

July 21, 2026

Highland, Indiana

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, July 21, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. President Krull opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silent reflection.

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

Absent: Mr. Robert Kuva (with notice)

Also present were Dr. Ryan Erdelac, Interim Superintendent; Mrs. Kim Fulton, Chief Financial Officer; and Mr. Rhett Tauber, Attorney for the Board

Minutes of June 16, 2026 and July 2, 2026. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 16, 2026 and special meeting of July 2, 2026 as presented. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

Interim Superintendent's Report. Dr. Erdelac provided a brief overview of the summer projects currently underway, including blacktop work at the middle school and Southridge. He also reported on a pipeline issue between the high school and the administration building. Buckeye Pipeline is replacing a defective pipe and remediating the contaminated soil. The project is expected to be completed before the start of the school year.

Overall, all summer projects remain on schedule, and the district anticipates being ready for the return of staff and students for the new school year. There are still a few positions that remain to be filled.

Board Liaison. Mr. Garcia attended the Highland/Griffith Chamber breakfast meeting where there was a presentation from Lorri Feldt of the Northwest ISBDC on "Updating Your Business Plan."

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

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

Donations. The high school received \$2,000 from the Highland Football Parent Boosters for jerseys; \$100 from Industrial Battery/Thomas & Kathryn Samples for boys' basketball; \$250 from Blackbaud Giving Fund – Krull family for athletics; and \$150 from David Pastrick for boys' basketball. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

Construction Management. The administration recommended the Board accept the letter of engagement from The Skillman Corporation in the amount of \$110,450 to manage the high school/middle school bleacher and HVAC improvement projects. The project will be funded through the GO Bond of 2025. Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

Architect Services. Mr. Alyea moved seconded by Mr. Garcia, to approve the revised agreement with Schmidt Associates to provide architectural and engineering services for projects associated with the 2025 General Obligation Bond. The revised agreement increases the base fee from \$170,000 to \$227,357, plus reimbursable expenses for mileage, printing, design review, permitting costs and building code consulting. All voted "aye" to approve the revised agreement. Motion carried.

Bid Advertisement. The administration requested permission to advertise bids for the high school/middle school improvement projects. The planned projects are the high school main gym bleachers and HVAC system at both the high school and middle school gyms. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Garcia to approve. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Transfer of Funds. The administration recommended approving a resolution to transfer up to \$528,581.51 from the Debt Service Fund to the Operations Fund during calendar year 2026. Mr. Garcia moved seconded by Mr. Alyea, to approve *Resolution 1-2026 for 2026 Transfers Between the Debt Service and Operations Fund* as proposed. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Extracurricular Semi-Annual Financial Reports. Indiana Code 20-41-1-8 requires all extracurricular treasurers to file a Financial Report with the Board twice a year. These reports were received for Board review.

Food Service Meal Prices. The administration recommended the current student and adult meal prices remain unchanged for the 2026-2027 school year. Milk prices will also remain the same. The following reflects the 2026-2027 pricing schedule:

	Elementary	Secondary	Adults
Breakfast	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$2.25
Lunch	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$3.80
Milk	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$0.50

Dr. Erdelac encouraged all families to complete the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application, regardless of income. The more families who qualify, the more federal funding Highland can receive through Title programs and services. Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the above as presented. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Rusty McWilliams, Director of Buildings and Grounds, provided the Board with a written report relating to the ongoing maintenance work over the past month in preparation for the opening of school.

Interlocal Agreement/School Resource Officer. The administration recommended approving an *Interlocal Agreement Between the Civil Town of Highland and the School Town of Highland* for \$109,348.64. This agreement provides for a School Resource Officer for the 2026-2027 school year. Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

NEOLA Policies. Dr. Erdelac presented on second reading NEOLA policies that were introduced at the June Board Meeting. This included Volume 38 No. 1 Nondiscrimination, Volume 38 No. 1 – September 2025, and Volume 38 No. 2. Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve. All voted “aye.” Motion carried.

High School Student/Parent Handbook Changes. Dr. Erdelac presented the recommended revisions to the High School Student/Parent Handbook, noting the new state law requiring electronic devices to be stowed and powered off during the school day. Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to approve the recommended revisions. The Chair requested that the following language regarding electronic devices be incorporated into the official meeting minutes.

Electronic Devices (Personal and School Issued)

Indiana Senate Enrolled Act 78 (Public Law 107) is a “bell-to-bell” cellphone ban for K-12 schools. This ban includes all personal communication devices, including (but not limited to) cell phones, smartwatches/smartglasses, tablets, earbuds/headphones (unless used for instruction), gaming

devices, and any other personal electronic devices not explicitly identified, but that provide a distraction from learning for the student or those around them. **Before attending their first class of the day, each student will need to turn their personal communication devices off and store them in their assigned locker.** No student is allowed to use an electronic device, including a cell phone, in an academic setting without the explicit approval of the teacher, in the instance to manage healthcare (i.e., diabetic monitoring of sugar levels), an emergency, or having permission through a 504 or IEP. Consequences for improper or untimely use will range from conference to recommendation for expulsion.

All voted "aye" on the motion. Motion carried.

Educational Flexibility Waiver. The School Town provided public notice of its intent to apply for Indiana Educational Flexibility Waiver #4 for Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant. If approved, the waiver would exempt the district from the federal requirement to allocate 20% of the grant funds to specific spending categories. Dr. Erdelac explained that the waiver would provide the district with greater flexibility in meeting Title IV, Part A spending requirements.

The Chair called for public comment. No comments were received.

Resignations. Dr. Erdelac presented the following recommendations: **Alex Wierzbicki**, middle school computer science-June 29, 2026; **Renee Castro**, Spanish teacher-July 10, 2026; **Dylan Marich**, high school PLTW teacher-June 15, 2026; **Sherry Tokash**, ELL aide-July 2, 2026; and **Hailey Tremain** middle school bookkeeper-June 19, 2026. Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to accept the above resignation as presented. All voted "aye." Motion carried

Appointments. Dr. Erdelac presented the following appointments effective for the 2026-2027 school year: **Brandon Lopez**, high school physical education teacher; **Dennis Scott**, PLTW teacher; **Kyle Adams**, high school English teacher; **Julie Homans**, middle school computer science teacher; **Stacy Steele**, Johnston Safety Patrol; **Sophia Filis**, middle school bookkeeper-July 27, 2026, and **Elaina Henry**, high school receptionist-July 30, 2026. Mrs. Smith-Gomez moved, seconded by Mr. Alyea, to approve. All voted "aye." Motion carried.

Comments from the Audience. A question followed concerning a report on the financial situation of the School Town of Highland.

Comments from the Board. Members of the Board encouraged summer reading at the library and wished all an enjoyable and safe last few weeks of the summer break.

Future Meetings. The Board will meet next in regular session on August 18, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. and for a budget work session on August 25, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment. There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Garcia moved, seconded by Mrs. Smith-Gomez, to adjourn at 6:35 p.m. after the signing of claims in the amount of \$7,728,045.93, minutes, resolutions, payroll file totals, etc. All voted "aye." Motion carried.