved the enFocus contract. (Codified File 2526-103)</p>	
<p>The administration presented proposed revisions to Board Policy 3220.01C – Teacher Appreciation Grants; Board Policy 3413S – Support Staff Working Hours, Compensatory Time, and Overtime; and Board Policy 6700 – Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) for initial consideration.</p>	<p>Board Policy for Initial Consideration</p>
<p>By unanimous action, the Board approved a resolution authorizing an incentive for eligible certified staff to give notice of their intent to retire from employment with ECS on or before March 1, 2026. (Codified File 2526-104)</p>	<p>Resolution</p>
<p>By unanimous action, the Board approved a resolution authorizing supplemental payments to teachers in excess of the salary specified in the school corporation’s compensation plan, who are providing instruction to students beyond the normal load expected of teachers. (Codified File 2526-105)</p>	<p>Resolution</p>
<p>Ms. Ronda Ross, Chief Financial Officer, presented a consolidation update focused on the district’s newly developed financial dashboard. She explained the dashboard is a new resource for ECS, and was developed collaboratively by the Finance Department in partnership with the Superintendent’s Office, Communications, and Technology Services to support transparency and informed decision-making.</p>	<p>Consolidation Update</p>
<p>Dr. Huff noted the dashboard is intended to provide the community with a clear and transparent view of the district’s financial position. He explained the dashboard begins with high-level financial highlights, including student enrollment trends and the proportion of the Education Fund within the overall budget. Dr. Huff emphasized that discussions around consolidation date back to March 2025, when the district first began sharing detailed financial updates, and stated that the dashboard provides a centralized location for the public to review the financial data used to guide these difficult decisions. He highlighted the dashboard includes both current and historical financial information, cost savings, and challenges, reflecting the significant progress made by the district over the past nine months.</p>	

Ms. Ross then walked the through the dashboard's components. She explained it includes an overview of Indiana school finance to help users understand funding sources and statutory spending requirements. The dashboard outlines how federal, state, and local funds are allocated and clarifies why certain funds are used for facilities or capital projects while others are dedicated to instructional costs and salaries.

Ms. Ross shared the dashboard currently displays the district's 2025 budgeted revenue, with updates to be made as the 2026 budget is developed. She highlighted the Education Fund, primarily supported by state tuition support, represents the largest portion of the district's budget. The dashboard allows users to interact with charts to view both dollar amounts and percentages, and provides detailed explanations for each major fund, including Education, Operations, and Debt Service.

Ms. Ross further explained that cash balances and budget-to-actual spending data will be updated monthly following each Board financial presentation. The dashboard also outlines the district's financial challenges, including declining enrollment, staffing considerations, impact from Senate Enrolled Act 1, uncertainty in federal funding, and the need to right-size district operations. She noted additional analysis from the district's financial partner will be presented at a future Board meeting.

Ms. Ross highlighted the cost-saving measures implemented by the district, noting collaborative efforts across departments resulted in more than \$3 million in savings for 2025. The dashboard allows users to review and drill down into the specific components of those savings. She concluded by explaining the dashboard archives prior financial updates, hearings, budget meetings, audit reports, and frequently asked questions, and confirmed it would go live later that evening.

Mr. Scott thanked Ms. Ross and her team, stating that the dashboard is easy to navigate and critically important during the consolidation process. He emphasized the importance of making financial information accessible, understandable, and transparent, and encouraged community members and stakeholders to review the dashboard and ask questions. He acknowledged the significant time and effort invested in developing the resource and expressed appreciation for the work completed.

Dr. Huff added closing remarks, recognizing the Finance, Communications, and Technology Services teams for their extensive work over the past three months. He specifically thanked Mrs. Wood and Mr. DJ Rhodes for their contributions, and commended Ms. Ross for her leadership in managing complex financial work on a short timeline. Dr. Huff shared that external financial partners and oversight entities have recognized and praised the district's progress, noting the district's financial improvements reflect careful planning,

accountability, and difficult but necessary decision-making. He concluded by expressing his pride in the work completed and gratitude to Ms. Ross for her leadership and commitment to doing what is best for students, staff, families, and the community.

Dr. Huff shared reflections marked by both pride and strong emotion, emphasizing the district's graduation rate as a significant achievement. He commended EHS counselors, teachers, administrators, parents, and students for their collective efforts, noting the district's 95% graduation rate reflects meaningful progress. Dr. Huff stated while continued work remains to support the remaining 4% of students, the district should be proud of its accomplishments and maintain high expectations for all students.

From the
Superintendent

Dr. Huff then addressed comments made during public comment, noting he typically focuses his remarks on observations from around the district but felt it was important to respond in real time to sensitive issues raised. He affirmed that ECS maintains high expectations for all students and does not differentiate expectations based on student characteristics. He referenced formal validation from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) regarding disciplinary practices for students with disabilities, explaining that the district was previously identified for significant discrepancies prior to his tenure. Dr. Huff reported that, in a letter dated January 9, 2026, the IDOE determined ECS is now compliant with Indicator 4 and no further action is required, noting disciplinary practices are equitable across the district.

Dr. Huff further stated that disciplinary infractions have decreased significantly during the current year while expectations and accountability remain in place. He emphasized that discipline is rooted in care and support for students and staff and reiterated his commitment to protecting the integrity of the district through factual and documented information. He expressed pride in the district's graduation outcomes and stated that these results expand postsecondary opportunities for students. Dr. Huff also shared personal remarks underscoring the importance of equity and his commitment, as the district's first African American superintendent, to ensuring positive outcomes for all students, particularly students of color.

Dr. Huff also highlighted that ECS is the only district in Indiana to be fully compliant with the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program following an external audit.

Mr. Thorne confirmed ECS is the only district in the state audited by Olweus, based at Clemson University, and found to be fully compliant with its bullying prevention standards.

Dr. Huff then shared highlights from recent ribbon cuttings for district facilities, including the expanded Criminal Justice and Community

Center at the EACC, noting the high-quality learning environments, and expanded opportunities for students. He thanked the Board, staff, and Mr. Eakins for their support and leadership. He also praised the new Health and Strength Center, describing it as a world-class facility that rivals collegiate environments and reflects district pride, motivation, and student engagement.

Dr. Huff acknowledged leadership transitions within the district, congratulating Mrs. Riise on her new role and expressing confidence in her leadership and a commitment to supporting her success. He noted external experts indicated the district would have faced a setback of two to three years in its financial trajectory had a different leadership decision been made, emphasizing the value of developing internal leadership capacity. Dr. Huff expressed pride in the district's decision and confidence in its direction.

Dr. Huff concluded by addressing the importance of standing together as a school community, emphasizing responsibility in sharing accurate information and supporting one another. He underscored the district's obligation to advocate for students and staff and encouraged kindness, professionalism, and unity.

Board Member Doug Weaver requested the IDOE letter referenced be posted on the district's website.

Mrs. Mullins highlighted and celebrated the EHS Pep Band for their enthusiasm and contributions to school spirit. She shared an example from a recent basketball game where the Pep Band, seated throughout the bleachers among opposing spectators, strategically positioned themselves to project sound across the court. She commended the students for maintaining high energy and enthusiasm throughout the game, regardless of the outcome.

From the Board

Mrs. Mullins noted the Pep Band is a small group of students who dedicate significant time after school to support athletic events and energize the crowd. She encouraged the community to acknowledge and celebrate the Pep Band when attending sporting events, emphasizing the positive spirit and pride they bring to ECS.

Mr. Scott expressed his appreciation to the Board for their collaboration and commitment during a recent leadership transition. He shared that he was out of state when he received notification of Dr. Huff's decision and described his initial concern regarding the district's trajectory. Mr. Scott noted the significant progress the district has made, citing statewide recognition of district leadership, principals, teachers, counselors, and support staff, and emphasized that ECS is on a strong and positive path.

Mr. Scott stated that upon learning of the situation, he contacted Board members to discuss next steps. He thanked the Board for coming

together promptly to engage in thoughtful and productive dialogue, stressing the importance of moving quickly while also making the right decision, similar to the collective approach taken when selecting Dr. Huff as Superintendent.

Mr. Scott thanked Dr. Huff for his leadership and hiring decisions, acknowledging the transition decision was not easy. He noted the Board considered highly qualified candidates with experience in district leadership, finance, and consolidation and expressed confidence the selected internal leadership would ensure continuity without disruption.

Mr. Scott highlighted recent district milestones, including a ribbon cutting at the EACC and the opening of the Health and Strength Center, as evidence that positive momentum continues across the district. He shared his confidence was restored through the interview process and reaffirmed his belief that the district will continue to move forward successfully.

Mr. Scott thanked Board members for their time, availability, and dedication, particularly during the holiday season, acknowledging the additional meetings, executive sessions, and extended discussions required to reach a decision. He emphasized the Board's actions were deliberate and thoughtful and not made hastily.

Mr. Scott concluded by expressing confidence in the district's leadership moving forward and stated that ECS is resilient and well positioned to continue its path of excellence. He thanked the Board for their service and commitment to making a positive difference for the district and community.

Dr. Huff thanked Mr. Scott and expressed appreciation to the Board in recognition of School Board Appreciation Month. He acknowledged the significant time, responsibility, and behind-the-scenes work required of Board members, including major decisions related to leadership, budgeting, and curriculum. Dr. Huff thanked the Board for its guidance and support during his tenure, recognized the public scrutiny Board members often face, and expressed gratitude for their commitment, resilience, and continued dedication to ECS.

Mrs. Mullins thanked Julie and others for the Board appreciation gifts. She expressed enthusiasm and confidence in the district's leadership team, particularly during the upcoming transition, and voiced her support for the continued growth and success of the administration. She concluded with words of encouragement and school pride.

Board Member Dacey Davis expressed appreciation for the district's leadership team, noting that effective leadership depends on a strong and trusted team. She acknowledged Dr. Huff for building a capable team and expressed confidence in Mrs. Riise and Dr. Amy Rauch, citing their prior working relationship and shared leadership strengths. Ms.

Davis thanked district leadership and Cabinet members for their commitment to ECS and expressed confidence in the districts continued stability and progress during the leadership transition.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:37 p.m.

Adjournment

APPROVED:

Signatures

Troy E. Scott, President

Douglas K. Weaver, Vice President

Kellie L. Mullins, Secretary

Mike Burnett, Member

Dacey S. Davis, Member

Eric Ivory, Member

Anne M. VonDerVellen, Member

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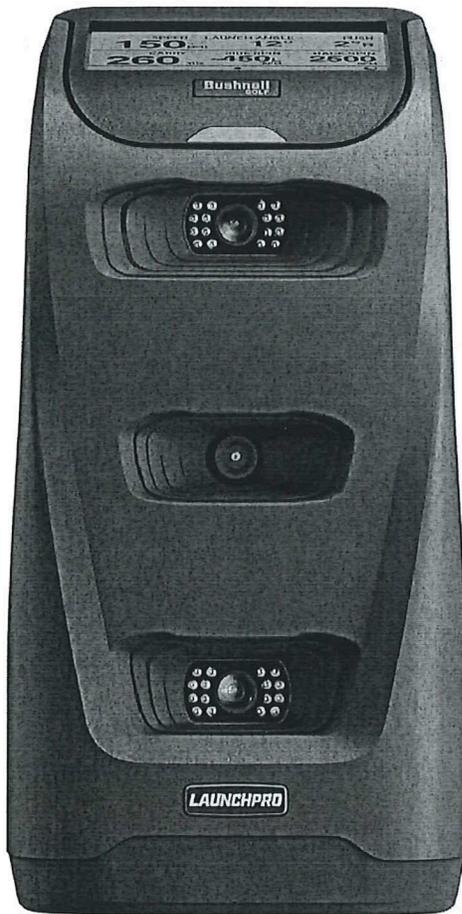
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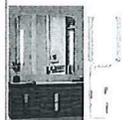
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Human Resources Department

2720 California Road • Elkhart, IN 46514

Phone: 574-262-5500

TO: DR. LARRY HUFF
FROM: MS. MAGGIE LOZANO
DATE: JANUARY 27, 2026

PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS

CERTIFIED

- a. **New Certified Staff** – We recommend the approval of two (2) new certified staff for the 2025-26 school year.
- b. **Separation** – We report the separation of three (3) employees.
- c. **Retirement** - We report the retirement of three (3) employees who have provided a total of forty-four (44) years of service.

CLASSIFIED

- a. **New Classified Staff** – We recommend one (1) new classified staff for employment in the 2025-26 school year.
- b. **Classified Staff Transfers** – We recommend the transfer of one (1) classified staff for the 2025-26 school year.
- c. **Substitute Teachers** – We recommend the employment of two (2) substitute teachers for the 2025-26 school year.
- d. **Separation** – We report the separation of six (6) employees.
- e. **Death** - We report the death of one (1) employee who has provided nine (9) years of service.



DISTRICT COUNSEL/
CHIEF OF STAFF

ELKHART
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

For Final Consideration

To: BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

FROM: W. DOUGLAS THORNE
DISTRICT COUNSEL/CHIEF OF STAFF

WDT
Larry Huff

DATE: JANUARY 23, 2026

RE: CONTRACTS RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD APPROVAL

The Administration recommends approval of the following contracts. All contracts are reviewed by the Chief Financial Officer and District Counsel prior to submission to the Board.

Contractor	Requesting Administrator	Description	Funding Source	Amount
AdTec	DJ Rhoades	Recommendation to approve agreement with AdTec for Category 2 E-rate consultation for the 2026 funding year. The services allow for ECS to receive the maximum amount of available funds in order to subsidize our internet network access.	Operations	\$15,680

WDT/crr

Cc: Dr. Larry Huff, Superintendent

Book	Policy Manual
Section	3000 Personnel
Title	Proposed Revised - TEACHER APPRECIATION GRANTS
Code	po3220.01C
Status	Second Reading
Adopted	September 12, 2017
Last Revised	January 27, 2026

3220.01C - **TEACHER APPRECIATION GRANTS**

The Board of School Trustees adopts this policy for the benefit of the School Corporation's teachers. The Corporation shall apply for and distribute teacher appreciation grand funds as described in this policy.

Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

The term "teacher" means a professional person whose position with the Corporation requires a license (as defined in I.C. 20-28-1-7) and whose primary responsibility is the instruction of students.

The term "license" refers to a document issued by the IDOE that grants permission to serve as a particular kind of teacher. The term includes any certificate or permit issued by the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE).

Eligibility for Teacher Appreciation Grants:

To be eligible for a grant under the program, the Corporation must:

- A. apply in a manner prescribed by the IDOE;
- B. identify not more than twenty percent (20%) of certified teachers as eligible grant recipients annually based on criteria outlined below;
- C. report how each recipient met the criteria outlined below; and
- D. meet any other requirements established by the IDOE.

Distribution of Annual Teacher Appreciation Grants:

Teacher appreciation grant funds received by the Corporation may be used only to pay stipends within the amounts described below to licensed teachers who meet the following criteria:

- A. have instructed students in the Corporation for at least one (1) school year prior to the grant distribution year;
- B. maintain employment at the Corporation at the time of the grant distribution;
- C. are determined to significantly impact student outcomes using National, State, or local assessment measures; and
- D. are designated in one (1) of the following categories:
 1. meets the criteria for a recognition stipend;
 2. meets the criteria for an exemplary stipend; or
 3. meets the criteria for an exemplary plus stipend.

The following criteria apply in evaluating a teacher for a stipend designation:

- A. For a recognition stipend designation, whether the teacher demonstrates high performance in teaching based on student outcomes.
- B. For an exemplary stipend designation whether the teacher:

1. demonstrates high performance in teaching based on student outcomes; and
 2. meets one (1) of the following:
 - a. mentors or coaches another teacher to improve student outcomes, or provides instructional leadership to improve student outcomes across multiple classrooms; or
 - b. serves in a high need or geographic shortage area as determined by the IDOE based on educator supply and demand.
- C. For an exemplary plus stipend designation, whether the teacher:
1. demonstrates high performance in teaching based on student outcomes;
 2. mentors or coaches another teacher to improve student outcomes, or provides instructional leadership to improve student outcomes across multiple classrooms; and
 3. serves in a high need or geographic shortage area as determined by the IDOE based on educator supply and demand.

The Corporation shall utilize the rubric developed by the IDOE pursuant to I.C. 20-43-16-7.

The Corporation shall distribute the teacher appreciation grant funds as follows.

The amount of the stipend that the Corporation may distribute to a teacher for a State fiscal year under this chapter must be within the following amounts:

- A. For a teacher who receives a stipend for a recognition designation, \$3,500.
- B. For a teacher who receives a stipend for an exemplary designation, \$5,000.
- C. For a teacher who receives a stipend for an exemplary plus designation, \$7,500.

The Corporation shall not allocate a percentage of the Teacher Appreciation Grant funds received to provide a supplemental award to teachers who serve as mentors to teachers who have less than two (2) years of service.

If the Corporation is the local educational agency (LEA) or lead school corporation that administers a special education cooperative or joint services program or a career and technical education program, including programs managed under I.C. 20-26-10, I.C. 20-35-5, I.C. 20-37, or I.C. 36-1-7, then it shall award teacher appreciation grant stipends to and carry out the other responsibilities of an employing school corporation under this section for the teachers in the special education program or career and technical education program with respect to the teacher appreciation grant funds it receives on behalf of those teachers.

A stipend to an individual teacher in a particular year is not subject to collective bargaining and is in addition to the minimum salary or increases in the salary set under I.C. 20-28-9-1.5. The Corporation may discuss with a certificated employee or a group of certificated employees at one or more meetings open to all certificated employees the policy for distribution of teacher appreciation grants.

The Corporation shall distribute all stipends from a teacher appreciation grant to individual teachers within sixty (60) business days of the date the IDOE distributes the teacher appreciation grant funds to the Corporation.

The Corporation shall return any part of the grant not distributed as stipends to teachers not later than June 30 of the applicable State fiscal year.

I.C. 20-18-2-22

I.C. 20-28-1-7

I.C. 20-43-16

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The Board of School Trustees adopts this policy for the purpose of determining the distribution of teacher appreciation grants. This policy shall be submitted to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) along with the School Corporation's staff performance evaluation plan online as one (1) document by September 13, 2024.

Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

The term teacher means a professional person whose position with the Corporation requires a license (as defined in I.C. 20-28-1-7) and whose primary responsibility is the instruction of students.

The term license refers to a document issued by the IDOE that grants permission to serve as a particular kind of teacher. The term includes any certificate or permits issued by the IDOE.

Distribution of Annual Teacher Appreciation Grants:

Teacher appreciation grant funds received by the Corporation shall be distributed to licensed teachers who meet the following criteria:

- A. employed in the classroom (including providing instruction in a virtual classroom setting);
- B. rated as Effective or Highly Effective on their most recent performance evaluation; and
- C. employed by the Corporation as of December 1st of the year in which the teacher appreciation grant funds are received by the Corporation.

The Corporation shall distribute the teacher appreciation grant funds it receives as follows:

- A. The Corporation shall not allocate a percentage of the Teacher Appreciation Grant funds received to provide a supplemental award to each teacher with less than five (5) years of service who is rated as highly effective or effective on the most recent performance evaluation;
- B. A cash stipend as determined by the Superintendent shall be distributed to all teachers in the Corporation who are rated as Effective; and
- C. A cash stipend in an amount that is twenty five percent (25%) more than the stipend given to the teachers rated as Effective shall be distributed to all teachers in the Corporation who are rated as Highly Effective.

A stipend to an individual teacher in a particular year is not subject to collective bargaining but is discussable and is in addition to the minimum salary or increases in the salary set under I.C. 20-28-9-5.

The Corporation shall distribute all stipends from a teacher appreciation grant to individual teachers within twenty (20) business days of the date the IDOE distributes the teacher appreciation grant funds to the Corporation.

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Board and shall be submitted to the IDOE annually by the Superintendent as indicated above.

~~Revised 9/11/18~~
~~Revised 9/10/19~~
~~Revised 9/8/20~~
~~T.C. 8/10/21~~
~~Revised 8/23/22~~
~~Revised 9/12/23~~

Legal
I.C. 20-18-2-22
I.C. 20-28-1-7
I.C. 20-43-10-3.5

Book	Policy Manual
Section	3000 Personnel
Title	Proposed Revised - SUPPORT STAFF WORKING HOURS, COMPENSATORY TIME, AND OVERTIME
Code	po3413S
Status	Second Reading
Adopted	November 22, 2016
Last Revised	December 17, 2019
Last Reviewed	January 27, 2026

3413S - SUPPORT STAFF WORKING HOURS, COMPENSATORY TIME, AND OVERTIME

The assigned working hours of all support employees are established by the Director of Human Resources in consultation with the administrator who is the employee's immediate supervisor, and the corporation ~~Treasurer~~ Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

Employees who wish to begin the work day earlier or later than the assigned hours for their position must receive prior written authorization from their immediate administrative supervisor, who shall provide a copy of this authorization to the Director of Human Resources.

Any employee who has a change in the number of hours worked per day, other than a temporary change, shall have his/her benefits for the current year changed accordingly. The increase or decrease shall be based upon the new number of hours worked per day.

The workweek shall begin at 12:00 a.m. on Sunday and end at 11:59 p.m. on Saturday.

Overtime work is defined as ~~time~~ hours actually worked by non-exempt support employees in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek. Paid benefit days shall ~~not~~ be included in the calculation of time worked.

For all non-exempt support employees, pay for overtime work will ~~normally~~ be at the rate of one and one-half (1-1/2) times the employee's regular hourly rate; ~~exceptions to the foregoing are set forth in employee handbooks.~~

In the event an employee is required to work on a day that would normally be a paid holiday for this employee, the employee will receive holiday pay and, in addition, will be compensated for all hours ~~actually~~ worked on the holiday ~~at two times their regular rate of pay~~ according to the terms of this policy.

Non-exempt employees who are required to work for more than their assigned hours during the workweek shall either be paid ~~by claim~~ for said hours or, with the approval in writing from their immediate administrative supervisor, may be awarded compensatory time off. Except in emergencies, non-exempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their assigned hours without the approval of their immediate administrative supervisor and the Chief Financial Officer/Designee.

A record of compensatory time awarded to a non-exempt employee shall be reported ~~in a form acceptable~~ to the Business Office in a timely fashion. Such records shall be maintained in the Business Office. Compensatory time is awarded hour for hour until the employee has worked in excess of forty (40) hours during the workweek, and thereafter shall be awarded at the rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) hours for each hour worked in excess of forty (40) hours.

Compensatory time may be accrued up to thirty (30) hours and must be used within the calendar year it has been earned; exceptions to this may be authorized by the Chief Financial Officer.

Revised 1/13/2026

Book	Policy Manual
Section	6000 Finances
Title	Proposed Revised - FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT ("FLSA")
Code	po6700
Status	Second Reading
Adopted	November 22, 2016
Last Revised	June 9, 2020
Last Reviewed	January 27, 2026

6700 - FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT ("FLSA")

Statement of Policy

It shall be the policy of the Elkhart Community Schools to comply with the provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

Definitions of Terms Applicable to this Policy:

- A. **"Employ"** means to suffer or permit work.
- B. **"Exempt Employees"** means an employee who is exempt from the FLSA minimum wage and overtime provision. These employees may include executive, administrative, professional, and computer employees earning at least a specified minimum salary.
- C. **"FLSA"** means the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 as amended by 29 U.S.C. Section 201 et seq. and the regulations implementing this Act found, in part, at 29 C.F.R. Part 541.
- D. **"Non-Exempt Employee"** means an employee who is not exempt from the FLSA minimum wage and overtime provisions.
- E. **"Primary Duty"** means the principal, main, major, or most important duty that the employee performs. Determination of an employee's primary duty shall be based on all the facts in a particular case, with the major emphasis on the character of the employee's job as a whole.
- F. **"Salary Basis"** means an employee regularly receives a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period on a weekly, or less frequent, basis.
- G. **"Workday"** means the period between the time on any particular day when an employee commences his/her "principal activity" and the time on that day at which s/he ceases such principal activity or activities. The workday may therefore be longer than the employee's scheduled shift, hours, tour of duty, or production time.
- H. **"Workweek"** means the seven (7) day period of time beginning on Sunday at 12:00 a.m. and continuing to the following Saturday at 11:59 p.m.

Minimum Wage

It is the policy of the Elkhart Community Schools to pay at least the minimum wage required by the FLSA to all employees.

Recordkeeping Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of all non-exempt employees to record and submit an accurate account of their absences each pay period ~~on approved forms~~. An employee's misrepresentation or failure to submit an accurate account of their absences may subject the employee to discipline up to and including discharge.

Non-exempt employee time records shall be verified by a supervisor who has personal knowledge of the hours worked by the employee. It shall be a violation of this policy for a supervisor to ask a non-exempt employee to record fewer hours than were actually worked by the employee.

A non-exempt employee's time record is an official school record and will be maintained for a period of not less than three (3) years.

Overtime

Overtime for hourly non-exempt employees shall be paid at a rate of one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay for each hour **actually** worked in a workweek in excess forty (40) hours.

Overtime may be authorized only by the Chief Financial Officer or designee and will be used primarily to address circumstances of an emergency or temporary nature. Non-exempt employees who work overtime without prior approval from a supervisor may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Compensatory Time

- A. In the event an employee is required to work on a day that would normally be a paid holiday for this employee, the employee will receive holiday pay and, in addition, will be compensated for all hours worked on the holiday ~~at two (2) times their regular rate of pay~~ **according to the terms of this policy.**
- B. Non-exempt employees who are required to work for more than their assigned hours during the workweek shall either be paid ~~by claim~~ for said hours or, with the approval in writing from their immediate administrative supervisor and the Chief Financial Officer/Designee, may be awarded compensatory time off. Except in emergencies, non-exempt employees are not authorized to work beyond their assigned hours without the approval of their immediate administrative supervisor and the Chief Financial Officer/Designee.
- C. A record of compensatory time awarded to a non-exempt employee shall be reported in a form acceptable to the Business Office in a timely fashion. Such records shall be maintained in the building and in the Business Office. Compensatory time is awarded hour-for-hour until the employee has worked in excess of forty (40) hours during the workweek, and thereafter shall be awarded at the rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) hours for each hour worked in excess of forty (40) hours.
- D. Compensatory time may be accrued up ~~to sixteen (16)~~ **to thirty (30)** hours.
- E. An employee requesting to use earned compensatory time must provide reasonable advance notice of the request to his/her immediate administrative supervisor. The employee and District agree that reasonable advance notice is five (5) days. The immediate administrative supervisor shall grant such request, unless doing so would unduly disrupt the District's operations. If the employee's original request cannot be accommodated, the employee and his/her immediate administrative supervisor will mutually agree upon a different time to use the requested comp time. Unless the employee agrees otherwise, the new date shall be within a reasonable period (typically five (5) days) of the date the employee originally requested to be off. The District reserves the right to substitute a monetary payment, in whole or in part, for an employee's accrued compensatory time.
- F. Individuals with unused compensatory time who are terminated or who terminate their employment are paid for unused compensatory time according to the following: The rate of compensation is not less than the average regular rate received by the employee during the last three (3) years of his/her employment or the final regular rate received by the employee, whichever is higher.
- G. Determination of an employee's regular rate will be made according to the U.S. Department of Labor guidelines.

Joint/Dual Employment

Joint/Dual Employment exists when:

- A. an employee is employed in two (2) wage positions or a salaried and a wage position with the Elkhart Community Schools; and
- B. at least one of the positions is non-exempt:
 - 1. if one of the positions is exempt, the hours may not have to be added together to calculate the number of overtime hours worked;

To determine this, the duties of the two (2) positions must be combined as if one (1) position. If the percentage of time spent performing non-exempt duties exceeds fifty percent (50%), the employee is considered non-exempt and hours worked shall be added together for the two (2) positions.
 - 2. if both positions are non-exempt, hours worked are cumulative, and overtime shall be paid after forty (40) hours are worked in a workweek in one (1) or a combination of positions;
 - 3. if the two (2) positions are paid at different rates, a weighted average shall be used as the regular rate for determining overtime compensation due.

Joint employment does not exist when the employee independently seeks employment with another school corporation or another state agency.

Volunteers



DISTRICT COUNSEL/
CHIEF OF STAFF

ELKHART
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

For First Consideration

TO: BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

FROM: W. DOUGLAS THORNE *WD*
DISTRICT COUNSEL/CHIEF OF STAFF *Larry Huff*

DATE: JANUARY 23, 2026

RE: CONTRACTS RECOMMENDED FOR BOARD APPROVAL

The Administration recommends approval of the following contracts. These contracts have been reviewed by the Chief Financial Officer and District Counsel prior to submission to the Board.

Contractor	Requesting Administrator	Description	Funding Source	Amount
Ivy Tech Community College	Doug Thorne	Recommendation to approve MOU with Ivy Tech Community College – South Bend/Elkhart to allow EACC students enrolled in Health Science programming – including Pre-Nursing, Emergency Medical Technician, and Exercise Science – to earn college credit at no cost to the student.	Perkins Grant	\$85,000
Radio Research Consortium	Doug Thorne	Recommendation to approve agreement between WVPE and Radio Research Consortium. Agreement gives WVPE five (5) years access to Nielsen data related to WVPE programming operations.	WVPE	2026 \$5,040 2027 \$5,200 2028 \$5,390 2029 \$5,610 2030 \$5,870

WDT/crr

Cc: Dr. Larry Huff, Superintendent

ACCOUNT BALANCES/INVESTMENT DETAIL
December 2025

CASH:

Petty Cash	\$	500.00
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BANK ACCOUNTS:

Lake City Bank – Accounts Payable	\$	(288,849.36)
Lake City Bank – Payroll Account		(13,454.91)
Lake City Bank – Flex Account		89,909.17
Lake City Bank – Merchant Account		-
Lake City Bank – Prepaid Lunch		99,926.60
Lake City Bank – Deposit Account		29,720,197.60

INVESTMENTS:

Certificate of Deposit	-
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\$ 29,608,229.10



MONTHLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Ronda Ross, CPA, JD, MBA, M.Ed.L

Board Meeting

1/27/2026

EXPENDITURES - Education Fund

	November	December
Beginning Cash Balance	3,513,171.18	2,313,520.21
<i>Total Receipts</i>	7,225,050.90	6,916,441.97
<i>Expenses</i>		
100 - Wages	4,891,110.36	4,919,259.87
200 - Benefits	1,502,077.29	1,471,512.05
300 - Professional Svcs	89,717.01	87,671.16
400 - Purchased Property Svcs		
500 - Other Purchased Svcs	28,132.69	34,931.24
600 - Supplies	161,933.69	48,256.95
600 - Curricular Materials	17,005.73	28,257.27
700 - Property		
800 - Other	487.19	55.54
900 - Transfers	734,237.91	257,801.27
<i>Total Expenses</i>	7,424,701.87	6,847,745.35
<i>Net Revenue (Expense)</i>	(199,650.97)	68,696.62
<i>Transfers to Operations</i>	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00
Ending Cash Balance	2,313,520.21	1,382,216.83



Revenues decreased



Expenditures decreased



Positive Net Revenue



Positive Year-End Cash Balance



2025 BUDGET - Education Fund

	1782 Notice Budget Notice	Adjusted Budget	2025 Actual
Revenue			
1000 - Local Sources	2,405,000	1,386,113	1,386,369
2000 - Intermediate Srvcs.	500	500	0
3000 - State Sources	97,225,000	91,220,505	90,898,056
5000 - Other Financing Sources		897,791	831,728
Total Revenue	99,630,500	93,504,909	93,116,153
Expenses			
Budgeted Expenses	(90,585,364)	(89,954,706)	(89,688,978)
Carry Forwrd Purch. Orders	(2,182,976)	(2,155,447)	(2,155,447)
Total Expenses	(92,768,340)	(92,110,153)	(91,844,425)
Transfers to Operations	(9,000,000)	(3,000,000)	(3,000,000)
Total Expenses & Transfers	(101,768,340)	(95,110,153)	(94,844,425)
Net Revenue (Expense)	(2,137,840)	(1,605,244)	(1,728,272)
Beginning Cash Balance	3,110,489	3,110,489	3,110,489
Ending Cash Balance	972,649	1,505,245	1,382,217

\$6M Revenue reduction from 1782 Notice

\$6M adjustment made here to compensate for reduced revenue projection.

Used beginning cash balance (reserves) to cover overspend.

1,382,217



EXPENDITURES - Education Fund

Expenses		% of Revenue
100 - Wages	65,872,920	70.74%
200 - Benefits	19,813,819	21.28%
300 - Professional Svcs	1,337,804	1.44%
400 - Purchased Property Svcs	-	
500 - Other Purchased Svcs	640,019	0.69%
600 - Supplies	844,421	0.91%
600 - Curricular Materials	666,625	0.72%
700 - Property	-	
800 - Other	22,351	0.02%
900 - Transfers	2,646,465	2.84%
Transfers to Operations	3,000,000	3.22%
		101.86%
Beginning Cash Bal. Used	1,728,272	1.86%

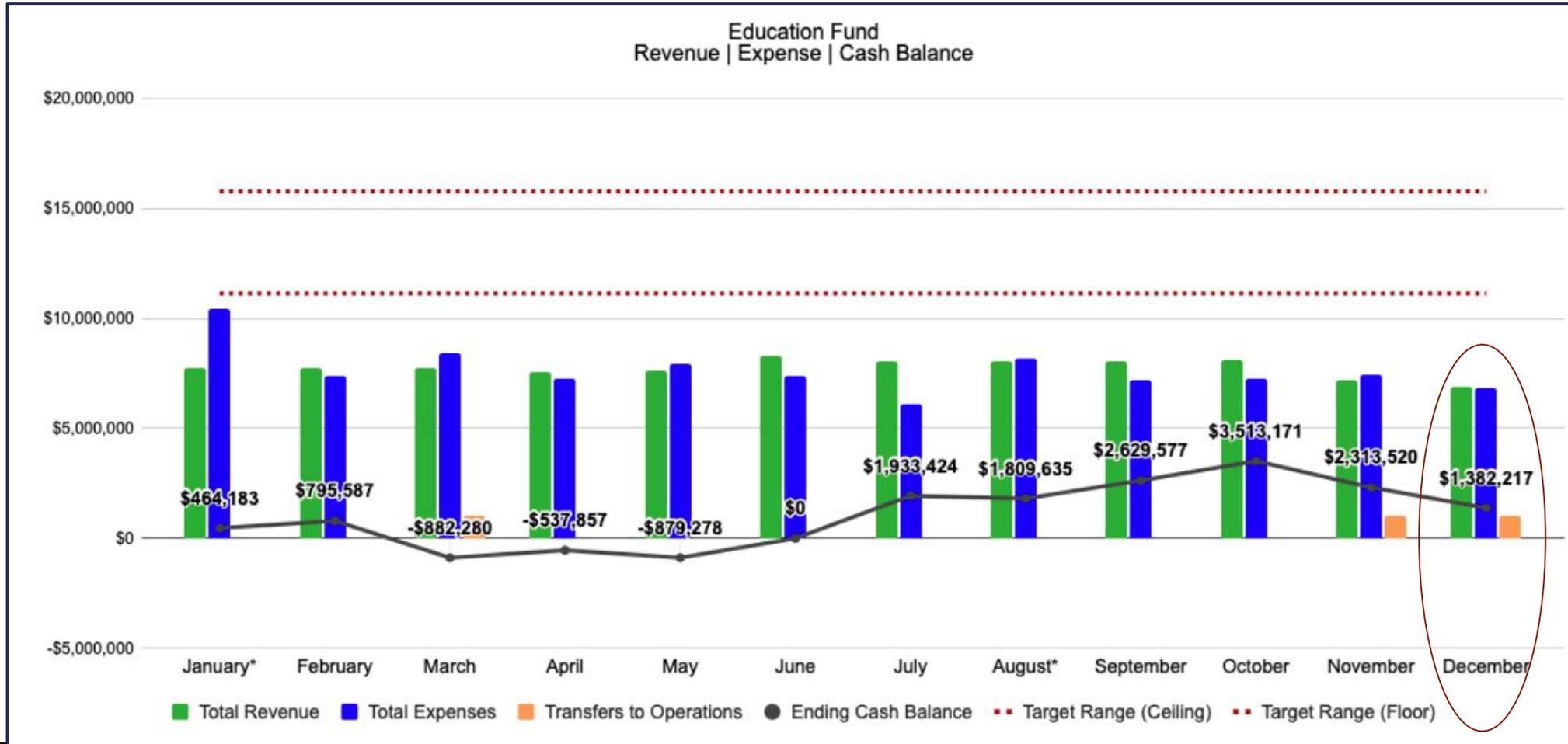
Year-End Summary

- **92% Wages & Benefits**
 - $\$86\text{M}/\$93\text{M} = \sim 92\%$
- **6.5% Other Items**
 - Curriculum, Supplies, Professional Srvcs.-> benefits to the classroom
 - $\$6\text{M}/93 = 6.5\%$
- **3% Transfers to Ops**

- **2026 savings must come from Wages/Benefits:**
 - Based on a \$93M Revenue Estimate:
 - \$70M budget for wages/benefits for 2026 vs. \$86M spent in 2025
 - \$16M budget gap from current spend to balanced budget
 - Average of \$1.3M per mo. savings needed for 2026.
 - 2026 Budget information provided Feb.
 - Savings Initiatives (Discussed Below)



CASH FLOW - Education Fund





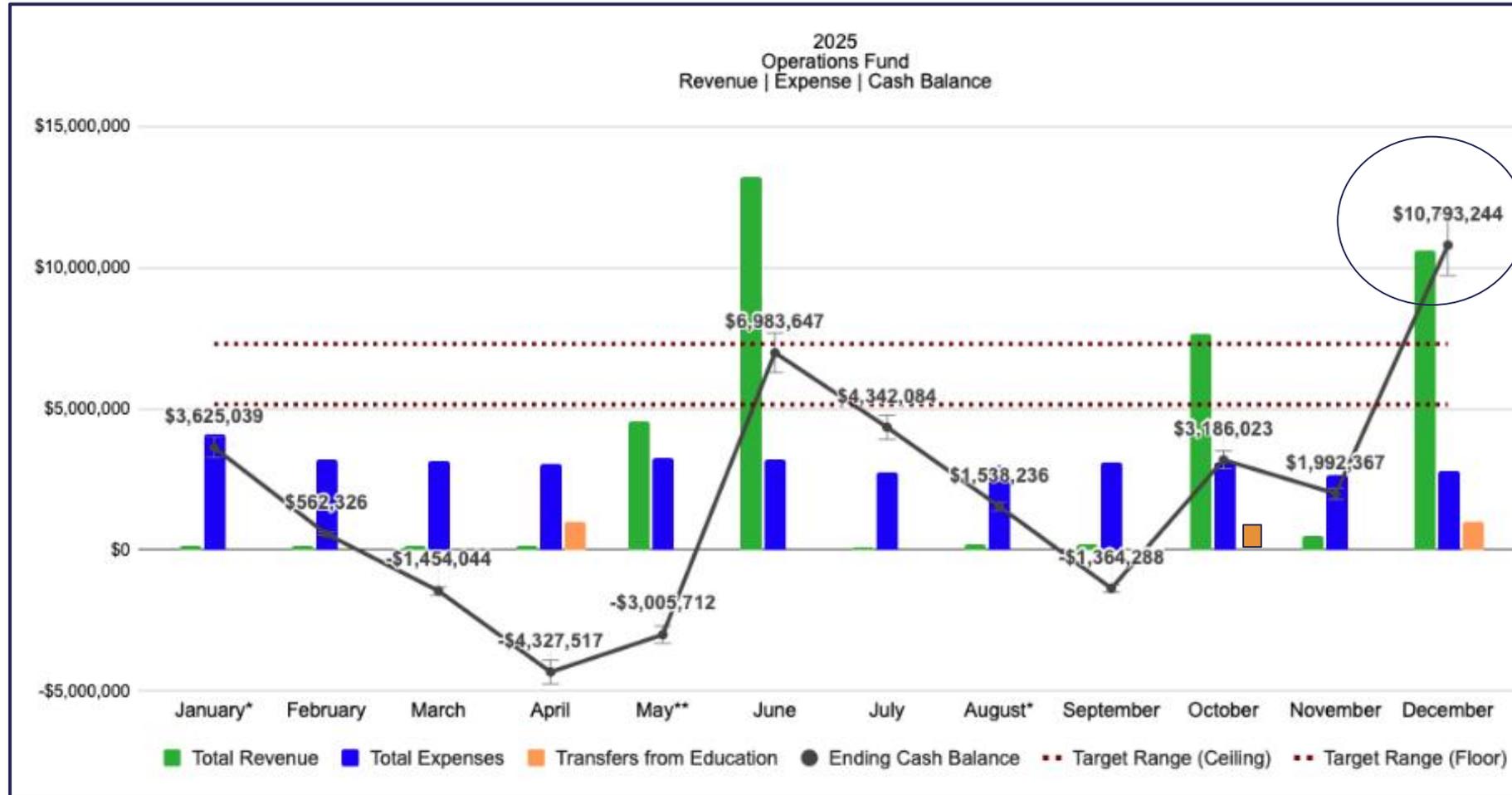
EXPENDITURES - Operations Fund

	December	Monthly Average
Beginning Cash Balance	1,992,367	
Total Receipts	10,606,079	
Transfers from Education	1,000,000	
Expenses		
100 - Wages	1,341,991	1,360,736
200 - Benefits	439,430	425,704
300 - Professional Svcs	47,200	110,124
400 - Repairs/Maint/Construction	179,607	242,473
400 - Rentals	3,067	6,764
500 - Other Purchased Svcs	40,219	183,154
600 - Supplies	329,653	285,821
600 - Gas/Lubricants	50,954	58,842
600 - Utilities	309,787	351,053
700 - Property		41,265
800 - Other	1,684	6,547
900 - Transfers	61,611	64,154
Total Expenses	2,805,203	3,112,565
Net Revenue (Expense)	8,800,876.01	
Ending Cash Balance	10,793,243.51	

Highlights:

- Local Tax Revenue Payment received (June, December)
- Monthly Expenses less than average
- Fund is ending with positive cash balance

CASH BALANCE - Operations Fund

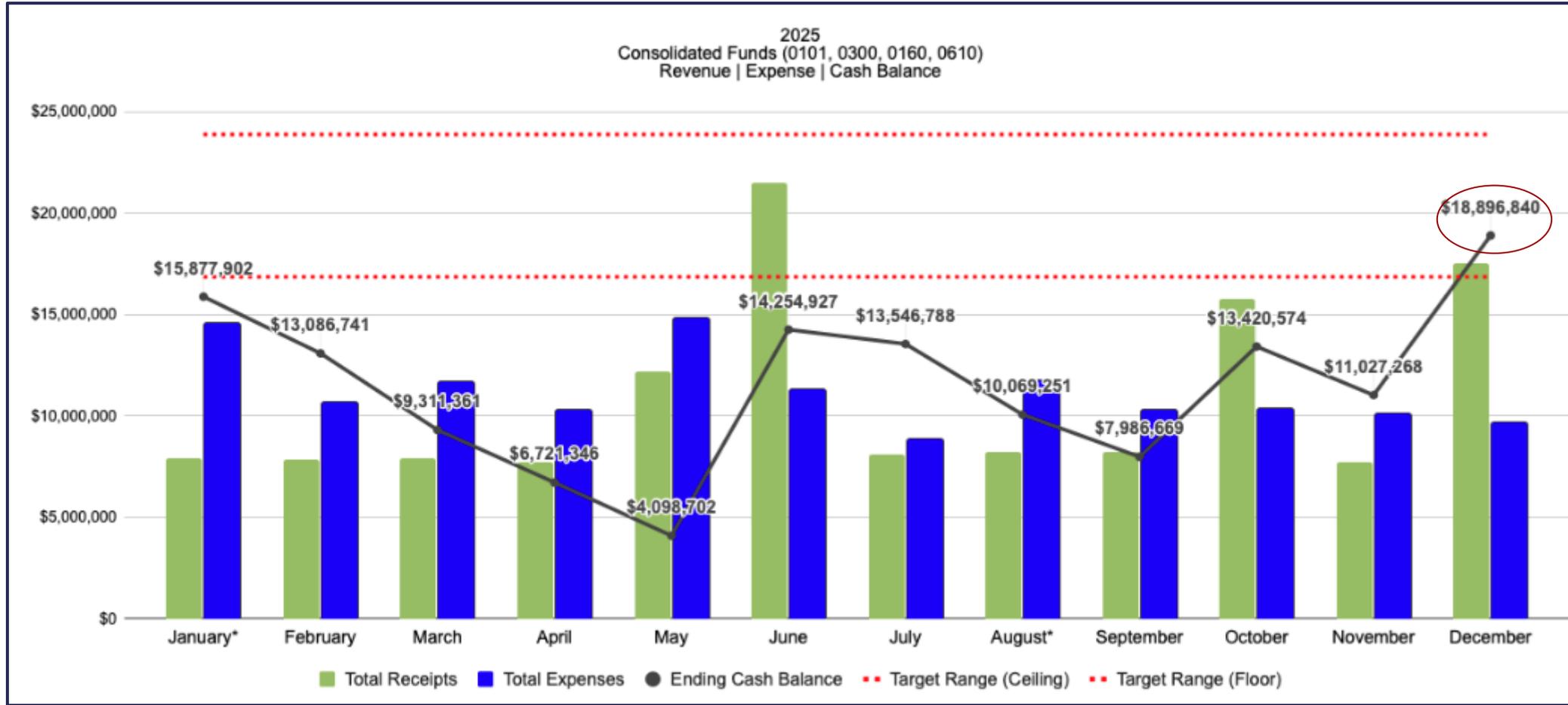


CASH BALANCE _ Rainy Day Fund

Beginning Cash Balance	\$7,983,692
Transfer to Ed. Fund (June 2025)	-712,412
Sp. Ed. Purchased Services	-549,900
Ending Cash Balance	\$6,721,380



CASH BALANCES - Combined*



*Education, Operations and Rainy Day.
The Operating Referendum was concluded in May of 2025.



SAVINGS Initiatives - Payroll Highlights

Item	Estimated Savings or Cost Avoidance (25-26 SY)	Notes
Curriculum Savings	\$390,000	(1) Solution Tree was not renewed, this curriculum served K-12; (2) Mastery Connect discontinued.
Reduced: Central Office & Building Level staff costs; Added Pays/ Extended Contracts; Sub Pay; Added Overtime and Comp Time Controls (including Time Clocks); Unfilled Vacancies	\$1,625,999	Aug. 1 - Dec. 31 2024 vs. 2025.
VEBA Forfeiture Dollars re-allocated to district	\$290,000	District and employee groups receive a pro-rata share of the re-allocation.
Excess Cost Applications	\$500,000	Recuperating costs of providing support for students with disabilities.
Utility Costs	\$80,000	Installation of LED light fixtures in middle schools and other buildings.
Professional Services	\$1,561,870	Cost avoidance through Dec. 2025.
TOTAL	\$4,447,869	

- Other 25-26 SAVINGS INITIATIVES
- Timeclock Software
 - Food Services Management Contract - Chartwells
 - District Footprint/Consolidation

Finance Dashboard

[Link](#)

Financial Dashboard

We take our role as stewards of your taxpayer dollars very seriously and are committed to financial transparency. Our Financial Information page provides an in-depth look at Elkhart Community Schools' finances. It's your resource for understanding how Indiana schools are funded and for staying up to date on the district's revenue, expenditures, cash balances, and financial challenges and initiatives.

Financial Highlights



← In 2025, ECS received approximately **\$93M in State Revenue**, primarily funded by Tuition Support.



State Revenue/Tuition Support is ECS' largest revenue source (**60% of budget**).



ECS receives about **\$45M in property tax-supported revenue** (29% of budget).



Property Tax-supported funds include: Operations, Debt Service, School Pension and Capital Referendum Debt Funds



In 2025, ECS received about **\$10M in Federal Funding** (6% of budget) →



INSURANCE UPDATE

Ronda Ross, CPA, JD, MBA, M.Ed.L

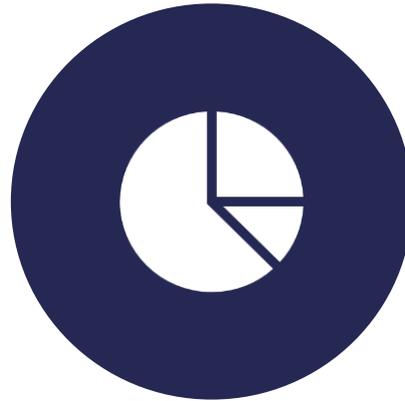
Board Meeting

1/27/2026

INSURANCE PLAN UPDATE



2026 Expanded Anthem
Network



86.5%
LOSS RATIO



2026 Enhanced
partnerships for claims
processing &
communications

INSURANCE PLAN UPDATE

- For **December**, our plan expenses were less than the plan premiums received, leading to a favorable loss ratio.
- Overall the **plan performed better** than last year.

