

MINUTES OF A REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
OF THE SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND

A meeting of the Board of School Trustees of the School Town of Highland was held at the Administration Center, 9145 Kennedy Avenue, Highland, Indiana, on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silent reflection.

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

Present: Mr. Patrick Krull, Mr. Robert Kuva, Mrs. Erica Smith-Gomez, Mr. Victor Garcia, and Mr. Richard Alyea

Also present were Dr. Brian Smith, Superintendent; Dr. Ryan Erdelac, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Cynthia Adams, Chief Financial Officer; and Mr. Rhett L. Tauber, Attorney for the Board.

**Board Reorganization - Election of Officers.** Mr. Krull opened nominations for the election of officers. Mr. Garcia made a motion for a slate of officers: Mr. Krull as President, Mr. Kuva as Vice President, and Mrs. Smith-Gomez as Secretary. Mr. Alyea seconded the motion. There being no further nominations, the Chair called for a vote. All voted "aye" on the motion as presented by Mr. Garcia. The motion carried.

**Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, School Attorney, and Labor Attorney for the School Corporation.** Dr. Smith recommended the following appointments:

|                                                                                                    |                                                                                                            |                 |
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| <b>Treasurer</b><br><b>Deputy Treasurer</b><br><br><b>School Attorney</b><br><b>Labor Attorney</b> | Chief Financial Officer (pending Board approval this evening)<br><br>Rhett L. Tauber<br>Pillar Jones Legal | Jean<br>Gogolak |
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**Board President Appointments.** Mr. Krull made the remaining Board appointments: Mr. Krull will serve as representative to the Highland Parks and Recreation Board with Mr. Alyea as alternate; Mr. Garcia will serve as a representative to the Highland/Griffith Chamber of Commerce; Mrs. Smith-Gomez will serve as the representative to the Northwest Indiana Special Education Corporation with Mr. Kuva as alternate; Mr. Garcia will maintain his role as legislative liaison/ISBA representative; Mr. Krull will continue as the representative to the Redevelopment Commission with Mr. Alyea as alternate.

**Meeting Dates for 2026.** Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved to accept the Board meeting dates for the 2026 calendar year as presented, seconded by Mr. Alyea. The Board will meet the third Tuesday of the month unless otherwise noted and additional meetings as needed with notice given as per state statutes. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Board/Administration Annual Professional Conferences and Workshops for 2026.** Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve travel for Board/Administration professional conferences and workshops as recommended by the Superintendent. The following were approved for travel in 2026: Board members, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Chief Financial Officer, where applicable. This would cover the conferences and workshops affiliated with professional organizations such as, but not restricted to, the following: Indiana School Boards Association, National School Boards Association, Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, Indiana Association of School Business Officials, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, Indiana Department of Education, and the like. Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Board of Finance.** At this time, the Board of School Trustees convened as the Board of Finance. Mr. Krull called for the election of officers to the Board of Finance. Mr. Garcia moved to nominate Mr. Krull as President

and Mr. Kuva as Secretary for the Board of Finance. Mrs. Smith-Gomez second the motion. There being no other nominations all voted "aye" on the motion. Motion carried.

A report on 2025 investments was received from Mrs. Adams. A total of \$502,733 in interest was earned during 2025.

Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to accept the investment report as presented. All voted "aye."

Motion carried.

The Board received for their review a list of currently approved depositories for the state of Indiana public entities as per Indiana state statutes.

Mrs. Adams recommended that all checks outstanding and unpaid for a period of two years as of December 31, 2023 be declared cancelled pursuant to IC 5-11-10.5. Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mr. Alyea, to approve the recommendation as presented. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

The *School Corporation Fiscal Indicators Report* was included in the Board packets. Mrs. Adams presented an overview of the report. This report must be reviewed at the Annual Board of Finance meeting to ascertain the financial condition of the corporation. The data provided was based on calendar 2024.

There being no further business to conduct, Mr. Krull reconvened the regular School Board meeting at this time.

**Public Participation.** Comments were made regarding a possible referendum and out of district students.

**Minutes of a Regular School Board Meeting – December 16, 2025.** Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mr. Kuva, to approve the minutes of December 16, 2025 as printed. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Superintendent's Report.** Dr. Smith shared the following updates:

- ☐ Welcome to students and staff back for the second semester.
- ☐ Best wishes to all athletic teams competing in the coming weeks.
- ☐ Recognition of National School Board Month by the Warren School community.
- ☐ Announced the administration building will be closed on Monday in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

**Board Reports.** Mr. Garcia reported that Superintendent Smith served as the guest speaker at the Highland/Griffith Chamber meeting. Johnston Elementary Principal Amy Harrington also attended and shared updates on activities and developments within the elementary buildings. In addition, Town Council President George Georgeff provided information on the impact of Senate Bill 1 on local income tax revenues and public school funding.

As legislative liaison, Mr. Garcia noted that a major education bill will be up for first reading this week in Indianapolis. He will be in Indianapolis February 2-3.

Mr. Krull reported that the Highland Redevelopment Commission received a proposal for the development of the former bus terminal on US 41.

**Treasurer's Report.** Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the treasurer's report as presented. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Vouchers.** Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve the vouchers as printed. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Donations.** Anonymous donations were made for the following: \$1,000 for the boys/girls swim teams, \$1,000 for girls basketball, and \$500 for the athletic department. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to accept the donations as presented. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**ECA Semi-Annual Financial Reports.** Mrs. Adams provided the Board with copies of the semi-annual extracurricular financial reports for their review. The reports list all transactions showing the receipts, the purpose of the disbursements, and the balance remaining in each fund. Indiana Code requires all extracurricular treasurers to file a Financial Report with the Board twice a year on specified forms.

**2025 Year-End Appropriation Transfer Reports.** As part of the 2025 Year-End Appropriation Transfers approved last month, Mrs. Adams reported that transfers occurred in the Education Fund and requested Board approval. Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Buildings and Grounds.** A written report was provided to the Board regarding the ongoing maintenance work over the past month.

**NEOLA Policies – Vol 37, No.2.** The Board was provided with copies of NEOLA Policies – Vol. 37, No. 2 updates for second reading by Dr. Erdelac. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Kuva, to approve. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Professional Leaves.** The following were recommended for professional leaves: **Anthony Belli** and **Andrew Locke**, School Safety Summit - January 6-7; **Amy Harrington**, New School Growth Model - February 12; **Lucas Maciejewski**, Tech Directors meeting - December 18, 2026; and **Kari Tolliver**, WVEC Virtual - February 17, 2026. Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mr. Alyea, to approve. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Retirement.** Dr. Smith recommended to accept the retirement of **Bharathis Chintamani**, high school science teacher, effective May 28, 2026. Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve as recommended. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Appointments.** Dr. Smith recommended the following: **Kimberly Fulton**, Chief Financial Officer effective January 19, 2026; **Russell McWilliams**, transfer from School Town Electrician to Director of Buildings & Grounds effective January 1, 2026; **Paulina Fernandez**, Merkley instructional aide effective January 5, 2026; and effective for the 2025-2026 school year, **Christian Zendejas** and **Quentin McToy**, girls varsity track coaches (shared positions). Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

**Comments from the Audience.** Comments continued on a referendum and the need for discussion regarding the same.

**Comments from the Board.** Members of the Board extended their best wishes to Cindy Admas in her retirement, welcomed the new CFO Kim Fulton, and thanked the Warren School community for their thoughtful recognition and support shown during National School Board Month.

**Future Meetings.** The Board will meet next in regular session on February 17, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

**Adjournment.** There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to adjourn at 6:50 p.m. after the signing of claims in the amount of \$6,211.398.44 minutes, payroll file totals, etc. All voted "aye." Motion carried.