

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, June 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

President Krull opened the meeting of the Board of School Trustees with the Pledge of Allegiance and 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 of Schools; Dr. Ryan Erdelac, Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Cynthia Adams, Chief Financial Officer; and Mr. Rhett Tauber, Attorney.

Minutes of Regular Meeting of May 16, 2026. Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the minutes of May 19, 2026 as printed. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

Superintendent's Report. Dr. Smith reported on the following:

- ☐ Extended congratulations to all the graduating seniors.
- ☐ Commended the high school staff for all their hard work on the graduation ceremonies.
- ☐ Reported on the pavement project that has started behind the high school and middle school.
- ☐ Congratulated state qualifiers Aniya Sole, who finished 10th in the 100m hurdles and Kennedy Stephens who finished 9th in the long jump.

Board Liaison Reports. Mr. Garcia attended the Highland Griffith Chamber meeting. State Representative Mike Andrade and State Senator Dan Dernulc were the guest speakers who shared information regarding annual State Legislative Updates.

Mrs. Smith-Gomez attended the NISEC board meeting where they addressed two NEOLA Bylaws and policies, worked on the draft budget for 2027, and approved the meeting dates for next year. NISEC has named Dr. Becca Harkema as their new director. The current director will stay on through August 7 to ease the transition.

Mr. Krull attended a meeting of the Highland Redevelopment Commission. He reported that the former Van Senus Auto Parts building has a new owner who is working with the commission to develop plans for the property's future use.

Mr. Krull attended the Highland Park Board meeting where Mindi Ray was appointed the new Superintendent of Parks and Recreation. Following the recent storm, the Red Cross has opened an emergency station in the Lincoln Center to assist residents in need. He also noted that the *Bridges over Ditches* project is now officially open.

Treasurer's Report. Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve the treasurer's report as submitted. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

Vouchers. Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the vouchers as presented. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

Donations. The high school received the following donations: \$100 - boys basketball from Richard Novak; \$500 - from Peoples Bank/Randy Walker and \$3000 - JED TV for athletics; \$200 - Steve's Towing, \$200 - Goodfellows Clubs \$100 - Customs by Vos; \$100 - Cheers Food and Drink; \$75.00 - Strand Salon, and \$120 - Top Notch for boys basketball camp.

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Warren School received books valued at \$1000 from the Highland Education Foundation for the After School Book Club and classroom supplies valued at \$600 from Burger King & Corebridge Partnership.

The food service department received an anonymous donation of \$1,856.75 for the Johnston food service student accounts and Southridge received \$2,438.93 from the Lake County Public Library Foundation for the school library. The middle school received equipment for life skills valued at \$239.04 from Strack & Van Til/Mission Tiger. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Kuva, to accept the above donations as presented. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Food Service 2026/2027 Bids. Britini Luster, Food Service Director, participated in the NWIESC cooperative bid for milk, bread, food, produce, sanitation, and menu planning items for the 2026-2027 school year. The following contracts were recommended:

Milk	Prairie Farms Dairy
Bread	Alpha Baking Company
Food	Gordon Food Service
Menu Planning	Hospital Purchasing Services (HPS)
Produce	Piazza
Sanitation	Smart System/Ware Washing
Smart Snacks	Commercial Food Systems

Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the above vendors as presented. Mr. Garcia requested to vote on the items individually. The Chair granted the request.

Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the Prairie Farms Dairy milk bid. Mr. Kuva, Mrs. Smith-Gomez, and Mr. Krull voted “aye.” Mr. Garcia voted “nay.” Motion carried.

Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve Alpha Baking Company Bread bid. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve the Gordon Food Service bid. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the Hospital Purchasing Services bid for menu planning. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mr. Kuva, to approve the Piazza bid for produce. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Kuva, to approve the Smart System/Ware Washing sanitation bid. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the Commercial Food Systems smart snacks bid. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Building and Grounds. Mr. Rusty McWilliams, Director of Buildings and Grounds, provided a written report on repairs made throughout the corporation during the past month.

NISEC Alternative Services Agreement. The administration recommended the approval of a Resolution Concerning Alternative Services Agreements with the Indiana Department of Education and Private Education Agencies. This will give the Director of Special Education for NISEC authority to enter into alternative services contracts after consultation with the Superintendent on behalf of the Board. Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Highland Middle School Handbooks. Several additions were recommended for the Highland Middle School Handbook regarding electronic devices, disruptive items, and tobacco on school property. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Kuva, to approve as presented. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

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NEOLA Policy Updates. The Board was provided with NEOLA policy updates for first reading. This included Volume 38 No. 1 Nondiscrimination, Volume 38 No. 1 – September 2025, and Volume 38 No. 2.

Professional Leaves. The following were recommended for professional leaves: **Scheryl Corman**, **Patrick O'Donnell**, and **Courtney Quigg** – MTSS Math Workshop on May 21, 2026. Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Retirement/Resignations. The Superintendent presented the retirement of **Greg Zabrecky**, elementary teacher effective June 12, 2026; and the following resignations: **Ben Geffert**, PE teacher and head football coach – June 9, 2026; **Nick Ecsy**, high school English teacher – May 28, 2026; **Emanuel Alcalá**, middle instructional aide – May 28, 2026; **Jon Meyer**, computer info technician – June 26, 2026; **Cynthia Matos**, Dependent Care aide – May 28, 2026; **Abeer Ziadat**, Title I aide – May 28, 2026; **Mary Colbert**, Johnston instructional aide – May 28, 2026; **Roxanne Finnis**, Dependent Care aide – May 28, 2026; **Ella Ochoa**, Southridge Dependent Care aide – May 28, 2026; **Mattea Ochoa**, Johnston Dependent Care aide – June 9, 2026; **Deb Stewart**, high school cafeteria – May 28, 2026, and **Paloma Maldonado**, Southridge cafeteria – May 28, 2026. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve as presented. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Appointments. The Superintendent presented the following for Board approval: **Teresa Cox** and **Jeff Turoci**, Summer School Credit Recovery – June 1-June 25, 2026; **Alicia Rivera**, high school summer school aide – June 1-June 25, 2026; **Mark Ashmann**, middle school instructional aide, 2026-2027 school year; **Raquel DeJesus**, transfer from receptionist to principal's secretary - July 20, 2026; **Jen Cooper**, transfer from principal's secretary to attendance secretary- July 20, 2026; **Dianne Kobus**, **Anna Heinbach** and **Leah Ochoa**, Southridge Dependent Care aides – 2026-2027 school year; **Ashley Sudar**, English Department Chairperson – 2026-2027; **Mark DeLeon**, Southridge boys and girls basketball – 2026-2027; **Caleb Vasquez**, computer technician – June 15, 2026; **Ernesto Guadarrama**, building foreman – June 1, 2026; **Evan Hillier**, JV soccer – 2026-2027 school year; **Lisa Kelly**, **Dan Cochrane**, **Erica Bizon**, **Becca Klacik**, Johnston PreK summer school teachers – June 8-25 & July 6-23; **Kathy Pozywio**, **Monica Greiner**, **Sarah Nelson**, and **Kim Gutekunst** – Pre-K summer school aides – June 8-25 & July 6-23; **Greg Zabrecky**, **Donna Politics**, **Jen Hunt**, **Mark DeLeon**, **Kat Bailey** and **Val Napp-Funchion** – Johnston IREAD teachers – June 1-12; **Jeannine Fleishman**, **Jessica Vemmer**, **Sandy Talavera**, **Stacy Steele**, **Maria Mendoza**, and **Debbie Moore** – Johnston IREAD aides – June 1-12; **Talitha Taylor**, **Lisa Breitweiser**, **Luke Hackett** and **Caitlin Mavity** – middle school summer school teachers - June 1-18; **Erin Ritzema** and **Megan Bennett**, Title I Highland Christian – 2026-2027 school year; **Mitch Aguilera**, volunteer boys soccer – 2026-2027 school year; **Michelle Macias**, Merkley instructional aide – 2026-2027 school year; **Caitlyn McDonald**, Johnston instructional aide – 2026-2027 school year; **Kassandra Brizuela**, high school English teacher – 2026-2027 school year; and **Elizabeth McNamara**, high school science teacher – 2026-2027 school year. Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Administrative/Classified Salary Increases. Dr. Smith recommended a 1.5% salary increase for administrative and classified personnel for the 2026-2027 school year. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Administrative Contract Extensions. Dr. Smith recommended the following administrators/positions for contract extensions:

Name	Position	Current Contract Concludes	One Year Extension
Ryan Erdelac	Assistant Superintendent	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028
Travis Anderson	High School Principal	New Hire	June 30, 2028
Cristina Campos	High School Assistant Principal	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028
Andrew Locke	High School Assistant Principal	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028
Scheryl Corman	Middle School Principal	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028
Anthony Belli	Middle School Assistant Principal	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028
Kimberly Hayes	Southridge School Elementary Principal	New Hire	June 30, 2027
Christina Davis	Warren Elementary Principal	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028

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Amy Harrington	Johnston School Elementary Principal	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028
Eric McMahon	Merkley School Elementary Principal	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028
Ryan Harrington	Athletic Director	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028
Kelly Gossman	Coordinator of Guidance	June 30, 2027	June 30, 2028

Mr. Kuva moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the above recommendations as presented. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Comments from the Audience. A question followed on administrative salary increases on the new contracts.

Comments from the Board. Members of the Board congratulated the graduating seniors and student athletes, thanked Marc Ryser for the excellent student art exhibit that was on display in the administration building, and extended their best wishes to Greg Zabrecky on his retirement.

Next Meeting. The Board will meet next in regular session on July 16, 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 6:45 p.m. after the signing of vouchers in the amount of \$1,959,322.85, minutes, resolutions, payroll file totals, etc. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.