FINNEYTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Regular Meeting, February 18, 2025
Brent Board Office Meeting Room
8791 Brent Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45231
Open Forum 6:00pm
Regular Meeting 6:30pm

The Finneytown Board of Education met in regular session on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, in the Brent Board Office Meeting Room, 8791 Brent Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45231. Ms. McMullen, Ms. Lee, Mr. Plaut, Mr. Rea and Mr. Reeb were present. The President called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

26-25 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Ms. Lee, that the Board approve the agenda as presented and amended. The President declared the motion passed.

27-25 Ms. Lee moved, seconded by Mr. Plaut, the Board approved the minutes from the Regular Meeting of January 27, 2025 and the Special Meeting of February 13, 2025. The President declared the motion passed.

Administrative Report

Dr. Laurie Banks, Superintendent – discussed the following:

- Communications –
  - Social Media – Allerton came on campus the same day as Wildcat Wellness and the pep rally, took some live video, did some interviews and are putting together a compilation in small bites for social media on "Why Finneytown?" These will be coming soon.
  - Facility Update Videos – New facility video updates will be accessible on the district's website landing page. The meeting was paused to watch the first facility update video.
  - Quarterly Strategic Plan Updates – These quarterly publications, regarding the strategic plan, will be emailed and posted on the district's website.
- The Finneytown Secondary Campus's production of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*! will be March 14-16th.
- February 13, 2025 Special Board Meeting – I wanted to clear up a few things.
  - The school calendar was reviewed with the union and voted upon prior to bringing it to you.
  - Fair School Funding Resolution – Superintendents in Hamilton County are asking Boards to pass this resolution in support of a fully funded fair school funding formula. Resolutions will be shared at an upcoming legislative breakfast with Senator Blessings. I'll share information, regarding details of Governor DeWine's budget at our next meeting.
  - Apology – I did not realize we had two members on the policy committee. It was my error Mr. Plaut was left out of our review meeting with NEOLA.
  - Policy 7421 (Bathroom Bill Policy) – Initial conversations with Mr. Warmack and Mr. Anderson have taken place. We have a plan to ensure compliance with the law going into effect February 25th.
- Other Highlights –

- Wildcat Wellness – It was a fantastic event. There are some entertaining videos out that I encourage you to watch.
- Building Connections – Will take place March 6th and March 20th with morning sessions at 9:30am and evening sessions at 6pm. The program intent is to welcome new families into Finneytown with kindergartners here next year.

- Policy 1540 –
  - Superintendent Feedback – I am opposed to the revision of this policy, which I believe undermines the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent. According to legal counsel for BASA, the state superintendent's organization, this policy is being litigated in the Ohio Supreme Court for failure to comply with Ohio Revised Code. Reasons, I don't agree with this policy change include:
    - The recently revised superintendent's job description clearly outlines personnel as one of my primary functions.
    - There is still oversight by the board, as Mr. Plaut pointed out at the meeting on Thursday. The board is directly responsible for employment of the treasurer and superintendent. I bring contracts for everyone else. The board has the option to approve or not approved. These are not unilateral decisions, although it's my discretion to bring who we feel is appropriate for the day-to-day to the board for consideration.
    - There are twenty-two districts in Hamilton County. Fifteen of them have the provision at the recommendation of the superintendent. One just has Ohio Revised Code language. Six do not have at the recommendation of the superintendent.
    - Checks and balances already exist. I have concerns about the process and transparency around it.
    - In terms of the timing, this blindsided me and feels rushed.
      - On December 2nd, the personnel committee met, which included two board members. During that, conversation, there was discussion about administrative contracts and that we did not want to repeat the events of February 2023. This policy change was not discussed during that time and contradicts that discussion and how we talked about moving forward.
      - On December 12th, the finance committee met on our five-year forecast and the need to be very thoughtful about our expenditures moving forward. A cost neutral expenditure target that the superintendent and treasurer would use to make decisions about how we run the district and employ people was suggested. Days after that meeting, Mr. Oliverio and I had a conversation concerning cost neutral spending and whether or not zero growth was realistic with the escalation of cost due to recent inflation.
      - At the December 16th board meeting, and it's in our notes, we talked about reevaluation of that target as a finance committee after we were done with our teacher negotiations and had a better understanding of how that would impact our finances.

- On January 27th, a regular board meeting executive session was held without the superintendent and treasurer because of employment considerations.
- On January 30th, I had a weekly meeting with the Board President. It was shared, there might be a proposed change to policy 1540 and that administrative contracts should not be brought to the meeting in February. I requested an executive session about employment so I could understand where we were at, but was not able to get one due to scheduling conflicts.
- On February 6th, Ms. Ruffin, Ms. McMullen, Mr. Plaut and I met. We left that meeting understanding we would move forward and bring the administrative contracts. I sent out a board update.
- On February 18th, I was asked not to include the administrative contracts on tonight's meeting and have come to understand the full scope of this policy.

- Administrative Team Feedback – In response to a Board member's request for administrative feedback on the proposed change to policy 1540, the following was prepared:

> We are deeply disappointed by the lack of meaningful dialogue regarding the proposed revision to Policy 1540. Instead of an open conversation with administrators, we were only given the opportunity to provide feedback by email. A face-to-face discussion would have affirmed the Board of Education's support and value for its administrative team while also ensuring that the many nuances of this decision were properly considered.
>
> We are feeling unsettled and disrespected. The removal of the superintendent's recommendation from this policy creates uncertainty and raises concerns about fairness, transparency, and due process. This change could foster a culture of fear where administrators hesitate to make difficult but necessary decisions due to the possibility of retaliation or abrupt contract suspension.
>
> Moreover, this decision, along with the communication policy change in the fall, is actively undermining our ability to lead. These actions send a troubling message about the lack of trust in our leadership team and negatively impact overall staff morale. When administrators feel unsupported and undervalued, it not only affects their ability to lead, but also disrupts the stability of the entire district. If this revision moves forward, it will set a dangerous precedent–one that erodes trust, discourages strong leadership, and ultimately weakens our district's ability to attract and retain high-quality administrators.
>
> We are left wondering–what's next. If a policy change of this magnitude can happen without meaningful discussion, it sets a concerning precedent for future decisions. We urge the board to reconsider this revision and

engage in a more thoughtful, inclusive process that respects and values the voices of our administrators and staff.

Signed: Laurie Banks, Jen Dinan, Carol Miller, Eric Muchmore, Tom Snyder, Jessie Martin, Lisa Samuel, Anton Walker, Meredith Baker, and Grant Anderson.

Public Address

Scott Haarlammert - Community Member, Parent, Former Board Member

- Expressed concerns regarding agenda item 10F and policies in items 11, 12, and 13, particularly the perceived lack of sufficient review time before a vote.
- Raised concerns about policy 1540, which allows the Board to suspend administrative contracts without the Superintendent's recommendation, suggesting it indicates misalignment between the Board and Superintendent.
- Questioned the separation of responsibilities between hiring and suspending administrators and its impact on accountability and performance evaluation.
- Stressed the importance of collaborative leadership between the Board and Superintendent.
- Urged the Board to act with prudence and fairness in decision-making.

Laura Walker - District Media Specialist, 18-Year Employee

- Voiced concerns about the removal of the Superintendent's recommendation from policy 1540, arguing it eliminates checks and balances in administrative contract decisions.
- Warned that this change could set a precedent for future policy expansions affecting teacher contracts.
- Emphasized the district's ongoing large-scale projects and expressed concern that changes in leadership could cause instability and delays.
- Urged the Board to reconsider the policy change to avoid unnecessary disruptions.

Michael Hamel - Community Member

- Supported the Board's decision, stating that change can lead to improved collaboration and strengthen the district's operations.
- Encouraged a practical and level-headed approach to decision-making.

Cindy Redman - Longtime Resident, Former Board Member

- Expressed concern over the timing and transparency of the second reading of policy changes, stating it was expected after the executive session.
- Questioned whether previous concerns about administrative contracts had been properly addressed before proposing policy changes.
- Shared experiences from another district, warning that frequent leadership changes create instability.
- Urged the Board to carefully consider the potential long-term consequences on staff retention and district operations.

Review of Action Steps from last month

1) Find a calendar date for the Board Self-Assessment – Tabled
2) Prepare and post the February 13, 2025 special meeting agenda – Done

Board Coordination Matters
Live Streaming Special Meetings

- Mr. Reeb expressed concern that the recent meeting was recorded without a new Board discussion or vote, contrary to the previous decision where a majority (3-2) voted against recording special meetings. He emphasized the need for consistency in recording decisions and proposed that a standard policy be established.
- Ms. McMullen apologized for the lack of communication but defended the recording, stating that it was done for transparency and accessibility, especially for those unable to attend due to illness. She noted that the recording became a useful resource for absent members and legal consultation indicated it did not require prior Board approval.
- Mr. Rea questioned whether legal counsel was informed of the prior Board vote against recording. Ms. McMullen confirmed that she had not mentioned it, which some members felt was a critical oversight.
- Ms. Lee recalled that the original reason for rejecting live streaming was due to the additional workload for staff and suggested revisiting the policy to ensure consistency.
- Mr. Plaut proposed that the issue be included in the organizational agenda every January, ensuring each new Board establishes a clear stance on live-streaming special meetings.
- Ms. McMullen and Mr. Reeb agreed that further discussion with Superintendent Banks and Mr. Anderson was needed to evaluate feasibility. The item was tabled.

Board Member Reports
Mr. Reeb, discussed the following items:

- Springfield Township Trustees Meeting
  - Springfield Township Zoning Commission held a public hearing regarding a new development plan on 80+acres near Winton Woods, which includes 120 single-family homes and 60 townhomes. WCPO ran a news story.
  - A street repaving project in Pleasant Marsh Farms will be voted upon in March.
  - Upcoming Events:
    - March 27th - Dinner Theater at The Grove, catered by TLAA, featuring David Anthony's Night of Magic & Hypnosis.
    - April 11th-12th - Children's Theater Program with 60 registered participants, performing in two shows per day.
  - Police Update - Increase in car door checking incidents; residents are encouraged to share security footage with authorities.
  - Gas Aggregation: Township's plan is still offering a lower rate than Duke Energy, unlike some other municipalities.

Mr. Plaut, discussed the following items:

- Finneytown Music Parents Association (FMPA) – met on March 6

- Costs keep rising; sheet music copyright permit fees for band and orchestra have increased 300%.
- Fundraisers -
  - Please consider the March 6th Skyline dine-to-donate
  - Mattress sale fundraiser will be held soon.

- Finneytown Alumni Network (FAN) –
  - Encouraged community members to join at finneytownalumni.org.
  - March 20 at 5 p.m. – Social gathering at Mad Tree.
- Athletics –
  - Two CHL League wrestling champions, including Brady Volz who won his 100th match and is nominated for Cincinnati Enquirer Athlete of the Week. Everyone is encouraged to vote for him.
  - Finneytown Athletic Association is seeking participants for baseball, volleyball, and spring wrestling.
- Elementary School PTA Events –
  - Feb. 28th - Black History Night at 6:30 p.m.
  - April 12th - Spring Carnival
  - Volunteers needed.

Ms. McMullen, discussed the following items:

- ACT Testing –
  - 11th graders are taking the ACT on Wednesday, February 26th (only juniors report to school that day at the secondary campus)
  - The ACT practice test will be Wednesday, February 19th at 3pm.
- Other Important Dates –
  - Feb. 20th – Parent-teacher conferences from 4–7 p.m.
  - March 21st – Staff in-service day.
  - March 24th-28th – Spring Break.

Ms. Lee, discussed the following items:

- Board Calendar Upcoming Events –
  - March 4th – Spring Sports Kickoff.
  - March 7th – Social event for 4th-6th graders.
  - March 14th-16th – Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella! at the Performing Arts Center.
  - April 3rd – ProAction Café at 5 p.m.
  - This calendar needs to be updated for senior sports nights and other events.

Mr. Rea, discussed the following items:

- No Report.

28-25 Mr. Rea moved, second by Mr. Reeb, the Board adopted the "Consent Calendar" as follows:

Action by the Board of Education in adoption of the "Consent Calendar" at this point of the agenda means that all items appearing with an asterisk (*) after the title constitute the "Consent Calendar" and are adopted by one single motion, unless a member of the Board of Education or the Superintendent requests that any such item be removed from the "Consent Calendar" and voted upon separately.

a) Monthly Financial Report*

b) Depository and Investment Balances as of January 31, 2025*

U.S. Bank	0.0890%	$ 549,232.86
U.S. Bank (construction)	0.6600%	$ 1,859,537.24
STAR Ohio (construction #1)	4.5300%	$ 3,070,193.07
STAR Ohio	4.5300%	$ 23,893,419.17
STAR Ohio (construction #2)	4.5300%	$ 3,234,666.56
STAR Ohio (OFCC local share)	4.5300%	$ 148,456.46
STAR Ohio (OFCC state share)	4.5300%	$ 4,050,989.24

c) Interest Earned on Depository and Investment Accounts as of January 31, 2025*

General Fund 001	$ 92,071.91
Construction Fund 004	$ 24,340.26
Classroom Facilities Fund 010	$ 15,695.60

d) Monthly Bond Project Spending and Commitment Report*

[See attachment]

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

29-25 Mr. Plaut moved, second by Ms. Lee, the Board adopted the "Consent Calendar" as follows:

Action by the Board of Education in adoption of the "Consent Calendar" at this point of the agenda means that all items appearing with an asterisk (*) after the title constitute the "Consent Calendar" and are adopted by one single motion, unless a member of the Board of Education or the Superintendent requests that any such item be removed from the "Consent Calendar" and voted upon separately.

a) Approval of Contract – One Year Limited Classified*

The Board approved a one year limited contract for the following new exempt staff member, effective February 19, 2025 through June 30, 2025:

Krystalyn Goodson	Payroll Specialist	$19,808.00

b) Rescission of Contract - Supplemental 2024-2025*

The Board rescinded the following supplemental contract originally approved on January 27, 2025:

Blake Fuller	MS Head Boys Basketball 7th	$1,753.00

c) Approval of Contract – Supplemental 2024-2025*

The Board approved the following supplemental contracts, effective August 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025:

Blake Fuller	Head Coach Freshman Boys Basketball	$2,338.00

d) Approval of Home Instructor Tutor*

The Board approved the following Home Instruction Tutor for the 2024-2025 school year (Home Instruction Tutors provide temporary tutoring services on an as-needed basis):

Armand Tatum	$20.00/hr.

e) Consideration of School Calendar 2025-2026*

The Board approved the following school year calendar for 2025-2026, which was originally presented for consideration at the Special Meeting of February 13, 2025:

August 11, Monday	Staff In-Service - No School
August 12, Tuesday	Staff In-Service - No School
August 13, Wednesday	First Day for Students
September 1, Monday	Labor Day - No School
October 15, Wednesday	1st Quarter Ends (44 days)
October 15, Wednesday	Staff In - Service - No School
October 16, Thursday	Staff In- Service - No School
October 17, Friday	Fall Break - No school
October 20, Monday	Fall Break - No School

November 26, Wednesday	Conference Release Day-No School
November 27 & 28, Thursday & Friday	Thanksgiving Break - No School
December 19, Friday	2nd Quarter Ends (41 days)
December 22, Monday-January 2, Friday	Winter Break - No School
January 5 & 6, Monday & Tuesday	Staff In-Service – No School
January 7, Wednesday	School Resumes
January 19, Monday	Dr. MLK, Jr. Day - No School
February 13, Friday	Conference Release Day-No School
February 16, Monday	Presidents Day - No School
March 13, Friday	3rd Quarter Ends (45 days)
March 16, Monday - March 20, Friday	Spring Break - No School
March 23 & 24, Monday & Tuesday	Staff In-Service - No School
March 25, Wednesday	School Resumes
April 3, Friday	No School
May 25, Monday	Memorial Day - No School
May 28, Thursday	Last Day for Students
	4th Quarter Ends (45 days)
May 29, Friday	Staff In-Service
	Last Day for Staff

f) Consideration of New / Revised Policies*

The Board considered the following new/revised policies, which will be presented for final adoption at the next regular meeting of the Board:

0131.1	TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS
0171	REVIEW OF POLICY RESCIND
1422.01	DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE
2271	COLLEGE CREDIT PLUS PROGRAM
2340	FIELD AND OTHER DISTRICT-SPONSORED TRIPS
2430.02	PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNITY/STEM SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
2431	INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS
2460	SPECIAL EDUCATION
3112	BOARD-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS
4112	BOARD-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS
5113	INTER-DISTRICT OPEN ENROLLMENT
5131	STUDENT TRANSFERS RESCIND
5136	PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES
5136.01	ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT
5223	RELEASED TIME FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY
5330	USE OF MEDICATIONS
5350	STUDENT HEALTH, WELL-BEING, AND SUICIDE PREVENTION
5460	GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
5610	REMOVAL, SUSPENSION, EXPULSION, AND PERMANENT EXCLUSION OF STUDENTS

5751	PARENTAL STATUS OF STUDENTS
5780.01	PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS
6151	INSUFFICIENT FUNDS CHECKS
6460	VENDOR RELATIONS
7440.01	VIDEO SURVEILLANCE AND ELECTRONIC MONITORING
8142	CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK FOR CONTRACTED SCHOOL SERVICES
8452	AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS ("AED") ANDCARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION
8500	FOOD SERVICES

g) Adoption of Resolution – Model Policies and Procedures*

The Board adopted the following resolution:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE FINNEYTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education hereby adopts the Special Education Model Policies and Procedures ("Model Policies") that were released by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce ("DEW") in December2024, and directs all staff in the District to use and comply with the Model Policies. The Board further authorizes the Superintendent to notify the DEW of the Board's adoption of the Model Policies through the
DEW's Monitoring System by uploading a copy of this Board resolution on or before March 30, 2025, and by November 30 for each subsequent school year.

h) Approval of Change Orders*

The Board approved the following change orders for the K-6 Finneytown Elementary construction project:

1) **Change Order #S88 – Skanska Contract**
Add $4,883.50 to replace and commission twenty-two (22) CSR sensors for critical systems at Finneytown Elementary. Suggested by Fanning Howey and Four Seasons due to specified/installed sensors not being sensitive enough to facilitate the sequence of operations.

2) **Change Order #S89 – Skanska Contract**
Add $2,930.10 to relocate the OAT temperature sensor at Finneytown Elementary. Suggested by Four Seasons to relocate the outside air sensor from near the chillers to the north side of the building above the entrance door near the Music Room.

3) **Change Order #S90 – Skanska Contract**
Add $4,273.06 to rebalance the HVAC piping systems at Finneytown Elementary. Requested by Fanning Howey and Four Seasons based on their 1/31/25 meeting. The final testing and balancing report was issued on 8/22/22.

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

30-25 Adoption of New Revised Policy 1540 (Suspension of Administrative Contracts)

Mr. Rea moved, second by Mr. Reeb that the Board adopt the newly revised policy 1540, Suspension of Administrative Contracts, which was initially presented for consideration at the special meeting on February 13, 2024.

> **31-25** Mr. Plaut moved, second by Ms. McMullen, that the Board pause consideration of newly revised policy 1540 sending the policy back to the Policy Committee for further discussion, citing the need for additional research, community input, and feedback from administrators.
>
> The following statements were also made on behalf of pausing:
>
> - the policy contradicts the values of the district and could create division rather than unity
> - this policy change politicizes administrative roles and disregards the importance of building trust with staff and the community.
> - Board oversight should remain focused on the Superintendent and Treasurer, rather than overextending into other administrative roles.
>
> **RC:** Ms. McMullen, yes; Ms. Lee, no; Mr. Plaut, yes; Mr. Rea, no; Mr. Reeb, no. The Board President declared the motion failed.

Discussion on New Revised Policy 1540

Mr. Rea:
This statement was prepared in advance of the meeting. It is not in response to anything that may have been said during the public comment. The policy is currently being litigated in the Supreme Court, as mentioned by Superintendent Banks.

I believe that policy 1540, as it currently stands, is an abdication of the fiduciary responsibility bestowed upon the elected members of this school board. Moreover, I believe that the previous board members who enacted the policy or who knew of its existence but didn't change it, failed to fulfill the expectations of responsible board members. I prepared a statement that covers a number of subjects, legal duties, current circumstances, the current policy, state law, and teacher's contracts. So I'd like to read some points on that.

1. Changing the policy ensures the board fulfills its legal duties to the district.

Policy 1540 in its current state permits changes to the administrative staff ONLY if the superintendent approves the changes. This is true even if the district is in financial ruin and must cut staff to survive as a district. Accordingly, if the board wants to cut non-essential positions to ensure the district's financial stability, the superintendent could simply say no and keep the staff in place–even if the status quo means destroying the financial health of the district. I want to be very clear about my motivation for changing this policy. This policy must be changed to permit the board to ensure the long-term financial health of our district. The board is legally responsible for ensuring the district's well-being. Therefore, I believe I have a legal obligation to move the final decision-making power to eliminate unnecessary positions back to the board.

2. Current circumstances demonstrate need for the change.

As stated, my motivation for changing the policy is permitting the board to fulfill its duty to look out for the district's best interest. But often, the desire for change arises out of unsatisfactory current circumstances. This is no exception. Finneytown, from an educational performance perspective, is not nearly as strong as it was in the past. Current data suggests we have stopped the decline; however, the district has not succeeded in moving toward where the district used to be. While our financial health has been strong, the forecasted financial picture is quite frankly alarming. The five-year forecast shows that our expenses are exceeding our income. This means we either need to consider making cuts to our budget and/or asking voters to pass a levy. We have a top-heavy district structure. Administration roles overlap such that the same two or three people frequently attend the same meetings together. State law prohibits school districts from operating with a negative cash balance. If Finneytown Local School District continues spending money like it currently does, eventually, we will have to operate with a negative cash balance. The consequence for having a negative cash balance would be devastating–the state can take over the district, thus making all decisions. All salaries could be frozen. The state can fire all administrators. The teachers' contracts may be renegotiated. The state could order a charter school to take over the district. Making changes NOW to stop the financial decline would have a multiplying effect on the road. For example, cutting a position costing the district $100,000 now means that in five years we'll have at least a half a million dollars we wouldn't have if we kept the status quo.

3. Policy 1540 is bad government.

The voters elect the board to look out for the district's best interest. Indeed, the board has a fiduciary duty to do just that–act in the best interest of the district. This sometimes means making decisions that are not popular. But to save the district from financial ruin, the board must be willing to do what is necessary to protect the district. Under current policy 1540, the board lacks the authority to make the changes that will ensure the district's financial health. Instead, the board must have the superintendent's "permission" to cut administrative positions. The board/superintendent relationship should be one of collaboration and

compromise. But if that relationship is lacking–for example, if, as here, the board and the superintendent cannot agree whether to cut unnecessary positions to keep the district from spending more money than it takes in, the board must have the authority to make hard decisions. Since I joined the board, almost every conversation I've had with residents about the district's financial health has included lamenting the top-heavy nature of the district because we have too many administrators. I agree–there is significant administrative bloat. But under the current policy, the board's hands are tied. Unless the superintendent agrees to cut the fat, Finneytown must live with the status quo–losing money each year, eating up our cash reserves, having too many administrators, and eventually risking the state taking over the district. Indeed, under the current policy, the superintendent has the right to ignore the board's directives involving the size of the administration. Some in the community have suggested that changing the policy is nothing more than board members' power grab. Those community members are missing the mark. The board has a legal responsibility to act in the best interest of the district. Changing the policy means placing the final decision-making responsibility related to overstaffing where it belongs–with the five members of the board. Keeping the policy the same means that a single person ultimately makes these decisions. Unlike the five board members, who are elected by, and answer to, the voters, the superintendent is a sole unelected person who doesn't answer to the residents. I believe that changing the policy will enhance our collaboration and compromise between the board and superintendent, an enhancement that is desperately needed. A good board will discuss changes with the superintendent and ultimately make the final decision. And if the voters are displeased with those decisions, the answer is simple–in the next election, change the board. Leaving the decision to keep or eliminate an administrative position also leaves the reasoning for doing so to a single person. And the board may not know for what reasons he or she is making that decision. Is it to benefit the best interest of the district? Is it to protect friends or supporters? Is it to avoid making a hard decision? Under the current policy, if the board and superintendent disagreed about cutting position, the only change a board could make would be to terminate the superintendent's contract. Changing the policy instead of finding a new superintendent leaves the board with more flexibility to act in the district's best interest.

4. State Law requirements.

State law dictates the rules for eliminating administrative contracts. For example, policy 1540 goes beyond that state law. The policy language is consistent with the statute...except that it adds the limitation on the board disallowing eliminating an administrative contact without the superintendent's blessing. The current superintendent offer implores the board to look to what other districts are doing when it is in her best interest. For example, she asked the board to survey other districts' superintendent salaries and benefits, like "Pick-up on Pickup (come talk to me if you want an explanation of that one). I did my research on this policy and found that many districts in Hamilton County do not have this limiting clause. If it's good government to have it, wouldn't all districts have it? Importantly, the state of Ohio does not

require school boards to have a superintendent's permission to eliminate an administrative position. And the statute specifically allows a board to eliminate a position based on financial conditions. This makes sense because a school board has a duty to act in the district's best interest. Sometimes, acting as such requires a board to make cuts to the administration that a superintendent would not otherwise make. Abdicating that responsibility is bad government.

5. Teachers' contracts.

Finally, I don't think a board member could be more supportive than me of teachers and their union. And I find the suggestion of placing the burden of helping the district's financial health on our teachers distasteful. Teachers negotiate a contract that addresses salaries, benefits, and the reduction in force process. In Finneytown, administrators have gotten every benefit offered to the teachers–and then some. (Ask me about the difference in severance packages if you are interested). Teachers are the people who work directly with our children to provide them with the care and education Finneytown prides itself on providing. If we must make cuts to continue to operate, teacher cuts, even to just their salaries, should not be considered first. They should be a last resort.

6. Conclusion.

Considering our district's five-year financial forecast, the board must have all available tools at our disposal to make the decisions in the best interest of the district. The change to policy 1540 is one tool to address the district's financial health. I understand that some residents will not like this change. Residents are welcome to express their opinions in person, via email, or any other method. And of course, residents may express feelings about board members at the ballot box or run for office. Finally, I want board members and residents to ask yourselves: if our district is ever in a financial position where we must ask for a levy, how can we ask the voters to trust the district with additional money when we are not currently managing the money well? How can we ask the voters to approve a levy when the board does not have the authority to fully manage the budget? Thank you.

Ms. Lee:

- Acknowledged receiving emails from community members indicating misunderstandings about the policy.
- Clarified that the current policy requires a recommendation before action can be taken.
- Expressed frustration over the lack of collaboration on this issue despite previous efforts to work together.
- Stated that four directives from prior executive sessions were not completed, and the absence of collaboration led to the need for a policy change to enforce collaboration.
- Scheduling conflicts prevented another meeting where all members could attend.

Dr. Banks:

- Stated that collaboration opportunities exist through the Personnel and Finance Committees, where previous discussions had been productive.
- Expressed being blindsided by the sudden policy proposal, as prior board direction had been to set financial targets and allow the administration to determine how to meet them.
- Raised concerns that the policy change signaled an intent to cut administration, causing uncertainty among staff.

Mr. Rea:

- Challenged Dr. Banks' assertion of being blindsided, stating that the Personnel Committee had been clear about budgetary limitations.
- Noted that administrative contract approvals were delayed until after union negotiations, affecting the budgeting process.
- Stated that past administrative contract issues had not been adequately addressed.

Dr. Banks:

- Responded that past administrative contracts had been approved with the same provisions without discussion, leading her to believe they were acceptable.
- Highlighted that similar contract provisions exist within teacher contracts.

Mr. Rea:

- Disagreed concerning comparability of contracts.

Mr. Plaut:

- Emphasized the Board's responsibility for financial health, noting that a previous superintendent was not renewed due to financial mismanagement.

Ms. McMullen:

- Expressed appreciation for fiscal responsibility but stated that dictating specific administrative cuts was not within the Board's role.
- Felt that better communication with administrators was needed before making such decisions.

Mr. Rea:

- Countered that providing financial oversight and making necessary cuts was within the Board's responsibility.
- Stated that the policy change was necessary to ensure full discussion and transparency.

RC: Mr. Reeb, yes; Ms. McMullen, no; Ms. Lee, yes; Mr. Plaut, no; Mr. Rea, yes. The Board President declared the motion passed.

32-25 Adoption of New Revised Policy 5540 (Schools and Community Agencies)

Ms. Lee moved, second by Mr. Rea, the Board adopted the newly revised policy 5540, Schools and Community Agencies, which was initially presented for consideration at the special meeting on February 13, 2024.

Discussion of New Revised Policy 5540

- Policy provides guidance for administration on handling situations where ICE or other government agencies enter school buildings to question or remove a student.
- Policy was developed with legal input, including guidance from a new attorney with expertise in this area.
- Board members emphasized that no law changes prompted this policy, but it is a proactive measure to support school leadership.

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

33-25 **Adoption of New Revised Policy 7421 (Restrooms, Locker Rooms, Shower Rooms, and Changing Rooms)**

Mr. Rea moved, second by Ms. Lee, the Board adopted the **newly revised policy 7421, Restrooms, Locker Rooms, Shower Rooms, and Changing Rooms**, which was initially presented for consideration at the **special meeting on February 13, 2024.**

Discussion of New Revised Policy 7421

- Policy is required to be in place by March 1st to comply with state law.
- Clarification was provided that the policy is not discriminatory but inclusive and was not rushed without input.
- Discussion included a request for student input in future plans to ensure emotional safety while maintaining compliance.

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

34-25 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Mr. Plaut, the Board approved the following substitute teachers who are employed by Comprehensive Substitute Solutions and may be assigned to fill absences for the Finneytown Local School District, effective February 13, 2025:

Amann, Michael
Baker, Tyler
Baldock, Jason
Besl-Ali, Carley
Binford, Cornelia
Blanks, Earl
Blyberg, Zachary
Bonifas, Elizabeth
Braswell, Keith
Brewer, Valeri
Brinkman, Rosa
Burkhardt, Heather
Buskirk, Delores
Campbell, Emily
Campbell-Goodman, Steven

Casada, Abigail
Chaffer, La'shawntay
Chamlagai, Tanka
Champion-Hughes, Bianca
Chandler, Cyndi
Chapple, Keariah
Clark, Sterling
Colvin, Gayle
Cook, Gary
Copeland, David
Coyne, Eleanor
Davis, Rollins
Demus, Clemon
Dunigan, Janee
Duskin, Deemiah
Espel, Linda
Falhaber, Leslie
Fischoff, Ann
Fisk, Summer
Fowler, Niah
Fromme, Ashley
Garner, Noah
Gentry, Jennifer
Giffin, David
Gorby, Lily
Gray, Kiara
Green, Keaira
Haarlammert, Stephanie
Hall, Dennis
Hardy, Diane
Hartman, Ronald
Haugan, Andrea
Hawkins-Hyde, Kellie
Hess, Leanne
Holland, Michael
Horton, Vanius
Howard, Elaine
Howard, Savanah
Hubbard, Latoya
Hunter, Toccara
Jaccobs, Corey
Jackson, Shirley
Johnson, Andrew
Jones, Brianna
Jones, Darrell
Jones, Trevor
Kahle, Anna
Kaufman, Fletcher
Kelley-Gerton, Lisa
King, Sharon
Lacure, Elizabeth
Lalley, Teresa
Le, Morgan
Lyons, Dayonna
Madriz, Gabriela
Madry, Thomas
Martin, Artis
Mason, Ebony
Maxam, William
Meier, Paulette
Miles, Linda
Mock, Taylor
Morris, Alexia
Namenyi, Tytus
Nashid, Wadeeah
Nienaber, Jennifer
Page, Candace
Periferaki, Despina
Phipps, Marilyn
Pickett, Jonathan
Pittman, Felicia
Pollington, Connie
Potensky, Chris
Powell, Christina
Price, Tanya
Redburn, Jalen
Reeb, Rebecca
Reppart, Jackson
Rice, Alisha
Richey, Sheila
Robinson, Marilyn
Ruffner, Sara
Schnur, Bethany
Schuster, Jason
Sfarnas, Jim
Shaw, Phyllis
Simpson, Estacia
Smith, Kimberly
Stevenson, Alisha
Still, Cameryn
Tennyson, Emma
Thomas, Nyla
Thompson, Saige
Tigert, Aaron
Tubbs, Quinetta
Turner, Alisha
Tyree, Alfred
Walker, Kimberly
Walton, Ronald
Wanat, Elizabeth
Ward, Nicole
Washington, Autumn
Watkins, Aimee
Weiler, Michael
Weirich, Helen
Wesley, Kate
Wilson, Celina
Winter, Stephany
Wise, Donnise
Yisrael, Nesyah

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

Review of Action Steps

1) Add Live Streaming Special Meetings as an agenda item to the next special or regular meeting – Ms. McMullen, Dr. Banks

The next regular meeting of the Finneytown Board of Education will take place on Monday, March 17, 2025 at 6:30 pm in the Brent Board Office Meeting Room, 8791 Brent Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45231. Open forum will begin at 6:00pm.

35-25 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Mr. Plaut, that the Board move to Executive Session, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(1), in order to consider the employment of public employees of the district.

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

The Board entered Executive Session at 7:58pm.
The Board returned to Regular Session at 8:41pm.

36-25 There being no further business, Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Ms. Lee, that the meeting be adjourned. The president declared the meeting adjourned at 8:41pm.

Jelicia McMullen, President

ATTEST: _____
David L. Oliverio, Treasurer