BARTHOLOMEW CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL CORPORATION
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024 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, February 5, 2024, 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. Dale Nowlin, Member
          Mr. Jason Major, Member
          Mr. Logan Schulz, Member

Administration:  Dr. Jim Roberts, Superintendent
                   Dr. Gina Pleak, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
                   Dr. Chad Phillips, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services
                   Dr. Laura Hack, Director of Elementary Education
                   Dr. Brett Boezeman, Director of Operations
                   Mr. Charles Edwards, Director of Secondary Education
                   Mrs. Megan Shaff, Director of Title Services
                   Mrs. Jessica Vogel, 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, opened the board meeting at 6:31 p.m.
PRESENTATIONS

Presentation of the 2023 Education Hall of Fame Award (Dr. Roberts)

Dr. Roberts recognized those individuals who served on the nomination committee and shared the nomination process. This year's Education Hall of Fame Award was presented to retired BCSC teacher Mrs. Sandy Watts. Dr. Roberts shared a few of her noted strengths: a tireless leader for education, leads with a can-do spirit, approachable and engaging, a master teacher, keen understanding of individual student needs, a community advocate and activist. Mrs. Watts taught in the district for over 35 years, teaching at Smith Elementary, CSA Fodrea, Taylorsville Elementary, and Parkside Elementary.

Mrs. Watts was humbled by the kind words noted and honored to receive the award. She commended her husband and his relentless support, introduced her children, and shared their faithfulness to volunteering many hours in her classroom. She shared the impact that her father made on her education, teaching her to love education and love people. She thanked the staff and noted her award would not be possible if it weren’t for the great staff she had working alongside of her in each building.

Mrs. Watts graduated in 1980 from college and took a position at Smith Elementary. She shared her teaching experiences in Fodrea, Taylorsville, and Parkside Elementary and noted the family atmosphere at Taylorsville Elementary and the opportunity her students experienced by adopting the Atterbury Coop. She thanked her students and thanked the parents for trusting her with their children. She shared that her students taught her so much, gave so much, and that they will always be considered her kids. She thanked the Columbus community and BCSC for the education they provided for her children, allowing her to teach, and honoring her for what she loves to do, which is teach.

Best Practice – W.D. Richards Elementary (Mr. Darin Sprong)

Mr. Sprong thanked the Board for the opportunity to give an overview of Richards. He noted that the building was named in honor of William Dalbert Richards who was a lifelong resident of Bartholomew County and a teacher and principal for 45 years. The building was dedicated on November 7, 1965, and is known worldwide for its architecture. There are currently 594 students enrolled in grades K-6, 35 certified staff members, and 10 native languages represented by Richards students.

He noted the Richards Motto is “Big Dreams + Hard Work = Success”, and the goal to reach this success is to prepare each K-6 grade student to live out each day by participating in community service, having a strong work ethic, and having a deep connection to the value they bring to the community.

Mr. Sprong introduced presenters and PBIS co-chairs Mrs. Karen Allen and Ms. Amy Mocas. Mrs. Mocas noted how this work is specifically tied to the BCSC core beliefs and shared how the goal is connected to the BCSC Strategic Objectives. She shared the benefits of building a strong work ethic through school and community connections and noted that with the responsibility of classrooms and building-wide jobs, students can see the direct value they bring to the classroom and school. She noted that as students practice working hard at school the goal is to have students develop confidence in their role as citizens so that they are excited and prepared to volunteer in their community. She shared that many 6th-grade students enjoy working in the community as part of earning the Mayor's Work Ethic certificate. She shared a video
highlighting the student experiences with building and classroom responsibilities and volunteering within the community.

Special Education teacher Mrs. Karen Allen shared the connection that Richards has made in developing a strong work ethic within the UDL (Universal Design for Learning) and PBIS (Positive Behavior Instructional Supports) framework. Mrs. Allen noted that multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression in the curriculum also provide multiple means for students to be an active part of the Richards community. The Richards staff works hard to engage every student in a different role or responsibility so that every student feels part of the Richards community. The connection between building a strong work ethic and PBIS is a two-way street. When students participate by being helpful and responsible to others they experience positive engagement, which has a strong influence on their learning. In turn, this helps foster pride and a stronger work ethic. She thanked the community partners and noted that with their contributions they help the Richards staff do their very best.

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

The students in the 6th-grade have an opportunity to earn the Mayor's Work Ethic Certificate. There are nine requirements that need to be completed within the 6th-grade school year to receive the certificate. This certificate leads to the Chamber Work Ethic Certificate for 8th-grade students and the Governor's Work Ethic Certificate for high school seniors.

The building job/responsibility that students enjoy the most is delivering library books.

Public Comments
1. Caleb Sharp
2. Chrystal Pumphrey
3. Amy Hales

WHAT

1) Request for Approval of the Human Resources Recommendations and the Appointment of the Principal of Rockcreek Elementary Mrs. Cathy Jackson. (Dr. Pleak)

Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve the Human Resources Recommendations and the appointment of Mrs. Cathy Jackson as Principal of Rockcreek Elementary and the motion was seconded by Mr. Schulz.

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

Dr. Roberts introduced Mrs. Cathy Jackson and shared that Mrs. Jackson is a proud product of BCSC. She attended Smith Elementary, Clifty Creek Elementary, Northside Middle School, and Columbus East High School. She recently was recognized as the Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year for the District by the Indiana Association of School Principals
(IASP). Since 2014, Mrs. Jackson has been the Assistant Principal of Southside Elementary. She will transition to Rockcreek Elementary on July 1.

Mrs. Jackson thanked those involved in the selection process and the Board for her approval. She acknowledged the many educators who have mentored and guided her through the years and thanked her husband, children, and mother for being such a strong support system. She noted the strong traditions she witnessed while both of her children attended Rockcreek Elementary and shared she looks forward to being part of the team.

2) Additional Human Resources Recommendations (Dr. Pleak)

There were no requests for additional Human Resources Recommendations.

3) School Board Member Reports

Mr. Grimes shared a BCSF update emphasizing the Donor’s Choose program. He shared an ISBA update and noted the goal remains for the legislative session to be complete by Friday, March 8. Mr. Grimes shared an update on the 116 bills regarding K-12 that remain on the ISBA watch list.

Mrs. Wheeldon noted the superintendent position has been posted. The board will meet with the University Team the first week of March to organize the interview process and select questions. The interviews will begin after spring break. She noted that the Bartholomew County Redevelopment Commission will meet on Monday, February 19.

Mr. Stenner noted that the District & Facilities committee recently met. They received an update on Envision 2030.

Mr. Major acknowledged that the district's health clinic physician Dr. Brian Kline was Recently named The Republic 2023 Readers’ Choice Family Doctor. He thanked Dr. Kline for his service to the district.

4) Cabinet Reports

- 2023 Financial Report (Dr. Phillips)

Dr. Phillips provided a Q4 report to conclude the 2023 financials. The interest income exceeded the budget of $1M in both the Education Fund and the Operations Fund. The education and state tuition support were higher than the budget since the budget was passed months before the legislature's budget session began. The salary and benefits expenditures were up slightly in the Education Fund with the approval of the teacher contracts in the fall of 2023. The salary expenditures from the Operations Fund were up 14% as the district continues to invest in competitive salaries for classified staff. He noted that this has resulted in a decrease in the number of open positions in the district.

He noted that the Debt Service expenditures are very predictable as we make semi-annual payments on debt as defined by the amortization schedule. The payments were up 13% in 2023, as expected, and were consistent with the budget.

The Operations Referendum Fund Expenditures were up 6% over 2022. He shared that before the Operating Referendum, the average teacher salary in BCSC trailed the state average by thousands of dollars and after implementing the experience increases from the Operating Referendum funds in 2021, we now exceed the state average by 7%. In total, the Operating Referendum contributed an additional $6.3M to increase employee salaries. To maintain the
current salary levels without the Operating Referendum, we would need to cut 5.2% from the Education and/or the Operating Funds.

He gave a 2023 summary of all tax-supported funds for the entire year and noted the district is reducing the cash balance in the Debt Service Fund. With older debt, the district was allowed to keep 50% of the next year's payment in cash balance. When older debt retires and new debt is acquired we are only allowed to keep 15%. He shared that every district that had those cash balances in place is slowly reducing the cash balances that were in place for the Debt Service Funds. The other cash balances increased due to a significant increase in interest earned on our cash that is invested during the year. For this reason, the cash balance in the Education and Operation Funds increased despite the district exceeding our budget for salaries and benefits.

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

There has not been a transfer of funds to cover curriculum materials to date. The request for approval will be brought before the board if there is a need to do so for the 2025 budget.

The line graph presented in the presentation shows the benefit of the referendum.


Most districts across the state do have sufficiently larger cash balances than they did before 2022.

Property taxes are the most stable way for the district to make obligations against debt. If there is a delay in receiving payment from the county the district's sufficient cash balances can cover payment.

- Technology Update (Dr. Brett Boezeman/Mr. Nick Williams)

Mr. Williams noted the mission of the BCSC Technology Department and introduced his team: Mrs. Brenny Kummer, Assistant Director of Education Technology, and Mr. Brian Trivett, Assistant Director of Technology Operations. He shared that all three of them are part of state boards. This representation across three boards allows the district access to many valuable resources and general knowledge from the state.

The technology team is responsible for over 12,500 students and over 2,000 staff accounts. He also noted that 16,500 plus devices are maintained and systems managed by the technology team. He noted the significant changes in the department budget, stating that it takes $1M annually to sustain student devices. He shared that over the past 5 years the district has been awarded over $2.5M in grants. These funds have assisted with the cost of internet, cybersecurity, and family engagement.

Mr. Williams shared a few 2023 highlights, noting Dr. Roberts' EmpowerED Superintendent of the Year Award and that BCSC was spotlighted in the 2024 National EdTech Plan for the district's work around UDL (Universal Design for Learning).
Mrs. Kummer noted the Ed Tech pieces that help both students and teachers meet the high expectations and provide support to all of the diverse learners across the district. She noted the changeover to Canvas from itslearning and provided an update on the first year with Canvas as the new K-12 learning management system. Canvas provides many training opportunities for staff, support for multiple lingual learners, a robust mobile app, and the opportunity for the secondary-level grade books to sync to the PowerTeacher Pro-Grade book. She stated that 96% of students are engaged each week and this percentage is trending upward.

Mr. Trivett shared information on Performance Matters. He noted it is the data warehouse for the district that is uploaded to PowerSchool, allowing teachers and staff the ability to generate reports and create dashboards to monitor the needs of students. This allows the high school cohorts to drill down and see what students need additional support and early interventions for a better educational outcome. He shared the district’s cybersecurity task force responsibilities, noting that BCSC uses the CIS (Center for Internet Controls) as a cybersecurity framework. The team of 8 individuals meets monthly to review cybersecurity updates, work on annual goals, and lead initiatives. He shared the 2023 improvements that have taken place to avoid cybersecurity concerns within the district.

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

The transition to Canvas has gone exceptionally well. For the first eLearning day there were only six phone calls. The communication that is now available through ParentSquare and the base knowledge that the staff had from the previous learning management system provided a successful adoption of Canvas.

Student engagement data is recorded once a student signs in and interacts with the content within the course.

Canvas is used in many post-secondary institutions. The branding may be different, but all of the pieces are the same and can easily be supported once the student has graduated from the district.

- **Envision 2030 Update (Dr. Phillips/Dr. Boezeman)**

Dr. Boezeman provided a project update, noting work continues with CSO with short- and long-range planning. He noted his recent meeting with the Cummins Foundation and shared that the foundation will soon have a list of potential design architects for the 12+ elementary school. He shared that a presentation of the proposed schedule for the Phase 1 facilities renovations will be presented to the Board at the Strategic Planning Session on Monday, February 19 with plans to then issue a request for proposal (RFP) for those projects the following day. He noted that this information would be presented again at the March 4, 2024 regular School Board meeting.
5) Requests for Approval – Old Business
   a. Minutes of the Regular School Board Meeting of January 22, 2024, and the Minutes of
      the Special School Board Meeting of January 29, 2024
   b. NEOLA Policy 5710 – Special Update July 2023

      Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve 4)a-b, and the motion was seconded by Mr.
      Nowlin.
      
      Upon a call to vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

6) Requests for Approval (Dr. Roberts)
   c. Supplemental Contracts (Dr. Hack/Mr. Edwards)
   d. Field Trips and Professional Leaves (Dr. Hack/Mr. Edwards)
   e. School Fundraisers (Dr. Hack/Mr. Edwards)
   f. Claims and Payroll (Dr. Phillips)
   g. Letter of Support for the Health Clinic Grant (Dr. Phillips)
   h. Purchase of Buses (Dr. Boezeman/Mr. AJ McKean)
   i. Request to Accept Bids for Schmitt Elementary (Dr. Boezeman)

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

      Mr. Schulz requested that 6)g be pulled from the approval list for a separate vote and
      Mr. Major requested that 6)h be voted on separately due to the conflict of interest with his
      employer.

      Mr. Grimes made a motion to approve 6)c-f and i, and the motion was seconded by
      Mr. Schulz.

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

      Mr. Nowlin made a motion to approve 6)g, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Bryant.

      Comments were heard from the board regarding the Health Clinic Grant.

      Upon a call for the vote, the motion carried 5-2.

      Mr. Nowlin made a motion to approve 6)h, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Schulz.

      Upon a call for the vote, the motion carried 5-0.

      Mrs. Wheeldon and Mr. Major abstained from the vote due to their employer.
BOARD INPUT REVIEW

Mr. Bryant thanked Mrs. Sandy Watts for her contribution to students and the community and congratulated her on her award.

Mr. Major congratulated the CEHS boys swim team for their first conference title in 42 years.

Mr. Stenner thanked those who provided presentations for the meeting. He encouraged participation in the survey regarding the superintendent search process, noting full participation will assist the board in the decision-making process. The survey will close on Friday, February 16.

Mrs. Wheeldon thanked those individuals who assisted with posting the superintendent position and the community survey and she gave commendations to the Parkside Elementary Robotics Team for recently receiving the Excellence Award. She noted that Parkside Elementary, Smith Elementary, and Central Middle School qualified for state in Robotics. She thanked Lisa Haines and the team of individuals who gave their time and support to the students during the competition season.

Mr. Grimes congratulated Mrs. Watts for receiving the Education Hall of Fame Award and thanked her for her many years of dedication to BCSC and thanked Mr. Sprong and his staff for their presentation. He acknowledged Dr. Phillips for providing well-explained financial information and thanked Mr. Williams and the Tech Team for their thorough presentation. He noted that the Book Buddies program still needs volunteers and encouraged involvement.

Mr. Schulz thanked Dr. Phillips and Mr. Williams for their presentations. He acknowledged Mrs. Watts for her service and noted the strong family atmosphere she was part of while teaching at Taylorsville Elementary. He also acknowledged Mr. Sprong for the Best Practice presentation and the efforts going into that program. He thanked the individuals who provided public comment.

Mr. Nowlin thanked the technology department for their presentation and Ms. Humphrey for reading the library book and sharing her public comments. He noted Mrs. Watts's award and thanked her for her service to BCSC.

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Next School Board Meeting
Strategic Planning Session, February 19, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
Administration Building, Terrace Room

Regular Board Meeting, March 4, 2024, 6:30 p.m.
Administration Building, Terrace Room

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Secretary

Attest: Michelle Wheeldon President