

FINNEYTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Special Meeting/Working Session
Brent Board Meeting Room
July 27, 2024
9:00am

The Finneytown Board of Education met in special session on Saturday, July 27, 2024, in the Brent Board Meeting Room, 8791 Brent Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45231. Ms. Lee, Mr. Rea, Ms. McMullen, Mr. Plaut, Dr. Banks, Dr. Dinan, Mr. Muchmore, Ms. Miller, and Ms. Baker were present. The President called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

In the absence of Mr. Oliverio, Treasurer, Mr. Rea nominated Lindsay Lee to be Treasurer Pro Tempore, seconded by Mr. Plaut.

95-24 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Ms. McMullen, to dispense with the Opening Ceremony and Approval of the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of July 15, 2024. Item passed.

Discussion – Master Scheduling 101

The board and admin teams interacted in discussion around how the Master Schedule dictates the entire day for our students and staff. The board and admin teams recognize a need to explore this topic of adjusting the schedule and timing to better meet the needs of our staff and students.

Mr. Rea asked how much does the state mandate? The state mandates total educational hours, and a few small things such as maximum recess time. There are requirements on subjects that are taught, but not a time limit (literacy being the only exception).

Ms. Baker went thru the process of creating the master schedule. There is a survey for feedback sent to the staff. What needs to start, stop, or continue (what's working)? The elementary schedule is primarily driven by the homeroom. There are various layers incorporated

1. Lunch and recess
 - a. Contracts have an impact on this timing
 - b. Logistics at the elementary required that lunches be separated by grade – the cafeteria is not a functioning environment with two grades together
 - c. Lunch period is long as a result – it begins early and ends late.
2. Specials
 - a. 40-minute special classes give the homeroom teachers a planning period
 - b. This doesn't work well
3. Scheduling homerooms for each schedule
 - a. Varies per grade and number of home rooms per grade
 - b. 5th and 6th grade band/orchestra add complexity to this process, especially if we want more than one class per week
 - c. Sometimes this requires splitting homerooms, which has several negatives
4. Addressing bottle necks and nuances
 - a. Hall usage, dismissal, starting time, attendance
5. Specials' teachers lunch and planning periods

- a. If you get this far and it doesn't fit, you are forced to start over.

Once the schedule is made, it needs reviewed, requiring literal map drawing and tracing routes to ensure transitions are not causing disruption. This is made challenging because the schedule embodies our priorities as a district, and we value communal time, including the whole grade together, allowing the staff to plan together.

Mr Plaut asked, "Do you have opportunities to connect with other schools who have seen these challenges?" Yes. These problems are very common.

How did parent volunteers at lunch go? The school saw 10 consistent volunteers. The goal was to build relationships and talk to kids.

Mr. Muchmore added that the schedule is not done at this point. It is important to note that once it is finished, our admin staff receive feedback from individuals. It adds an emotional toll to the process.

Ms. McMullen asked, "How do you relay or communicate the schedule to the staff? The schedule is sent via email. When we believe there's going to be something particularly tricky or problematic, we will have proactive sit-down meetings.

The timeframe for this work starts with the survey in January. The Master Schedule is drafted by May

One challenge is the shared staff between the buildings.

Mr. Plaut asked, "Can we proactively work together to communicate and anticipate pinch points with the community before they are known?" Yes. This is something Dr. Banks feels responsible for, and the request is the admin needs the board to better right size the problem statements. The admin needs to know the board will support and back up the admin in these situations.

Ms. Lee stated that a lot of the communication has already changed as relationship improve this year. Going forward, the board needs to define those guiding principals on communication so that the school district can be more consistent.

Ms. Miller explained the differences in master scheduling for secondary campus. High school lunch is very different due to being more free-flowing. Kids eat with teachers, in the gym, outside, etc. In November/December the admin meets with each department head on what needs to start, stop, continue, and what course offerings they want to have. The course guide goes to the community and needs updated at this time. The department heads send who wants to teach what. This is important – the district values giving teachers the chance to teach courses they are passionate about. Once course offerings are decided, counselors meet with students and classes to determine who wants to take what classes (January/February timing). Once done, the schedule building process begins. This process is owned primarily by E Styles, who works tirelessly to put this into the system. A lot of work is done to input all courses (90 hours, approx.). There are needs such as spreading out AP/honors courses, understanding course spread across grades, etc. Final decisions are then made on what is actually offered based on student numbers per class. The program runs (and re-runs)

and adjusts. First priority is always academics. The program will run approx. 30 times. Once the final schedule is determined and agreed on, it is locked. At that point changes have to be made by hand (May time period). Once locked, schedules are then reviewed and verified for each individual student. Key considerations made include IEPs, intervention specialists' schedules, graduation requirements

We offer a diverse amount of choice, which creates challenges on our small staff to have to prep multiple classes. A lot of class offerings end up being singletons – only offered 1 time.

Discussion continued with the board on where we need to focus efforts, or where we need to make changes. Several opportunities were mentioned, specifically around incorporating PBL and individual learning, providing opportunities for internships, and prioritizing the need for teachers to have more time to learn to work together

Noted Challenge Follow-up Items:

- Challenge at elementary = lunch (30 min, can't combine grades)
- Challenge = to better support leadership on the emotional toll after publishing the schedule
- Need better alignment on what and when to communicate from the board
- Challenge = traffic flow (at elementary lunch)

Discussion – Beyond Differences

Discussion around how to best utilize Beyond Differences in meaningful ways. Ms. McMullen mentioned how meetings lacked clear purpose and were fizzling out. Concerns were mentioned about adding too much to Scott's plate, and maybe finding a new way to meet the ProAction Café while finding more engagement. The skills of the committee would benefit the ProAction Café team, where there is already a budget. Ms. Lee mentioned it needs to be more of a Family Engagement group over all of the separate functionalities, a voice to centralize and bring the support organizations and others together. The ProAction Café could fall under this group, and Beyond Differences would be a resource for finding mentors and helping to continue the work started at the ProAction Café.

96-24 Mr. Rea motioned, seconded by Mr. Plaut, to suspend the meeting for 30 minutes for lunch.

RC: Mr. Plaut, yes; Ms. McMullen, yes; Mr. Rea, yes; Ms. Lee, yes. The President declared the motion passed.

The meeting was suspended at 12:05 pm.

The president ended the suspension at 12:40 pm.

Facilities Update

Dr. Laurie Banks, Superintendent – discussed the following:

Elementary School (K-6)

This summer, Finneytown Elementary was cleaned and received a fresh coat of paint and all preventative maintenance was performed. It is ready for students and the start of school.

Secondary School (7-12) – new building update

Utility relocation to accommodate the construction of our new 7-12 building co-funded by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) has begun. The official groundbreaking ceremony will be Friday, August 30, at 5.30 pm before the home football game.

Select demolition of the old administrative offices, locker rooms, and a portion of the 300 building will happen during winter break. Extension of the break from two weeks to three weeks is being considered as a contingency for bad weather and/or unforeseen circumstances for high school middle school only. No one will be allowed on the campus during the demolition. The contingency will be presented to the construction core team for its assessment. Virtual learning would be preferred. Planned completion of the new building has shifted to the spring of 2026. The building is scheduled to officially open at the start of the 2026-27 school year.

This summer, Finneytown Secondary was cleaned and spaces shifted in preparation for the new building. All preventative maintenance was performed, and the building is ready to welcome students back.

ESSER Funding

The district is leveraging our ESSER funds to replace existing HVAC units in the 100 building and the gym. This project is scheduled to be completed in November 2024. Two years ago, we were able to utilize the funds to put a new roof on the gym. These projects provide a safe and comfortable environment for our students, staff and community.

Whitaker

The abatement and demolition of the Whitter site has begun. Construction fencing has been placed around the site. The abatement is being set up this week and will be completed by August 15. Demolition will begin August 19 and be completed by October 22. This project is being completed by Mound Waste & Demolition and is a co-funded portion of our OFCC project.

Future Projects:

- new baseball and softball fields at Finneytown Secondary campus
- renovation of the varsity gym and performing arts center at the Finneytown Secondary campus
- selection of a long-term location for the district offices
- site planning for Whitaker in partnership with Springfield Township.

Discussion – 5-Year Forecast

The five year forecast was updated with final numbers for the 2023-24 fiscal year. With the new updates we are able to extend the current levy an additional year. The forecast

cash balance is projected to be negative in year 5. Currently we are looking at a levy 3 years out.

Mr. Plaut noted the community does not have a thorough understanding to support a levy at this time. We need to begin work to save money while also adding in programs that the community values (arts – theater, and choir). We need to begin a deep dive on where to save money.

Discussion continued around saving expenses and building revenue.

Discussion – Attendance Calendar

Dr. Banks has created a google sheet with dates and times of various activities the district would like to see Board attend. The Board members will access this file to plan ahead and determine who will attend each event. Ms. Lee will bring the calendar to discuss during the regular meetings during board coordination each month.

Discussion – Communication Policy

Policy was brought forth by Mr. Rea. This policy is similar to one brought last year and pulled due to lack of support. The board had the first reading of this policy earlier this year but did not move forward. The union has seen the policy and is in support of it.

Mr. Plaut noted that he and Mr. Rea agree on the need and why behind the policy. They do not agree on the how.

Dr. Banks asked to review the reason for the policy change. Ms. McMullen stated that she originally felt confident things were being handled appropriately, but with exit surveys and what we see with retention, she is less confident and feels we are losing opportunities to course correct. Dr. Banks noted that nothing in the exit surveys were a surprise. We knew each issue. Ms. Lee stated that in addition, she personally can get a bigger, more balanced view when more staff feel more comfortable talking to the board. She can use what she hears to better support the admin. Similarly, she hears a lot of conflicting stories that don't always match what the admin says. No one believes the admin is ignoring or sticking their heads in the sand. There, in general, looks like there is a lack of empathy in the responses given to issues.

Review of Action Steps

- 1) Beyond Differences will meet to design what it will look like as a centralized function over all support organizations, ProAction café and key communicators – Mr. Plaut, Ms. McMullen, Dr. Banks, and Mr. Scott Myer
- 2) A recommendation for adjusting the winter break schedule due to construction disruption risk at the Secondary Campus for the August 2024 regular board meeting – Dr. Banks
- 3) The Finance committee will meet and recommend targets for budgeting by November 2024 – Mr. Oliverio, Dr. Banks, Finance Committee members
- 4) The communication policy proposal will be included in the August regular meeting agenda for a second reading for discussion, approval or revision – Dr. Banks

- 5) A meeting will be set up to draft recommended administrative guideline additions for the communication policy to further guide staff on when it is and is not appropriate to have discussions with the board – Dr. Banks and Mr. Plaut

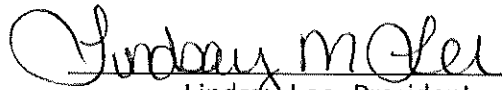
97-24 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Mr. Plaut, that the Board move to Executive Session, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(1), for the purpose of considering the employment of public employees of the district.

RC: Ms. McMullen, yes; Mr. Rea, yes; Ms. Lee, yes; Mr. Plaut, yes. The president declared the motion passed.

The board entered executive session at 3:10 pm.

The board exited executive session at 4:22 pm.

98-24 There being no further business, Ms. McMullen moved, seconded by Mr. Rea, that the meeting be adjourned. The president declared the meeting adjourned at 4:22pm.


Lindsay Lee, President

ATTEST:


Jelecia McMullen, Vice President