FINNEYTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Minutes of Special Meeting, April 8, 2026
Brent Board Office Meeting Room
8791 Brent Drive
Cincinnati, Ohio 45231
Meeting 4:30pm

The Finneytown Board of Education met in special session on Wednesday, April 08, 2026, in the Brent Board Meeting Room, 8791 Brent Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45231. Ms. Catanzaro, Mr. Engleman, Ms. Laird, and Mr. Plaut were present. The President called the meeting to order at 4:38 pm.

033-26 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Ms. Laird that the Board **Dispense with the Opening Ceremonies.** By consensus, the motion passed.

034-26 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Mr. Engleman that the Board **Approve the Agenda with the addition of Item 10: Executive Session according to ORC 122.21(g)(1) to discuss the employment of a public employee.**

035-26 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Ms. Laird that the **Board Waive the Reading and Approval of the Minutes from the March 16, 2026 Regular Meeting.** By consensus, the motion passed.

Miss-Steps and Missed Opportunities

Mr. Plaut apologized for leadership changes "at probably the worst time," recognized staff resilience during the transition, and the continued focus on student achievement. He pledged to rebuild trust through transparent communication while advancing a strategic plan centered on clear, attainable goals without micromanagement, to be finalized over the summer and implemented next school year. He highlighted governance changes, noting that most board members bring district work experience, all have children enrolled in the district, and participation in committees and support organizations has been at 100% to date.

Master Schedule

Mr. Smith described the master schedule as the comprehensive "who, what, when, why, and by whom" framework needed to guarantee student services and staff coverage, driven by enrollment, staffing levels, IEP requirements, and contractual constraints.

Elementary Master Schedule (Presenter Ms. Baker)

Ms. Baker explained that the elementary building operates with roughly 29 homerooms for grades K thru 6, using lunch as the anchor for the elementary master schedule with seven 30-minute lunch periods and seven 40-minute specials, supported by 5-minute transition buffers. These buffers are necessary to manage hallway congestion, choke points, and simultaneous transitions involving multiple homerooms. Additional building-level constraints include contractual requirements for a 30-minute duty-free lunch, 200 weekly plan minutes, and state limits on recess and mandates for specials. There is a focus on preserving large chunks of time for in the younger grade. The schedule also see to avoid stacking specials and lunch or splitting core instruction. Split instructional blocks disrupt learning, require calming activities after recess, and undermine sustained project-based learning.
Ms. Baker emphasized that scheduling is a multi-week, iterative process that often requires rebuilding when any change occurs.

Secondary Master Schedule (Presenter Ms. Miller)

Ms. Miller outlined a year-long, intensive master scheduling process designed to balance student needs, staff capacity, instructional quality, and fiscal responsibility. Planning begins in December with department-level reviews and course rotation planning, followed in January by a detailed student course selection process involving teacher recommendations, counselor verification, and manual data entry that determines section counts. Based on enrollment demand, department heads and administration collaborate on teacher assignments, carefully limiting excessive course "preps" and canceling or alternating low-enrollment offerings to maintain class balance and budget health.

The master schedule is physically constructed using a scheduling board, allowing the team to distribute courses across bell periods and test multiple student pathways, including honors trajectories, advanced acceleration, and co-taught classes for students with IEPs. Once entered into the system, the schedule is repeatedly run through a batch scheduler to resolve conflicts, often requiring dozens of iterations before acceptable completion rates are reached. Significant front-end effort—hundreds of hours annually—reduces disruptive schedule changes later and allows the schedule to be locked before the school year ends, with counselors handling any subsequent adjustments manually.

Ongoing challenges include high student transiency, certification and contract constraints, and limited advanced course availability, The school uses strategies such as PE waivers, restorative practices bells, and internal substitute coverage to protect instructional time and remain fiscally responsible. Key annual goals—to complete data entry by Spring Break and lock the master schedule before year-end—have been consistently met, ensuring students receive finalized schedules shortly before the start of school while minimizing confusion and instructional disruption.

Superintendent's Role

Mr. Smith emphasized the superintendent's responsibility to meet with unions, ensure proposed changes align with contractual obligations, and support the principals through collaborative problem-solving.

Board's Role

The discussion focused on how board members should appropriately receive and respond to concerns from staff, parents, and students while preserving trust and clear roles. Speakers emphasized transparency, shared understanding of operational complexity, and the importance of routing concerns first to principals, who are best positioned to probe specifics and address root causes before escalation. The board reaffirmed its protocol of directing complaints through administrators, agreed to develop a concise "elevator pitch" to explain decisions confidently, and committed to creating clearer guidance and data briefs so board members can distinguish anecdotes from systemic issues and communicate consistently without undermining professional leadership.

Compromises, Understandings & Goals

Other high- level topics referenced during the work session included:

- Transition Planning for Middle School
- IEP Continuity, Medical Accommodations, and Proactive Parent Engagement (Transition Planning)
- Counselor and Teacher Collaboration, Information Sharing, and "Clean Slate" Philosophy
- Individualized Scheduling for Senior Internships and Small-School Flexibility
- Program Balance and Student Choice Across Disciplines; Data Collection and Communication

Insights & Appreciations

036-26 Mr. Plaut moved, seconded by Ms. Catanzaro that the Board enter Executive Session according to ORC 122.21 ( )( ) to discuss Property Update and according to ORC 122.21(g)(1) to discuss the employment of a public employee.

RC: Ms. Catanzaro, Yes; Mr. Engleman, Yes; Ms. Laird, Yes; and Mr. Plaut, Yes. Motion passes.

037-26 There being no further business, Ms. Catanzaro moved, seconded by Ms. Laird that the meeting be adjourned. By consensus the meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Seth Plaut, President

ATTEST:

Anita E. Ruffin, Treasurer