FINNEYTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Regular Meeting, March 17, 2025
Brent Board 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 Monday, March 17, 2025, in the Brent Board Meeting Room, 8791 Brent Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45231. Ms. McMullen, Mr. Plaut, Ms. Lee, Mr. Rea and Mr. Reeb were present. The President called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

49-25 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Mr. Plaut, that the Board approve the agenda as presented and amended. The President declared the motion passed.

50-25 Mr. Reeb moved, seconded by Mr. Rea that the Board move to Executive session, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22(G)(1), to consider the employment and compensation of a public employee.

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

The Board entered Executive Session at 6:33 pm.

The Board returned to Regular Session at 6:35 pm.

51-25 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Mr. Reeb, the Board approved the minutes from the Special Meeting of March 3, 2025 and the Special Meeting of March 13, 2025. The President declared the motion passed.

Administrative Report
Dr. Laurie Banks, Superintendent – discussed the following:

- Summer School – will be offered Jun 9 – Jun 27 at either Brent or Finneytown Elementary due to Secondary Campus construction
- Communications – The second edition of the *Why Finneytown?* video series is being launched this week, featuring community, student and staff interviews about why they chose Finneytown and what they love about it.
- I attended the Finneytown Secondary Campus's production of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*! yesterday. Our students and staff did a fantastic job.
- Wildcat Welcome – This Friday we are welcoming families that are new and /or with future kindergarten students to Finneytown Elementary for tours. Support organization representatives will also be there to meet new families.

- Building Connections – On Thursday we will host our second opportunity to participate in a program focused on future kindergarten families and the steps and strategies that can be taken to get students ready for kindergarten.
- Special Meeting Livestreaming – Mr. Anderson and I met to discuss the feasibility of livestreaming special meetings in terms of our ability to accommodate and train additional backup videographers.
- Spring Sports Kickoff – This event was hosted on March 4.
- HB96 Budget Bill – We continue to collaborate with partners and communicate with legislators, on the initial form of the budget bill, to fight for full formula funding, updating cost sets and other significant concerns.

Student Mobility, Enrollment and Assessment Trend Data Presentation
Dr. Laurie Banks, Superintendent – presented the following information:

- Key enrollment and assessment trends for the district were shared. While enrollment remains steady, students frequently move in and out, with most transferring to other public schools. A small percentage opt for private schools or homeschooling.
- State testing results were discussed, including kindergarten readiness assessments and third-grade reading diagnostics, showing early-year baselines for student performance. While many younger students were on track, third-grade scores were lower, but this was expected at the start of the year. Additional mid-year data will be provided later.
- Secondary-level testing, including Ohio state tests and English language proficiency assessments, was briefly reviewed, with an emphasis on the importance of tracking student progress throughout the year. The data helps guide instructional strategies and measure growth over time.

Public Address

Jelicia McMullen (Resident, Parent) – Expressed deep concern over recent policy changes and their impact on district stability, staff morale, and student outcomes. Challenged the board for removing key positions and limiting the superintendent's authority, fearing it may lead to further administrative turnover. Urged the board to prioritize continuity and inclusion for the benefit of students and staff.

Michael Hamel (Resident) – Voiced frustration over the district's handling of funds, decision-making transparency, and educational methods. Expressed opposition to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, arguing they are ideological in nature. Believed the board should take control of district policies and finances, advocating for more accountability and responsiveness to community concerns.

Matt Breines (Teacher, 27 Years) – Defended restorative practices in education and opposed the removal of Mr. Muchmore, a respected district leader. Emphasized the importance of relationships in education and suggests that eliminating Mr. Muchmore's position could weaken the district's ability to support students effectively.

Laura Walker (District Media Specialist, 18 Years) – Strongly supported retaining Mr. Muchmore, highlighting his leadership, innovative thinking, and positive impact on school culture. Urged the board to engage with staff before making budget cuts and warned that removing key personnel could have long-term negative effects on the district.

Thomas Budday (Teacher, 11 Years, 8 in District) – Emphasized that good education is built on strong relationships and that financial decisions should not come at the expense of experienced and effective educators. He warned that eliminating a key leader like Mr. Muchmore will harm the district's culture and ability to navigate ongoing challenges in public education.

Charles Crawley (Teacher, 25 Years in District) – Strongly supported Mr. Muchmore, highlighting his leadership, commitment, and role in shaping key programs like the House System, Youth Advisory Council, and Restorative Practices. Warned that losing Mr. Muchmore would harm the district's vision and student experience.

Sharoj Gurung (Student) – Defended Mr. Muchmore as a mentor and friend, emphasizing his positive influence on students, particularly through events like the Finneytown vs. Deer Park game and photography programs. Saw Mr. Muchmore as an essential, uplifting presence in the school.

Julie Ficke (Resident, Parent, Teacher Since 1997) – Advocated for retaining Mr. Muchmore, citing his 19 years of service, visionary leadership, and major contributions to initiatives like Project-Based Learning, the House System, and district leadership. Argued that terminating him for financial reasons sets a dangerous precedent, creating a culture of fear among staff.

Lauren Woodward (Teacher, 9 Years in District) – Challenged the board's lack of dialogue before making administrative changes, emphasizing that strong leadership and consistent administration are crucial for school success. Warned that such drastic changes will deter high-quality candidates from joining the district.

Eric Muchmore (Teacher, Dean, Administrator, 19 Years in District) – Reflected on his deep connection to Finneytown and its community over 19 years. Spokes about his passion for the district, his positive experiences with students, families, and staff, and urged the board to consider the broader implications of their decisions on district culture and stability.

Elijah Fenwick-Sanders (Teacher, 17 Years in Education, 7 Years in District) – Described Mr. Muchmore's irreplaceable contributions, warning that removing him will exacerbate staff shortages and worsen morale. He stressed that experienced educators like Mr. Muchmore are vital and that decisions should not be based purely on budget considerations.

Review of Action Steps from last month

1) Add Live Streaming Special Meetings as an agenda item to the next special or regular – Scheduled for March 31 special meeting

Board Coordination Matters

Board Member Reports

Ms. Lee, discussed the following items:

- *Cinderella!* Musical – It was my favorite performance of one of my favorite musicals. Attendance was record-breaking, surpassing even *The Sound of Music.* Congratulations to our students for their standout performances. Thankyou teachers, staff, volunteers, and parents for your contributions and support.
- Athletic Boosters Meeting Update - Excited about the launch of Boys Volleyball, with 12 of 13 spots filled. Participation in softball and baseball is up this year. Boosters is in dire need of community members to volunteer for leadership roles. Our support organizations need volunteers if they are to continue to exist.
- Board Calendar Updates –
    - April 3 – Pro-Action Café
    - April 18 – K-3 Movie Night
    - April 21 – Celebration Breakfast (Board invited)
    - May 13 – Diamond Oaks Senior Ceremony (Board presence needed).
    - May 14 – Orchestra Concert
    - May 15 – Production Café and Senior Awards Night (Board invited).
    - June 2 – Graduation
- Senior Night for Sports –
    - April 22 – Track
    - April 28 – Softball
    - May 9 – Baseball
- Concerns Crucial to the Health and Integrity of our Board's Work – I have been reflecting on the behavior and actions of some of us this year and I believe it is important to call for a return to professionalism, respect, and collaboration. We are entrusted with the responsibility of making important decisions that affect the lives of students, teachers, and the broader community. To be effective in this role, we must uphold the standards set forth in the OSBA Code of Ethics. Specifically, the following ethical guidelines have been compromised:
    - Respecting the confidentiality of privileged information, which at times has not been honored.
    - Recognizing that as individual board members, we do not have the authority to speak or act on behalf of the board, yet some have acted outside this boundary.
    - Expressing personal opinions is acceptable and encouraged. But once the board has acted, it is essential to accept the will of the majority, something that has not always been observed.

      As board members, we must lead by example. I am making a personal commitment. I will not engage in spreading rumors about my colleagues. I will not condone or support the use of social media to publicly attack or dox board members. I will not endanger your families by publicizing private information on them. I will not support the spread of false accusations, such as claims that

others have violated sunshine laws. I will refrain from calling board members' names, and I will honor the confidentiality of our executive sessions. Further, my husband has requested that I assure you that he is committed to understanding enough about our work so that when he speaks, he can speak professionally and appropriately without harming our board relationships, relationships with the community, or our relationships with the staff. These are not just words but actions that I take seriously. We can do better as a team and we owe it to those we serve to work together with mutual respect, professionalism, and a shared commitment to the success of our students. Disagreement is expected on difficult decisions. If you remember, we were taught that this is a sign of effectiveness, but we must do so without hate. Lastly, I would like to request that our board meetings not be scheduled during traditional work hours.

Mr. Plaut, discussed the following items:

- *Cinderella!* Performance – Congratulations to cast and crew. Thanked Finneytown Alumni Network, particularly Mike Steele and Scott Haarlammert, for organizing outstanding alumni attendance.
- Finneytown Alumni Network:
    - Encouraged membership; you don't have to be an alumnus to join.
    - Highlighted alumni events, including a networking event on March 20 at Madtree Oakley.
- Upcoming Events:
    - April 12 – Elementary PTA Carnival & FMPA Mattress Sale.
    - April 5 – *Dine to Donate* event at Finneytown Skyline.
    - Youth Football (Finneytown Crusaders) returning for its second year and now playing in the more competitive Clermont County League.

Ms. McMullen, discussed the following items:

- Upcoming Deadlines and Events -
    - March 19 – Scholarship meeting at the secondary campus (mandatory for recipients)
    - April 1 – College Credit Plus applications deadline
    - March 20 – Building Connections at Finneytown Elementary (9:30-11 AM and 6:00 – 7:30 PM)
    - March 21 – last day for T-ball and coach-pitch registrations
    - March 24-28 – Spring Break (No school)
    - April 2-4 – EOC Testing (7:50-10:50 AM)
    - April 14-May 2 – Testing window at Finneytown Elementary
    - April 25 – Testing Ice Cream Social (Grades 3-6, donations needed)
- Student Resources – Prom dresses and accessories are available for those in need via district counselors.
- Upcoming Board Items –
    - Superintendent's goals discussion in March

- Board SWOT Analysis this summer.
- March 31 Meeting – Resolutions for secondary campus construction and other agenda items.
- Board President and Superintendent meetings continue to take place weekly.

Mr. Reeb, discussed the following items:

- *Cinderella!* Performance – The show was an awesome experience as an alumnus of the Finneytown Theatre Program. The Finneytown Alumni Network post-show events in support of the performance on Saturday were very cool and much appreciated.
- Student Exit Survey – Are we still interested in a student exit survey to better understand why some are leaving and if they are moving to private or public schools? I appreciated the student mobility, enrollment and withdrawal data and analysis that Dr. Banks provided in her report tonight. I feel we are collecting sufficient data and appreciate the way it was presented.
- Staff Exit Survey – Expressed interest in retaining collection of staff exit survey responses, for additional depth of understanding for members of the board, instead of the announced shift to exit interviews. Dr. Banks explained the shift to exit interviews allows deeper discussions but agreed to consider both surveys and interviews.

Mr. Rea, discussed the following items:

- Secondary PTA – Urgent Request! –
  - Dedicated parents that have participated by serving as officers and volunteering, many of them for years, had to have a difficult discussion. If no one steps up into the president and treasurer roles of the secondary PTA, the organization likely will cease to exist.
  - The Secondary PTA has a major impact on Finneytown students' experience. A couple of examples include AfterProm and Wildcat Serve.
  - PTA participation has been flat to declining for years. I know all parents are busy and often exhausted, but I know from experience that participating with the PTA is a tremendous way to positively impact your children's and their peers' public school experiences. So please get involved, either with the PTA or another board-sponsored organization like the Boosters Music Parents Association. Your parents' passion and presence makes a difference. Thank you.
- Reflection on My Time on the School Board – Given the past few weeks, I have been truly reflecting on my time on the school board and I want to share some thoughts. When I moved to Finneytown and began paying attention to the school board, I found the meetings were boring. In public meetings, I usually saw a lot of consent calendars and unanimous votes with what appeared to be very little curiosity from members. What made that especially troubling to me was learning that in the past 15 years, Finneytown went from a rating in the top 35% in the state, to now in the bottom 10%.

  That statistic is not acceptable to me or to the community members with whom I've spoken. Since 2022, Finneytown has stopped the decline and I'm hopeful that our district has begun to improve its performance.

The positive direction of our performance coincides with the voters electing members that promise change, asked tough questions of the administration, spend time trying to understand why the district declined so dramatically, and investigate how to improve our deliverables. I fully understand that correlation and causation do not go together always. I, as with other board members, have spent countless hours talking to members of the community, our teachers, administrators, students, and alumni. We've heard what Finneytown means to people and what it used to be.

We have ideas about what needs to happen for Finneytown to be the best it could be for our community now and in the future. Some specifics:

The Communication Policy
Last meeting, Dr. Banks read a letter in public from the administrators. One part of that letter alleged that the board's decision to change the communication policy negatively impacted the administrative team's ability to lead. For those unaware, the previous communications policy forbade staff from speaking to board members, except on occasional social interactions.

Instead, all communication had to be filtered through Dr. Banks. The current policy, however, allows staff to freely speak to board members and prohibits any penalty for teachers communicating with or not communicating with board members. Teachers can't bring grievance issues to the board, but in terms of culture and morale, they're allowed to come to us.

I mention this because senior members of the administration recently used this very policy to impact a decision on an upcoming vote. I applaud these administrators' change of heart, allowing staff to have their voices heard by the people making decisions that affect their workplace is exactly why I pushed to have the communications policy changed. Staff members should feel free to speak without being punished and without their speech being monitored and filtered. Part of the reason I felt so strongly about changing the communication policy was because of hearing that a perception existed that the teachers could not approach Dr. Banks with certain topics. Teachers with whom I spoke said they feared retaliation if they were to raise issues about certain topics and certain members of the administration. I found it very troubling that teachers were not reporting significant issues that may have negatively affected them and students because the teachers were afraid of being penalized for doing so.

Although the policy has changed, teachers have shared with me that they continue to fear retaliation for reporting issues or employees that senior administration members do not want discussed. This, not the changed policy, is what negatively impacts the ability to lead. For three years, I've told Dr. Banks that staff members told me they perceive that there are certain employees who are favored and protected and about whom the teachers are not comfortable raising issues. I believe that if you're not hearing complaints about certain issues from staff, this is the reason.

Instead, these staff members share their frustrations in exit interviews when they finally feel safe to speak out. Board members have received multiple messages from teachers

at the secondary campus in support of Mr. Muchmore. Again, we welcome feedback, comments, concerns, and questions. That being said, I found it deeply inappropriate that Mr. Muchmore, accompanied by Dr. Dinan, personally visited teachers to ask for these letters. Some teachers perceived this as coercion, not all. This makes sense. They were approached in person by one of the favored employees and the assistant superintendent.

In coming days, I plan to investigate whether Dr. Dinan and Mr. Muchmore should receive repercussions for these actions, and if so, what is appropriate? After Dr. Banks confirmed that Dr. Dinan was in the same space as Mr. Muchmore, when he approached teachers, the value I've placed on all of these letters was diminished.

Community
I want the community to know that when you share opinions, concerns, thoughts, and feelings with me through emails, text messages, phone calls, social media participation, in PTA meetings, or even in the checkout line at Kroger, I hear and consider what you've said. I ask you to understand that as board members we have access to information the general public does not have and we cannot share.

I'm glad that people in our community are taking an interest in what this board does. I'm always happy to answer questions as long as answering does not reveal privileged information or violate a policy. I welcome honest feedback and appreciate the opportunity to have a conversation about issues. I do not make any significant board decision without spending hours thinking, researching, and considering various perspectives. I'm willing to make tough decisions that I know will be unpopular if they are in the district's best interest.

Every decision I make is what I believe is in the district's best interest. I believe most of the board members also make decisions based on the district's best interest. We just don't always agree on what will serve that interest. That is why there are five board members elected by Finneytown voters and majority rules on these decisions. I've always operated such that once a board makes a decision, those opposing the decision should stack hands and work to make it successful.

I've had to stack hands many times over the past three years. Not every board member, however, is willing to stack hands. I put in more than 25 hours of work before determining my vote regarding the reduction in force policy. I was in the majority this time. I was appalled when a board member's spouse on a public social media post defamed the three board members in the majority by accusing us of violating Ohio law regarding open meetings.

Even worse, however, was the spouse exposing our families to security risks by discussing the existence, ages, and whereabouts of our minor children. While the spouse isn't a board member, it certainly made me suspect the spouse's vitriol arose from another member. A professional group of people cannot work properly when members take professional disagreements personally. Unfortunately, this happens far too frequently on our board.

When I disagree with a board member about an issue, I'll still be friendly after a meeting. After all, we all see issues differently and there are bound to be disagreements. Why make the board toxic by taking each disagreement as a personal insult?

Personnel
Last week, Dr. Banks sent staff and board members a letter which indicated that she's recommending a net negative to teachers in the elementary school next year. If the decrease is not addressed by attrition, I hope Dr. Banks will put as much effort into keeping teachers employed as she has into keeping a single redundant administrator position. This also would allow Dr. Banks to show our teacher support, something I am told is lacking.

I also want to address the notion that our changing the reduction in force policy is hurting teacher morale. Teachers, I want you to know that your contracts are not affected by the policy. It is only administrators. Anything involving teacher contracts is governed by state law and a negotiated union contract. I also want to ensure that you know how I feel about the union and all of its members. I fully support our teacher's union. In fact, I fully support all labor unions. Before I would even entertain cutting teachers, I would first address administrative bloat, especially when I see our teachers understaffed and overworked.

Teachers and assistant principals are essential to educating our students. I've heard that, according to some community members, I'm to blame for retirements that are being announced tonight. Before anyone buys into this, consider a possible factor. A recent change in teacher state retirement plans created a two-year window in which teachers can retire a year early and still receive full benefits. I cannot speak for anyone retiring, but this might play significantly in their decisions.

Legal Advice
Dr. Banks sent the board an email last week that included, and I use the term loosely, legal advice. The email threatened that due to a case pending before the Supreme Court of Ohio, any administrative reduction in force may require the district to hire back administrators with back pay. Going forward, Dr. Banks, any legal advice you provide to the board should come from our attorney. After reviewing the case myself and with attorney friends, I've learned that your information was at best misleading.

Roles
Finally, I want to address the role of the board president. In February, the board president stated that a policy decision was not the board's role. First, I disagree with her. The board is a policymaking group. Our job is to make policy, which the administration is to implement.

Second, I implore the board president to understand the role. The president of the board is not the boss of the other four members. The president has no authority to make unilateral decisions for the rest of the board, especially when the board has

already voted on an issue and went the other direction. The board president's vote is the same as every other member. It is one of five. The board president does not have the authority to control the direction of our discussions or interrupt other board members during meetings, even if the president does not want to hear what others have to say.

By becoming president, the board member simply agrees to accept organizational responsibilities for the group. Last year, our board seemed to function at a more respectful level. I hope we can return to our board functioning in an effective manner, showing respect for each member's opinion, stacking hands when the board reaches a decision, not launching personal attacks on members or encouraging others to do so, avoid accusing other board members of being unethical or violating laws, agree to never discuss board members' family members, especially not board members' minor children on a public forum. We all signed up to do a job and it is perfectly okay to disagree on how we meet our shared goals.

Finally, if anyone in the community has a desire to accept a job that, if done well, is usually thankless, candidates for school board must have their petitions to the Board of Elections no later than August 6th. Thank you.

52-25 Mr. Reeb moved, seconded by Mr. Plaut, that the Board adopt 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 February 28, 2025*

U.S. Bank	0.0898%	$ 211,565.29
U.S. Bank (construction)	0.6600%	$ 1,859,201.83
STAR Ohio (construction #1)	4.5000%	$ 3,075,672.31
STAR Ohio	4.5000%	$ 28,506,901.12
STAR Ohio (construction #2)	4.5000%	$ 3,245,811.21
STAR Ohio (OFCC local share)	4.5000%	$ 148,968.05
STAR Ohio (OFCC state share)	4.5000%	$ 3,665,408.97

c) Interest Earned on Depository and Investment Accounts as of February 28, 2025*

General Fund 001	$ 90,504.47
Construction Fund 004	$ 21,810.18
Classroom Facilities Fund 010	$ 14,007.81

d) Monthly Bond Project Spending and Commitment Report*
[See attachment]

e) Approval of Payment - FY25*

The Board approved payment of the following invoice(s) representing purchases that were made prior to the issuance of a valid purchase order of the district:

DATE	VENDOR	AMOUNT
3/4/25	Ken Neyer Plumbing	$ 5,433.04

(Camera inspection, hydro jetting and use of an auger to free blocked sewage lines at the Secondary Campus)

11/1/24	Perry & Associates	$14,350.00

(Audit of district financial statements and supplementary information for the 2023-24 fiscal year)

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

53-25_Mr. Plaut moved, second by Ms. Lee, that the Board adopt 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 request that any such item be removed from the "Consent Calendar" and voted upon separately.

a) Acknowledgement of Resignations*

The Board acknowledged the following resignations, which were previously accepted by the Superintendent:

Mary Beavan	Extended Care Attendant effective May 31, 2025	(retirement)
Craig Dukes	Physical Education Teacher effective June 30, 2025	(retirement)
Mary Pat Grosser	2nd Grade Teacher effective June 30, 2025	(retirement)
Penney Mefford	School Secretary effective June 30, 2025	(retirement)

Michelle Yauss	Consultant Contract- Intervention Specialist	$44,933

b) Approval of Consultant Contract- Intervention Specialist- Revision

The Board approved the following contract revision:

Michelle Yauss	Consultant Contract- Intervention Specialist	$44,933

c) Approval of Contract – Supplemental 2024-2025*

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

Greg Davis	Assistant Girls Varsity Basketball Coach	$2,922.00

d) Adoption of New / Revised Policies*

The Board adopted the following new/revised policies, which were presented for consideration at the regular meeting of the Board on February 18, 2025:

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 SCHOOI 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") AND CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION
8500	FOOD SERVICES

e) Approval of Resolution – RESOLUTION TO ADOPT SPECIAL EDUCATION MODEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Board adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS, Ohio Revised Code § 3323.08 requires each school district to provide assurances to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce ("DEW") that the District will provide for the education of children with disabilities within its jurisdiction and has in effect policies, procedures, and programs that are consistent with the policies and procedures adopted by DEW; and

WHEREAS, DEW developed a document entitled "Special Education Model Policies and Procedures" ("2024 Model Policies") that a board of education may adopt to fulfill the requirement described in the preceding paragraph; and

WHEREAS, the District has reviewed the 2024 Model Policies and determined that certain statements within the 2024 Model Policies conflict with existing State and Federal laws and/or applicable caselaw;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby adopts DEW's 2024 Model Policies in their entirety except for the following sentences, which are specifically rejected in their current form and will not be implemented as written. The Board directs that the language identified below shall be considered either modified as specified or, where indicated, deleted to ensure the District complies with applicable State and Federal laws and/or caselaw:

P. 10. Destruction of Educational Records.

- Original Language: "Ensures the information is destroyed at the request of the parents."
    - Action: Replace sentence with "Once a parent is notified that personally identifiable information maintained by the District is no longer required to provide educational services to their child, or is not otherwise required to be maintained by the District based on State or Federal law or applicable retention schedules, the parent may request that the information be destroyed."

P. 14. Independent Education Evaluation at Public Expense.

- Original Language: "An educational agency may not impose conditions or timelines related to obtaining an IEE, except for the criteria described above."
- Action: Delete this sentence in its entirety.

P. 33. Extended School Year.

- Original Language: "The IEP team should consider emerging skills as part of the IEP process for children who are exhibiting beginning skillsets."
- Action: Delete this sentence in its entirety.

P. 42. Services.

- Original Message: "Although not required, educational agencies are encouraged to provide services during short-term removals to assist children with disabilities to continue to make progress toward their IEP goals and prevent them from falling behind."
- Action: Delete this sentence in its entirety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board directs all staff in the District to use and comply with the 2024 Model Policies (as modified herein). The Board further authorizes the Superintendent to notify DEW of the Board's adoption of the modified 2024 Model Policies through DEW's monitoring systems by uploading a copy of this Board resolution by March 30,2025, and by November 30 for each subsequent school year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board acknowledges that the 2024 Model Policies (as modified herein), while comprehensive, do not include every requirement set forth in the IDEA, the regulations implementing IDEA, the Ohio Operating Standards, the Ohio Revised Code, and/or the Ohio Administrative Code, and the Board recognizes its obligation to follow these laws and regulations, as well as applicable caselaw, in the event there is a conflict between their requirements and the Board-adopted 2024 Model Policies (as modified herein).

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

54-25 Ms. Lee moved, seconded by Mr. Reeb, the Board accepted the resignation of David Oliverio, Treasurer, effective July 31, 2025 for the purpose of retirement.

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

55-25 Mr. Reeb moved, seconded by Mr. Rea, the Board abolished the Director of Personnel and Systems Design position effective July 31, 2025.

WHEREAS, the Board seeks to re-align its organizational structure to more effectively and efficiently meet District needs; and

WHEREAS, O.R.C. 3319.171 and Board Policy authorize the suspension of administrative contracts for a decrease in the District's enrollment, a return to duty of an administrator after a leave of absence; financial conditions affecting the District, any other financial reasons that the Board, in its sole discretion, finds warrants a reduction in force, loss of funding for a particular program, project or grant, changes in the curriculum or academic program of the School District, the reorganization of the management structure of the School District.

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved that:

1. The Finneytown Local Board of Education (the "Board") approves the abolishment the position of Director of Personnel and System Design due to reorganization of the management structure of the school district and financial reasons that the Board has determined warrants reduction in force.

2. The Board further directs that the contract of Eric Muchmore be suspended effective July 31, 2025.

3. The Board further directs the Superintendent and/or Treasurer to send any required notices to Mr. Muchmore concerning the suspension of his employment contract due to this reduction in force.

Discussion and comment:

Mr. Reeb:

I would like to share my reasoning behind support of the elimination of this position. To provide some background, in May of 2021, the former Board members our former Superintendent created an administrative position (Communication and Community Coordinator, which later was changed to Director of Culture and Climate), and 4 teaching positions (originally 1 Restorative Practices Facilitator and three Co-Plan Co Serve Facilitators) to kick-start restorative practices in our district and staff co-teaching). These five positions were paid out of federal ESSER (COVID-relief funds).

Two years ago, our Board had a dispute with our superintendent over a superseverance clause that appears in each of our administrative contracts, which resulted in three board members including myself voting no on all our administrator's contracts that were up for renewal at that meeting. At the same meeting, I shared that I did not think that the Director of Culture and Climate position should exist (though I did not say so at the time, my reasons were overlapping job responsibilities and the eventual exhaustion of ESSER funds). At the next month's meeting, to try to repair the damage to morale that was caused by our votes on the administrative contracts, I changed my vote to a yes on all the contracts without any changes except in the job title of the Director of Culture and Climate, which was changed to the Director of Personnel and Systems Design.

In the past four years, the four teaching positions that were created in 2021 have become our current RP/PBL facilitator positions. The Director of Personnel and Systems Design currently oversees these positions, although two of the positions were previously overseen by our Assistant Superintendent. Last year, the source of funds for the salaries of the four RP/PBL facilitator positions and the Director of Personnel and Systems Design were all moved from ESSER funds to our general fund. This was due to our federal ESSER funds running out.

Last month, the board revised board policy 1540 to remove a phrase that required the superintendent's recommendation prior to the suspension of administrative contracts. We took this action to make it possible for the reduction in force action that has been proposed tonight and we were not able to give more details about the reason behind the policy

change at the time. After last month's meeting, a spouse of a board member posted a picture on a social media platform that included circles around the board members who supported the policy change and a community member who regularly attends our board meetings who expressed support for the board's action. This post included the names of board members who supported the policy change and where our children attend or will attend school. I feel that the post was misleading and a personal attack. To my fellow board members, I know that this post is protected first amendment speech, but to the extent that it is possible, I would not have allowed my family members to make such a post about you or your children.

For those who have speculated that this decision is related to current happenings in the federal executive branch, I want to assuage your fears and assure you that this decision is entirely unrelated; board members expressed reservations about this position long before anyone knew who would be elected president this past November.

Overall, while the creation of this administrative position may have been well-intended, I feel that changes are needed in order to use our available resources for the maximum benefit of our teachers who are in the classroom each day working with our students and to show our residents that we are being responsible with their hard-earned tax dollars, especially since we will be coming to our residents for an operating levy in the next few years.

Mr. Rea:

I am in favor of eliminating the Director of Personnel and Systems Design position for two reasons. First, I believe the position is unclearly defined and cumulative to other administrative positions, justifying restructuring the administration. Second, the district's financial health and uncertainty justifies cutting the position to ensure its financial health.

Restructuring
Superintendent has changed this role job title twice in four years since the original role was created, but these changes did not include any significant alteration to the job description. Superintendent first changed the job title because of confusion within the community about the role. Superintendent next changed the job title after the board informed her this position would not be renewed. She changed the title to Director of Personnel and Systems Design to obtain the three votes necessary for renewal but did not substantively change the job description. And a recent job evaluation described the role itself as not clearly defined.

Most of this position's committee obligations also include the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. This gives the appearance that the district has three people doing the same or similar tasks. Moreover, two of the major independent roles have expensive contractors doing a significant amount of work. Very few school districts close to our size have a Director of Personnel and an Assistant Superintendent.

Neither I nor the teachers and community members with whom I have spoken about this position can explain the purpose of the role to the district. And as the Superintendent has stated, the job description was not clearly defined. It appears that we don't even know how

to effectively describe the purpose. Instead, we've heard terms like strategic impact without any specifics. And it appears to me that the role is the administrator's assistant.

Financial.
The role with its current job description was created during COVID pandemic to take advantage of ESSER dollars being available and recently was switched to the general fund. The combined salaries of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Director of Personnel cost the district almost $375,000 per year, not including the substantial cost of benefits. It's difficult for me to understand why the district is paying this much money when there is a significant overlap in the positions, as evidenced by the three serving on multiple committees and projects together.

Additionally, the Director of Personnel uses contractors for two major aspects of the role costing the district approximately $150,000 a year additional. Our Treasurer has told the board that we soon will need to go to the community with a tax levy and that the earlier we seek a levy, the less we'll need to ask for, therefore increasing the possibility of it passing. He also acknowledged the sooner we cut our costs, the greater impact those costs will have on the district down the road.

I cannot in good conscience consider going to the community to ask for their hard-earned tax dollars without attempting to make cuts to the administration first. Members of our community have told me for years the district is too top-heavy and has too many administrators. I firmly agree and therefore I will vote to suspend the Director of Personnel.

Dr. Banks:
I would like to add a couple things as well. Number one, absolutely, for everyone in the audience community, we work as a team at district office. There is no meeting that takes place where there's not two to four to five to six of us sitting around the table because there's different perspectives, different lenses, and different gifts that each of our administrator brings. And that's what the strength and the beauty of our district is – the diversity of thought and bringing that together. Second, I want to make clear I was in no way a part of the process or a conversation about reorganizing and I serve as a Superintendent of this district. And I was not a part of any conversation regarding the need or use of a reduction of force for financial reasons. What I was involved with was a personnel committee meeting and a finance committee meeting in December, where we left with the acknowledgement that we would come back to look at our finances and make a target to work through with our administrative team after negotiations were done. At no time during that conversation was reduction in force discussed. And in terms of reorganization, we did a new strategic plan last year. Our current administrative team shows up in that. There was no conversation about reduction in force, reorganizing, how it would shift or who's picking up job responsibilities. So, I just want to be clear on my involvement in this, which is none.

Ms. Lee:

Thank you to all of the stakeholders who have talked to me. Mr.Oliverio, we have talked in these meetings a few times. We've talked in the executive sessions. You've answered my questions very professionally. I appreciate it. Dr. Banks, we've talked about this multiple times. I've had phone calls and in-person conversations and emails from staff, and the community. I've never had so much input on one decision and that is just a beautiful thing. This is a very emotional situation, with people hurt on both sides, with reasoning on both sides. This is a difficult decision to make, but because of the amount of input I've gotten, I am confident that I am making the decision that best represents the community and best represents what is good for our students.

Mr. Plaut:

I want to thank those who sent emails. I want to also thank everyone that came in support of Finneytown. I'm not so naive to think I'm going to change any minds at this table. For those watching on YouTubes and Instagram...if you don't like the decision we are making...or if you do like the decision we are making...at the end of the day, we are Finneytown. Get involved...with our PTAs, get involved with our FMPA's, our Boosters. Getting upset and pulling your kids, doesn't help Finneytown. You are our community. We are the community. You will see us at the plays. You will see us at the soccer fields and the baseball fields. You will see us around you. You will have the chance to talk to us. As you get involved, as we get involved, we can turn Finneytown where it needs to be. At the end of the day, we need to remember where our heart is...we are Finneytown.

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

56-25 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Mr. Reeb, the Board approved the following Administrative Contract, effective August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2027:

Grant Anderson	Director of Business Operations	$122,558.00
	(Pick-up on pick-up fringe benefit $6,802)	

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

57-25 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Mr. Reeb, the Board approved the following Administrative Contract, effective August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2028:

Meredith Baker	Principal Finneytown Elementary	$104,308.00
	(Pick-up on pick-up fringe benefit $16,648)	

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

58-25 Mr. Lee moved, seconded by Mr. Rea the Board approved the following Administrative Contract, effective August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2028:

Jen Dinan	Assistant Superintendent	$132,141.00
	(Pick-up on pick-up fringe benefit $21,090)	

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

59-25 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Ms. Lee, the Board approved the following Administrative Contract, effective August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2028:

Carol Miller	Principal Secondary Campus	$119,611.00
	(Pick-up on pick-up fringe benefit $19,090)	

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

60-25 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Mr. Rea, the Board approved the following Administrative Contract, effective August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2027:

Lisa Samuel	Assistant Principal Secondary Campus	$91,725.00
	(Pick-up on pick-up fringe benefit $5,228)	

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

61-25 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Mr. Plaut, the Board approved the following Administrative Contract, effective August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2027:

Anton Walker	Assistant Principal Secondary Campus	$101,526.00
	(Pick-up on pick-up fringe benefit $5,787)	

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

62-25 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Mr. Rea, 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 March 13, 2025:

Amann, Michael	Falhaber, Leslie	Kennedy, Angel
Baker, Tyler	Fischoff, Ann	King, Sharon
Baldock, Jason	Fisk, Summer	Lacure, Elizabeth
Barton, NaDeera	Fowler, Niah	Lalley, Teresa
Besl-Ali, Carley	Fromme, Ashley	Le, Morgan
Binford, Cornelia	Gentry, Jennifer	Lyons, Dayonna
Blanks, Earl	Giffin, David	Lyons, Dayonna
Blyberg, Zachary	Gorby, Lily	Madriz, Gabriela
Bonifas, Elizabeth	Gray, Kiara	Madry, Thomas
Braswell, Keith	Greco, Mary	Martin, Artis
Brewer, Valeri	Green, Keaira	Mason, Ebony
Brinkman, Rosa	Haarlammert, Stephanie	Maxam, William
Burkhardt, Heather	Hall, Dennis	Meier, Paulette
Buskirk, Delores	Hardy, Diane	Miles, Linda
Campbell, Emily	Hartman, Ronald	Miller, Kayla
Campbell-Goodman, Steven	Haugan, Andrea	Mock, Taylor
Casada, Abigail	Hawkins-Hyde, Kellie	Morris, Alexia
Chaffer, La'shawntay	Hess, Leanne	Namenyi, Tytus
Chamlagai, Tanka	Holland, Michael	Nashid, Wadeeah
Champion-Hughes, Bianca	Horton, Vanius	Nienaber, Jennifer

Rice, Alisha	Tennyson, Emma	Weiler, Michael
Richey, Sheila	Thomas, Nyla	Weirich, Helen
Robinson, Marilyn	Thompson, Saige	Wesley, Kate
Ruffner, Sara	Tigert, Aaron	Wilson, Celina
Schnur, Bethany	Tubbs, Quinetta	Wilson, Celina
Schuster, Jason	Turner, Alisha	Wilson, Makayla
Sfarnas, Jim	Tyree, Alfred	Wilson, Max

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

Review of Action Steps

1) Provide athletic supplemental salary data for comparison school districts – Dr. Banks
2) Add special meeting live streaming discussion to the March 31 special meeting agenda – Dr. Banks, Ms. McMullen

The next regular meeting of the Finneytown Board of Education will take place on Monday, April 21, 2025 at 6:30pm in the Brent Board Meeting Room, 8791 Brent Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45231. Open forum will begin at 6:00pm.

63-25 There being no further business, Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Mr. Plaut, that the meeting be adjourned. The President declared the meeting adjourned at 8:31pm.

Jelicia McMullen, President

ATTEST:

David L. Oliverio, Treasurer