

**BARTHOLOMEW CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORPORATION  
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING, MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023 MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Board of School Trustees of the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation was held at the Administration Building, Columbus, Indiana, on Monday, January 23, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., pursuant to notice having been duly given to the media and to all members of the Board in accordance with the rules of the Board.

On call of the roll, the members of the Board were shown to be present or absent as follows:

Present:                               Mrs. Nikki Wheeldon, President  
  Mr. Rich Stenner, Vice President  
  Mr. Todd Grimes, Secretary  
  Mr. Pat Bryant, Member  
  Mr. Jason Major, Member  
  Mr. Dale Nowlin, Member  
  Mr. Logan Schulz, Member

Administration:                       Dr. Jim Roberts, Superintendent  
  Dr. Gina Pleak, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources  
  Mr. Chad Phillips, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services  
  Mr. William Jensen, Director of Secondary Education  
  Dr. Laura Hack, Director of Elementary Education  
  Dr. Brett Boezeman, Director of Operations  
  Mr. Charles Edwards, Director of Title Services  
  Dr. George Van Horn, Director of Special Education

Attorney:                               Mr. Michael McIver, School Attorney

**REGULAR SESSION**

The business meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mrs. Wheeldon, the President, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**WHO/WHY**

**HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATOR APPROVAL: (Dr. Roberts)**

- **Director of Title Services – Ms. Megan Shaff**

Dr. Roberts introduced Ms. Megan Shaff as a recommendation for the Director of Title Services. He noted that she is currently the Director of McDowell Adult and Alternative Education Center. Ms. Shaff received her Bachelors of Science degree in Physical Education and Sports Management from Valparaiso University and her Masters of Education and Principal Licensure from Indiana Wesleyan University. Before beginning her career in education, Megan served as a graduate assistant basketball coach at Valparaiso University. Megan began her career at Westfield Middle School as a Health and PE teacher and coached volleyball and basketball from 2003-2005. She joined BCSC in 2005 as a PE teacher at Columbus North High School. She served in that role for seven years and, during that time, she was the department coordinator and varsity volleyball coach. She then served as the Pupil Services Counselor for CSA New Tech from 2012-2018. Megan has been the Director of McDowell Adult and Alternative Education Center for the past five years.

Dr. Roberts noted that Megan has been very active in the community and currently serves as the President of the Board of Directors for Su Casa, on the Board for the Bartholomew Consolidated School Foundation, and as a Guiding Team member for the Council for Youth Development. She is currently a member of the 40th-anniversary class of Leadership Bartholomew County. Megan and her team at McDowell were recognized last year for their work with Afghan refugees at Camp Atterbury. Dr. Roberts shared that Ms. Shaff is recommended for this position due to her ability to develop strong relationships with all stakeholders, her experience with budgets and grant applications, and her commitment to the corporation's Strategic Plan.

Dr. Roberts made a recommendation to hire Ms. Megan Shaff as the Director of Title Services. The vacancy for this position was created by the recent appointment of Mr. Charles Edwards to the position of Director of Secondary Education. Mr. Edwards will replace Mr. Bill Jensen who will retire at the end of the school year.

Mr. Nowlin made a motion to approve the recommendation to hire Ms. Megan Shaff as Director of Title Services, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Bryant.

Upon a call for the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Ms. Shaff thanked Dr. Roberts and the school board members for the opportunity to serve and her family for their support. She noted the growth and development she has gained from her mentors to give her the capacity to serve the community and students in this new role.

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

### **United Way Check Presentation (Dr. Roberts)**

Dr. Roberts presented a check to United Way Director Mark Stewart and Resource Development Director Ellen Solich. This school year the district raised \$32,120 through the annual giving campaign.

### **Best Practice – CSA New Tech High School (Mr. Mike Reed)**

Principal Mr. Mike Reed shared the demographics of CSA New Tech High School noting the school was established in 2008 and is part of a national network. The school is the first in the nation to be a part of a K-12 project-based learning pathway. Mr. Reed shared that CSA New Tech offers a rigorous, college prep project-based program for students and allows students to participate in their home school extracurricular activities. The CSA 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students are automatically enrolled in the CSA New Tech freshman class.

At the heart of CSA and the New Tech Model is an educational practice referred to as

Project Based Learning (PBL). Mr. Reed introduced teacher and certified New Tech trainer Ms. Veronica Buckler. Ms. Buckler shared that the New Tech Model is a revolutionary pathway to education that brings real-world experiences to the classroom. Ms. Buckler noted that PBL encourages each student to be in charge of their learning. The students are centered as the drivers of their learning with the teachers acting as facilitators. She explained the process of a project and how it aligns with required state standards.

Mr. Reed shared that the New Tech Model originated in Napa, California. The model was created in response to business and industry leaders who expressed their concerns to the local school board that graduates lacked the skills to collaborate, problem-solve, communicate well, and have a strong work ethic in the workplace. These skills were defined as 21st Century Skills. Mr. Reed noted that to see these outcomes in students we need to teach these skills, give opportunities to practice, and provide feedback. He shared the New Tech Schoolwide Learning Outcomes and the process for assessing students, as well as the diplomas available to students and the requirements needed to achieve the New Tech Seal.

Mr. Reed shared the IT Pathway requirements. This pathway was created for BCSC through a partnership with Ivy Tech. Students who are interested in this pathway can start the program in their sophomore year. He shared a breakdown of the courses and noted that classes are taught on the New Tech High School campus. The students that complete the program will graduate with 29 college credits tuition free.

CSA New Tech seniors Abby Shute and Tommy Morrill shared their personal experiences with the internal Ivy Tech IT Pathway. They both expressed how the IT Pathway has prepared them for real-world experiences and freed up time to take additional classes and second majors in college.

CSA New Tech students benefit from a small school culture, PBL and the opportunity to have access to all of the activities that a large school has to offer students.

The following information was given in response to questions from the Board:

The project-based design starts with the state standards. Once the standards are determined this opens the door for students to explore other areas.

Community members are encouraged to reach out to the school for ways to get involved in a community project.

A library of successful community projects is compiled and often repeated with a different group of students the next school year.

The incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade class will largely come from the CSA campus at Central Middle School.

Approximately 175 CSA New Tech students are involved in extracurricular activities at their home high school.

70 to 75% of CSA 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will keep their spot in the program at New Tech High School.

Touring the New Tech High School facility is vital for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to see the revolutionary learning space and determine if they have an interest in attending the high school.

Collaboration skills are intentionally taught.

The two students noted two New Tech activities, “House Games” and “Fika”, are great ways to bring everyone together, get to know one another, and develop community.

Last year was the first graduating class to complete all of K-12 in the CSA pathway.

### **BOARD COMMENDATIONS:**

Mr. Nowlin gave commendations to Central Middle School teachers Ms. Sara Rapp and Ms. Trisha Burns. The two teachers recently organized a project where students collected over 1,700 food items.

Mr. Schulz gave commendations to Principal Brett Findley and the CSA Huskie Family for the building tour and the opportunity to see the school in full operation.

Mr. Grimes gave commendations to the following: CEHS Varsity Girls Basketball Coach Danny Brown for his 300th win and 20 years of dedication in coaching; the success of the Columbus Robotics teams; the seven student scholarship recipients recognized at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration; Wellness Director Kristin Beck for promoting the Employee Assistance Program (EAP); commendations for those responsible for creating the weekly staff highlights and the good work those employees do daily; the girls bowling team representing CNHS for moving on to the semi-state competition.

Mr. Stenner gave commendations to the four classified staff members of the month for their exemplary behaviors.

Mr. Major gave commendations to W.D. Richards Elementary and the staff for providing a great welcome and tour of the building. He noted the diversity within the school and commended Mrs. Davida Harden and the STEM program, and the virtual field trip opportunity with Mrs. Deanna Wenzler's 4<sup>th</sup> grade class, and gave commendations to retiring CEHS basketball coaches Mr. Willy Humes and Mr. Danny Brown for their years of service.

### **WHAT**

#### **1) School Board Member Reports**

Mr. Grimes provided a Bartholomew Consolidated School Foundation (BCSF) report. He reviewed the DonorsChoose program, noted BCSF scholarships are now open for students, and announced that the Harlem Wizards will be back in town on Sunday, March 5, 2023. This is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the foundation. He thanked Dr. Boezeman for working with BCSF and partnering with the Visitors Center to organize school-building tours, and provided a legislative report noting there are currently 218 bills on the tracking list in regards to education.

Mrs. Wheeldon noted that the City of Columbus Redevelopment Commission reports that the NexusPark Groundbreaking Ceremony will be held Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.

## 2) Cabinet Reports

### **Annual Technology Update (Mr. Nick Williams/Mr. Josh Burnett)**

Mr. Nick Williams, Director of Technology Innovation, introduced the technology team and shared the vision and mission of the department. Mr. Williams noted that the Technology Strategic Plan is on the BCSC website and is aligned with the BCSC Strategic Plan. The goals have been set for cybersecurity, recruitment and retention, customer service, support for all, essential skills, and project management. He shared that the district infrastructure is vast and noted some of the statistics. There are 12,500+ student accounts and 1,700+ staff accounts within the district. He shared that collaboration is throughout the district and is included in nearly all BCSC decisions. He shared that vital partnerships with vendors have supported the district well throughout the last couple of years. The district is very involved at the state and national levels to stay on the cutting edge.

Mr. Josh Burnett, Communications Coordinator, provided an update on the district's new communication tool, ParentSquare. The tool is an all-in-one parent communication system that allows information to be conveyed in both English and Spanish. He shared that during the pandemic the district noticed several different tools were being used to communicate and determined the need for a unified communication system for parents. He shared the benefits of ParentSquare for both students and parents, noting the system can quickly send critical communication via email, text, or phone.

Mr. Burnett noted that several schools were running several different communication tools at one time and now ParentSquare is providing those same functions under one unified tool. Some of the benefits of ParentSquare are in helping with effective communication with staff, students, and parents with school newsletters, attendance alerts, scheduling meetings, asking for items or volunteers, and creating groups for extracurricular activities. He noted that each week an electronic newsletter is sent out to just over 22,000 contacts with over 10,000 views. He shared that with the prior tool used for distributing the newsletter there were on average only 1,000 views. He shared that currently 96% of the district families are contactable and noted the importance that the district has current contact information for both staff and students. He discussed testimonials from parents, students, and staff and noted the feature to translate to any home language has made communication between staff and parents more effective.

The following information was given in response to questions from the board:

The downloaded app is very user-friendly.

Training and ongoing assistance are offered to staff.

Tracking data on the secondary level is harder to do since high school students could be taking classes at both CEHS and CNHS.

The many features of the app allow quick communication with alerts. Through the app, families within the district are finding ways to get engaged in their student's classrooms and school.

High school students have the option to sign up for StudentSquare. This allows students to quickly be alerted in an event of a safety concern or schedule change.

Each school within the district is encouraged to post their weekly newsletter on social media.

The district continues to advance with cutting-edge technology. The recent advancement in artificial intelligence for the district is the arrival of Milo. The robot is making a big impact on students.

**2013 Lease Rental Bond Refunding (Mr. Philips)**

Mr. Philips presented to the school board an opportunity to refund a 2013 bond and save the district a considerable amount of money. In 2013, bonds were issued for \$22.4M for projects across the district. That debt amount is scheduled for payoff in 2032. The district has about \$15,660,000 remaining on those bonds at a rate of 4.84%. The estimated new rate is 2.71%. This would save the district an estimated \$1,580,453. This savings amount increases capacity for a possible 2023 GO Bond to be issued this fall for the Schmitt renovation. Mr. Phillips presented the timetable for the refund, anticipating the closing for the refund to be in April.

The following information was given in response to questions from the board:

The issuance costs regarding the refunding of the bond are a rating agency, financial advisor, and bond counsel fees.

The savings will probably come in higher than what we have advertised.

**NEOLA Policy Revision Recommendations (Dr. Roberts)**

Dr. Roberts reviewed the NEOLA recommendations due to legislative changes.

The following information was given in response to questions from the board:

After the first reading the policies are available for public review.

A dialogue regarding the recommendations will occur with CEA through the regular discussion process.

Each board member received all parts of the policy in draft form.

Any revisions made to the drafts will be given to the board for review.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

No one signed in to speak.

**HOW**

**3) Approval of Board Appointments for January 2023 – December 2023 (Mrs. Wheeldon)**

- a. BCSC Health Trust – Jason Major
- b. Districting & Facilities Committee – Rich Stenner
- c. Diversity Leadership Council – Nikki Wheeldon

- g. Conflict of Interest for Mr. Rich Stenner (Mr. McIver)
- h. Conflict of Interest for Mr. Jason Major (Mr. McIver)

Dr. Roberts shared additional information on the reviewed items and requested approval.

Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve the reviewed items 6) a-h and Mr. Bryant seconded the motion.

Upon a call for the vote, items 6) a-h were unanimously approved.

### **7) Human Resources Recommendations (Dr. Pleak)**

Dr. Pleak requested approval of the Human Resources Recommendations as presented.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to approve the Human Resources Recommendations and the motion was seconded by Mr. Grimes

Upon a call for the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

### **BOARD INPUT REVIEW**

Mr. Major acknowledged and shared appreciation for the openness the schools present for board member visits. He thanked Mr. Sprong for the tour of Richards Elementary.

Mr. Stenner thanked CSA New Tech and its staff for the Best Practice presentation.

Ms. Wheeldon thanked the staff for their support of Ariel Roberts and her family.

Mr. Grimes thanked the CSA New Tech staff for their Best Practice presentation. He thanked Mr. Newell and Mr. Jensen for providing the Graduation Rate data in the recent Friday Notes.

Mr. Schulz thanked the CSA New Tech staff for their Best Practice presentation and CSA Lincoln for hosting a building visit. He asked for a public presentation on the graduation rate data as well as the steps we are taking to improve the rates.

Mr. Nowlin expressed appreciation to the schools and their staff for hosting building visits.

### **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The next regular School Board Meeting will be on Monday, February 6, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the Terrace Room of the Administration Building.

There will be a reception honoring the 2023 Education Hall of Fame recipients before the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

 Secretary

Attest:  President