

Western Wayne Schools

Minutes

March 12, 2025

The Western Wayne Board of School Trustees met on Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Esports Room at 215 East Parkway Drive. Board members present were Phil Pflum, Kris Bex, Jenni Risch, Dave Sturgis and Brent Fortman. Also, in attendance: Andy Stover, AJ Sickmann, Chad Lieberman, Robin Hokey, Peggy Huesman, Elizabeth Miller, Renee Lakes, Karen Hinkein, Grady Munchel, Blake Munchel, Jim Antle, Jenni Hamric, Jessica Williams, Shannon Brooks, Robert Miller, Ben Burris, Brittany Burris, Matt Webb, Troy Johnson, Denise Smith, Tracey Maish, Jessica Cox, Kaitlyn Ooten, Holly Muse, Jenny Vance, Dylan Miller, Jack Patton, Oliver Webb, Jenn Miller, Kelly DeVaughn, Jordan Kennedy, Amber Jones, Traci Linde, John Ambs, Duane Fultz, Brooke Bell, Sarah Cottrell, Megan Holcomb, Lisa and Carl Vickers, Nicole and Todd Patterson, Wyat Patterson, Noah Patterson, Jamie Davis, Matt Truesdell, Garrett Singer, Susan Moistner, Reilynn Ferguson, Paige Pitcock, Sara Munchel, Megan Munchel, Lucius Pitcock, Betsy Pitcock, Michael Munchel, Tom Munchel, Debby Webb, Nancy Durbin, Joyce McCarty, Braydon Munchel, Leo Russell, Jacob Myers, Erin Losekamp, Jules Losekamp, Frank and Kelley Hancock, Luke Cottrell, William Redd, Randy Smith, Anna Drake, Peter Smith, Grace Smith, Avery Smith, Frank Brattain, Mike Brattain, Zach Hawk, Carson Hawk, Nathan Ulerick, Brody Ulerick, Diana and Cecil Bell, Tracy and Randy Vogelgesang, Spencer Sare, Liza Bates, Kailey and Jon Winchester, Krista Weireter, Megan Alexander, Maria Schambers, Renee Schambers, John and Jean Eddington, Gary and Amber Rushton, Wyatt Rushton, Reba Rushton, Shane Watson, Kent Fortman, Nathan Cottrell, Samantha Bell, Tahlia Rastbichler, Grace Briar, Gage Sherwood, Dustin Lunsford, Kristin Brown, Tyler Brown, Renee McCullum, Amy Puckett, Sarah Pennington, Clint Newton, Gunnar Newton, Annabelle Keen, Kari Christie, Ashley Pitcher, Brandi Myers, Jesse and Kasey Tyree, Stephanie Stover, Sydney Lieberman, Sandy Lewellen, Andi Melerowicz, Brenda Mateos, Megan Ripberber, Sarah Roberts and Kelly Klein.

*****These are the community members that signed in, there were a few that did not sign the sheet.**

1. Dave Sturgis, called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Upon a motion by Brent Fortman, seconded by Kris Bex, the minutes for the Regular meeting and the Board of Finance meeting of February 12, 2025, executive session (1) of February 20, 2025, executive session (2) of February 20, 2025, special board season of February 20, 2025 and executive season of February 28, 2025 were all approved as presented.

Motion carried, 5-0

3. Discussion Items

3.1 Elizabeth Miller, WWES Principal, updated the board on what is going on at the elementary school and presented the February students of the month.

3.2 Renee Lakes, Principal of LMHS, updated the board on what is going on at the middle/high school and presented the February students of the month.

3.3 Fund Report:

Fund Title	Beg Month Bal	MTD Rev	MTD Expend	Current Bal
EDUCATIONAL FUND	\$ 1,567,710.77	\$ 479,919.35	\$ 549,706.88	\$ 1,497,923.24
REFERENDUM	\$ 47,713.66	\$ 0.00	\$ 49,425.53	\$ (1,711.87)
DEBT SERVICE FUND	\$ (19,415.61)	\$ 48,954.14	\$ 0.00	\$ 29,538.53
OPERATIONS FUND	\$ 528,773.11	\$ 162,875.34	\$ 168,310.74	\$ 523,337.71
LOCAL RAINY DAY FUND	\$ 1,643,477.39	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,643,477.39

3.4 Receipts Reported:

Richmond Family YMCA - Meal reimbursement	\$810.00
HC Claim - Medicaid Reimbursement	\$1,239.21
Gerald Gerard - Student contribution	\$1,500.00
AFLAC - Refund overpayment	\$53.95
State Auditor - School Lunch program reimbursement	\$42,897.60
State Auditor - Congressional Interest	\$77.09
LMHS Athletic/ECA Trips	\$216.22
Bank of NewYork Mellon - Reimbursement for IRS Subsidies	\$48,954.14
AFLAC - Refund overpayment	\$61.62
HC Claim - Medicaid Reimbursement	\$106.34
Reid Health - Donation	\$12,000.00
State Auditor - Teacher Residency Grant Reimbursement	\$6,000.00
Wayne County Auditor - Local Option Tax	\$7,367.42
State Auditor - Basic Grant	\$479,436.35
State Auditor - Title II FY23 reimbursement	\$822.20
State Auditor - Title I FY25 Reimbursement	\$9,491.59
State Auditor - STEM Integration Grant	\$1,935.99
State Auditor - STEM Robotics Grant	\$385.01
State Auditor - SIG Next Gen Reimbursement	\$65,534.06
State Auditor - McKinney-Vento reimbursement	\$2,491.50
State Auditor - Digital Learning Grant Reimbursement	\$22,712.90

Richmond Family YMCA - Meal reimbursement	\$810.00
State Auditor - Stronger Connections Grant reimbursement	\$12,109.67
State Auditor - EARN Grant reimbursement	\$1,321.92
LMHS Athletic/ECA Trips	\$518.28
Kim Riggs - Facilities Use	\$200.00
WWES Field Trip Reimbursements	\$204.58
Project Lead the Way Inc - PLTW Grant	\$2,500.00
WC SD Juul- Juul Vaping Settlement	\$1,368.39
Public Consulting Group - INMAC reimbursement	\$3,002.54
Wayne Bank & Trust - Interest	\$13,081.86
Wayne Bank & Trust - Interest	\$71.38
Western Wayne Schools Cafeteria - Monthly Lunch receipt	\$1,774.80

3.5 The board and community were updated on the bond project by Mr. Stover and Mr. Sturgis.

3.6 Mr. Stover gave an update on (ic) 20-28-9-27, Funding Floor.

3.7 The sealed bids for the Camera RFP were opened, read aloud and documented by Mr. Stover and Mr. Burris.

4. Action items:

4.1 Upon a motion by Brent Fortman, seconded by Kris Bex the second reading of the new/revised board policies were approved: Policies included:

C625-R -Test Security Provisions for Statewide Assessments (AG)
C625 - Test Security Provisions For Statewide Assessments
G-475 - Audio + Video Recording
E125-R - Retention Appeal Procedure
C100-R Student Admission Enrollment
C450 - Medical Needs at School
F125 - Purchasing
E125-E - Appeal Request From (3rd Grade Retention)

Motion carried, 5-0

4.2 Upon a motion of Jenni Risch, seconded by Kris Bex the revised First Reading of policy A275-R School Wellness was approved.

Motion carried, 5-0

4.3 Upon a motion of Brent Fortman, seconded by Kris Bex the following overnight/out of town field trips were approved.

High School Baseball team to Seymour IN March 28-29

2nd grade classes to the Wright Patterson AirForce Museum April 18th

Motion carried, 5-0

4.4 Upon a motion of Brent Fortman, seconded by Kris Bex the certified personnel hire of Brad Shortridge to teach PE/Health at the Middle/High School until the end of the school year was approved.

Motion carried, 5-0

4.5 Upon a motion of Kris Bex, seconded by Brent Fortman the following cafeteria staff was approved.

Phoenix Davis

Janie Bertsch

Mandy Haler

Motion carried, 5-0

4.6 Upon a motion of Jenni Risch, seconded by Kris Bex, Elizabeth Wonsetler as a Volunteer Tennis Coach was approved.

Motion carried, 5-0

4.7 Upon a motion of Brent Fortman, seconded by Kris Bex the following resignations were accepted

Chad Lieberman - Director of Titles and Grants

Tyler Klein - High School Math

Aadra Norrod - LMHS Guidance Counselor

Kelley Hancock - Prom Sponsor

Motion carried, 5-0

5. Upon a motion of Jenni Risch, seconded by Kris Bex the bills were approved for payment.

Motion carried, 5-0

6. Patron Comments:

There were a number of comments from the community, therefore I will list the names of those who spoke and then summarize the context as a whole.

Speaking: Karen Hinkein, Brayden Munchel (on behalf of Ashby Jones), Luke Cottrell, Samantha Bell, Brooke Bell, Dylan Miller, Fisher Brown, Kent Fortman, Gunnar Newton, Frank Hancock, Susan Moistner, Sara Munchel, Lucius Pitcock, Michael Munchel, and Amber Rushton.

Summary:

A concern was brought up about the resignation of Chad Lieberman, stating that he has brought in more than \$4 million in grants. It is understood that you can't stop someone from leaving but did any board members reach out to him? Brent Fortman said he did reach out to Mr. Lieberman. It was asked that Special Board Meetings be more publicized in the future. The Community did not feel that they were informed about meetings concerning the bond. The board did recognize that and agreed to put out a one call 48 hours prior to meetings.

Community members, parents and students raised their concerns about the \$12 million bond project and that \$6 million was allocated to renovating the high school gym. Many felt that the bond should have been used for other things, ie: track, softball field, and classrooms.

Community members and parents criticized the lack of communication, discipline for students and support for teachers. One community member/parent emphasized the need for community involvement and unity.

7. Corporation-Department Comments

7.1 Board Comments were made by Mr. Brent Fortman.

Mr. Fortman responded to the staff's concerns, emphasizing the need for unity and collaboration among all stakeholders. He acknowledged the challenges faced by the staff and the need for additional resources and support. He also urges the community to focus on the positive aspects of the district and the efforts being made to improve education, with emphasis on the importance of communication and collaboration to address the needs of students and staff effectively. Mr. Fortman addressed the negative attitude towards the school and the impact of social media on the school's reputation, asking the community, parents, students and teachers to not do so. He continues to state that the misinformation to students from teachers is causing a separation and this needs to stop and all come together for our school and community. Mr. Fortman stated that he was frustrated with the community's perception that the board is to blame for all issues, particularly those related to discipline, and holding staff accountable. Mr. Fortman stated that the board's role is only overseeing the superintendent and making policy, it is not in the day-to-day operations.

7.2 Corporation Staff Comments

Middle School Staff, Traci Linde, Jordan Kennedy, Amber Jones and Jen Miller raised concerns about the workload of special education teacher, Jen Miller, who manages 50 students, and the lack of support for teachers. Stating that Mrs. Miller cannot service all of the students in her caseload. Kailey Winchester and Liza Bates explained the rationale for the extra caseload of students for Mrs. Miller. Liza Bates, Director of East Central Indiana Special Services, stated that she services all the area schools and the average caseload is 40, so Ms. Miller's classes are not out of line. Chad Lieberman took this opportunity to thank Brent Fortman for his sincere response to his resignation. He proceeded to inform the community of his reasons for leaving. He stated that misconduct on part of employees and some board members that he has witnessed is something that he is out of remedies for hence the reason for his resignation. Mr. Lieberman stated that he reported his findings to Mr. Stover, and subsequently watched his hands be tied by some board members. Mr. Lieberman informed the board that he has reported instances of misconduct to and or received guidance from the Indiana Ethics Commission, the State Board of Accounts, the Indiana Department of Labor and the Attorney General. Peggy Huesman, District Financial Manager, thanked Mr. Lieberman, everything he has done, stating he will be missed, not only because he writes the grants but also because of the work that is done after the grants are awarded. Mrs. Huesman stated that under Mr. Stover's leadership, the culture at the Middle/High School can be improved. She stated that it will take a lot of hard work, putting aside our differences and holding people accountable, but it can be done. She stated that Mr. Fortman mentioned what the role of the board is policy making and not administrating and that the Superintendent makes the decisions. She stated that she does not see this happening at this time with this board.

7.3 Superintendent Comments

The superintendent, Mr. Stover, reflected on his journey as a leader in the Western Wayne school district, highlighting his early appointment at 31 and his commitment to revitalizing a struggling district. He acknowledged past challenges, financial struggles, and divisions within the district but stressed the importance of unity and support among staff, the board, and the community. He strongly advocated for Mr. Lieberman, Director of Title and Grants, for his role in securing funds for the district. Mr. Stover emphasized his passion for education, starting as a teacher and working his way up to make a larger impact. He acknowledges his mistakes but asserts his dedication to making tough decisions for the betterment of students and the district. He urged community members to engage in constructive dialogue, set aside personal conflicts, and work together to support the schools. He concludes by reaffirming his commitment to students, teachers, and the broader community, emphasizing that the school system is the central force that unites everyone.

8. Upon a motion of Brent Fortman, seconded by Kris Bex the meeting was adjourned at 8.42 pm.

Motion carried, 5-0

Dave Sturgis

Kris Bex

Brent Fortman

Phil Pflum

Jenni Risch