

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF
CLAY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

A regular session of the Clay Community Schools Board of Trustees was held in the Board Room of the Central Administrative Office, 1013 S. Forest Avenue, Brazil, IN, 47834, on Thursday, April 13, 2023. Ryan Keller, Lynn Romas, Tom Reberger, Amy Burke Adams, and Cheryl Schopmeyer were present. Michael Shaw and Andrea Baysinger were absent.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Board President Tom Reberger led those in attendance in the pledge, and Superintendent Fritz offered the prayer.

II. Comments from Patrons

None

III. Consent Agenda

A. Claims

B. Board Meetings

Regular Session: Thursday, March 9, 2023

C. Field Trips

Northview High School Cross Country to Lincoln St. Park/Holiday World in Santa Claus, IN, requiring an overnight stay, July 24-28, 2023.

D. Personnel

A. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

1. Certified

a. FMLA	ME	Jamie Dickerson
b. FMLA	ME	Colleen Osborn
c. FMLA	NCMS	Kimberly Parsons
d. FMLA	NCMS	Marie Bettenbrock

2. Non-Certified

a. N/E	NCMS	Cindy Lemmon
b. N/E	VBE	Markie Hofmann

B. RETIREMENTS

1. Certified

None

2. Non-Certified

a. School Nurse (eff. 5/24/23)	NCMS	Jada Butts
b. IA (eff. 8/1/23)	JTE	Rebecca Vincent

3. Place on Retirement Index

a. Retirement Index		
b. Longevity Stipend		

C. RESIGNATIONS

1. Certified

None

2. Non-Certified

a. Maintenance (eff. 3/17/23)	Maint	Richard Foy
-------------------------------	-------	-------------

b. Bus Driver (eff. 3/8/23)	Trans	Jennifer Cassidy
c. IA (eff. 3/20/23)	MES	Lisa Watler
d. Bus Driver (eff. 5/23/23)	Trans	Robert Harmon
3. ECA Resignations		
a. Boys Varsity Basketball (eff. 4/3/23)	NHS	Michael Byrum
4. ECA Lay Coaches	None	
 D. TRANSFERS		
1. Certified	None	
2. Non-Certified	None	
 E. EMPLOYMENT		
1. Certified	None	
2. Non-Certified		
a. Police Officer (eff. 7/1/23)	PD	Matt Weber
3. Supplemental	None	
 F. EXTRA-CURRICULAR		
1. Extra-Curricular Certified		
a. Assistant Unified Track Coach	NHS	Whitney Braswell
2. Extra-Curricular Non-Certified	None	
3. Extra-Curricular Lay Coach	None	
4. Supplemental	None	
 G. CHANGES		
1. Certified	None	
2. Non-Certified	None	
3. ECA-Lay Coaches	None	
 H. VOLUNTEERS		
1. CLASSROOM		
a. Classroom (Volunteer)	CCE	Amy Curtis
b. Classroom (Volunteer)	CCE	Andrew Brown
c. Classroom (Volunteer)	CCE	Danielle Schlak
d. Classroom (Volunteer)	CCE	Brian Pair
e. Classroom (Volunteer)	CCE	Kayla Myers
f. Classroom (Volunteer)	FPE	Kristin Wheeler
g. Classroom (Volunteer)	JTE	Erin Thompson
h. Classroom (Volunteer)	JTE	Caleb Moore
i. Classroom (Volunteer)	JTE	Shelby Dean
j. Classroom (Volunteer)	JTE	Jennifer Bedwell
k. Classroom (Volunteer)	JTE	Kelsey Glassburn
l. Classroom (Volunteer)	JTE	Katie French
m. Classroom (Volunteer)	JTE	Jessica Bowman
n. Classroom (Volunteer)	JTE	Brandi Braswell
o. Classroom (Volunteer)	JTE	Megan Mason
p. Classroom (Volunteer)	ME	Alissa Smothers

q. Classroom (Volunteer)	ME	Brandon Strickland
r. Classroom (Volunteer)	SE	Chloe Clark
s. Classroom (Volunteer)	VBE	Paige Maesch
t. Classroom (Volunteer)	VBE	Jennifer Barnes
u. Classroom (Volunteer)	VBE	Dustin Maesch
v. Classroom (Volunteer)	VBE	Kendra Crum
w. Classroom (Volunteer)	VBE	Mark Dickison
x. Classroom (Volunteer)	VBE	Ashley Thompson
y. Classroom (Volunteer)	NCMS	Sage Shepard
z. Classroom (Volunteer)	NCMS	Nathan Propst
aa. Classroom (Volunteer)	NCMS	Michelle Kirkpatrick
bb. Classroom (Volunteer)	NCMS	Tandy Burns
cc. Classroom (Volunteer)	NCMS	Andrew Bailey
dd. Classroom (Volunteer)	FPE/NCMS	Heather Lantzy
ee. Classroom (Volunteer)	FPE/VBE	Jenifer Stoehr
ff. Classroom (Volunteer)	NCMS/NHS	Tracie Walker
gg. Kids Hope (Classroom)	FPE	Jeff Thun
hh. Kids Hope (Classroom)	FPE	Amy Wallace
ii. Kids Hope (Classroom)	FPE	Pam Floyd
jj. Kids Hope (Classroom)	FPE	Debbie BonDurant
kk. Kids Hope (Classroom)	FPE	Brian Deakins
2. Band		
a. Band (Volunteer)	NHS	Nicholas Roman
b. Band (Volunteer)	NHS	Ashley Gonzalez
c. Band (Volunteer)	NHS	Cindy Hughes
3. ATHLETICS/ECA	None	
I. TERMINATIONS	None	
J. Suspension Without Pay	None	
K. NON-RENEWAL	None	

Mr. Romas moved to approve the consent agenda. Mrs. Schopmeyer seconded, and the motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

IV. Old Business

A. Neola Policy Updates – Second Reading

Information regarding the proposed updates to the Neola policies was presented at the March 9 regular session, and no changes were proposed during the first reading.

Mrs. Schopmeyer moved to approve the Neola policy updates. Mr. Keller seconded, and the motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

V. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Fritz noted the following:

- Congratulations to Meridian Elementary for being named an IDOE Family Friendly School for the 2023-2024 school year.

- Recognized Forest Park teacher Linzy Raley for receiving the Golden Apple award through WTHI.

VI. New Business

A. Student Handbook Changes – First Reading

Information regarding the proposed changes to the student handbooks was included in the board packet. This is a first reading, so no vote was necessary. The student handbooks will be brought back for a second reading and approval in May.

B. Title I Grant Application

Mr. Keller moved to approve the recommendation to apply for the Title I Grant. Mr. Romas seconded, and the motion was approved by a 5-0 vote. This is a federal grant program that provides funds for instruction and services to East Side, Forest Park, Meridian, and Van Buren for elementary and preschool students.

C. Alongside Pilot Request

Information from Assistant Superintendent Dr. Tim Rayle was included in the board packet regarding his request to approve the pilot program of the Alongside app for a maximum of twenty students for the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year. If approved, this app would be accessible to those students whose parents opt them in. Dr. Rayle was available to answer questions. Mr. Fritz noted this app was presented to them a year ago; however, it did not offer services that they felt were important. He believes this app will provide students with an alternative opportunity to talk about issues with parental permission. Before the motion, Mrs. Schopmeyer asked if they could discuss some questions she had regarding the program. She stated she had spoken to Dr. Rayle; however, the more questions she asked the more questions she had. She questioned how much liability will there be for the school corporation if something goes awry with the app. She questioned what would happen if a student who had parent permission was mad at their parents and told the app they were suicidal so the app sent police to the house or called 911. She asked what would happen in those cases? Dr. Rayle stated if a child mentions they are suicidal, the app will push out an alert whether they are serious or not, and parents will be notified immediately. Mrs. Adams stated this was something that could be done right now with a phone, and Dr. Rayle agreed. Mrs. Schopmeyer explained the definition of AI, Artificial Intelligence, stating that it learns from the interaction with the student. She questioned Dr. Rayle if this app does this and learns from the responses of the students. Dr. Rayle explained this app has a team of psychiatrists and psychologists who have already programmed responses that recognize words that will direct the student to solutions and exercises to help manage and cope with the situation. He gave an example of a student that might express they are stressed because they have too much homework. The system will direct that student on how to reduce the stress by giving different exercises or activities that are pre-programmed in the app. Dr. Rayle asked if this answered her question, and Mrs. Schopmeyer replied, yes, this is what AI usually does. Dr. Rayle confirmed that the responses are already programmed into the app by the licensed professionals, not newly generated. Mrs. Adams questioned when the student typed “homework” or “stress” that would be a trigger to what exercises to pull for the student. Dr. Rayle confirmed this is built off of an algorithm. Mrs. Schopmeyer stated she read in the

information provided by Dr. Rayle that a parent can request that the data collected could be deleted. (No identifiable data will be collected.) She doesn't know of a device where data can be completely deleted forever. She questioned Dr. Rayle on how secure the data would be if the device is compromised by a hacker. Dr. Rayle spoke with the developers of the app, and they stated that if the parent requested the data be deleted that it would be permanently deleted. He noted the data is housed within the app's servers, which are within the United States, not spread out between multiple servers. Dr. Rayle stated at the end of the school year, if the pilot program is approved, he will have a printout of data from the secondary schools of what topics the students were talking about: stress, anxiety, homework, home life, etc. He stated he knows he didn't answer the question, but when he spoke to the developers and they said it was permanently deleted, he took it as the data would be permanently deleted. Mrs. Schopmeyer questioned how the app would be able to access the feelings of the student interacting and the facial expressions that the student might have. Dr. Rayle confirmed the app bases its response on cues it receives from what the student types. Mr. Fritz added that studies have shown when students show violent behavior or self-harm, many times they will report it to someone first through technology. He believes if they can utilize a program that would help pick up on that and help stop that student, that is the primary reasoning behind the program. Mrs. Schopmeyer then asked what the liability would be for the school if the student was communicating with the app but still committed suicide. Mr. Fritz replied that when something happens, it's not a matter of if the school will be sued, but when. He stated that if they can put as many barriers of help between the students and hurting themselves or others, it's a much better look for the corporation. Mrs. Schopmeyer believes the students spend a lot of time on devices at school, and she doesn't see the need to add one more reason to be using a device. She doesn't know if this program would be effective based on her belief that human interaction is better. She thinks if she speaks with the app developers she might change her mind, but she is very unsure. She would like to table the discussion and talk about the program later since she would not be able to speak to anyone until next week. Dr. Rayle agreed with Mrs. Schopmeyer in regards to human interaction being better, but according to the data that was provided by the developers via a Zoom meeting, less than 15% of students in school right now will seek help from their guidance counselors or school social workers. When looking at Northview's three guidance counselors, if they were to see kids who showed they needed support with anxiety and stress, they would be working 24 hours a day in order to meet one on one with those students. He agrees that while human interaction and one on one is better, the humans are not there; school counselors and psychologist positions are not being filled. The data has shown that since schools have been using this app, 80% of students are now interacting virtually for mental health support. He says students are afraid to mention issues to those they know for fear of a stigma, but when talking to the AI on the app, students are opening up and expressing their feelings. Dr. Rayle reiterates that due to the unavailability of counselors and psychologists in the schools, the pilot program is a test to see if it could be a viable resource for CCS students. He states, that following the pilot program, they will evaluate the data and the feedback from the students to see if this program is not what they were hoping for or if it could be a great resource to the corporation. Mrs. Schopmeyer asked if there were alternatives to hiring professionals to come into the schools from the community. She believes if the corporation engaged the

community more in this situation that there might be a better solution. Dr. Rayle explained the corporation has a partnership with the Hamilton Center; however, there just aren't enough personnel. Mrs. Schopmeyer interjected that she didn't mean a service that was paid for but rather volunteers. Mr. Fritz stated that the school would be more liable for inviting people who are not professionals to try to help kids with mental health issues. Mrs. Schopmeyer stated that over the last three years there has been isolation and lack of interaction and she is worried that society is moving towards focusing on technology and doesn't want to give other options a chance. She states that based on what she knows she cannot support the use of this program. She mentions she has spoken to parents who gave her negative feedback about using the app and wishes they would have come to the meeting. Mrs. Adams shared that those twenty students that would pilot the program will experience stress or anxiety whether the corporation has the app or not. While she knows that all staff is there to support and help the students, there will still be some students who fall through the cracks. Speaking from experience, she has known individuals that have committed suicide and even though some of them had resources available to them, they didn't say a word. Whether it was the stigma of having mental health issues or they didn't want to talk face to face with someone. She wondered if an app like this would have helped to save their lives. Mrs. Adams believes that if this is a tool that can help save one child by any means, it is worth a try. Mr. Fritz included that the corporation staff in all positions interact with students. He stated all employee groups have contacted administration, contacted parents, DCS, or law enforcement regarding concerns they have heard or witnessed from students; he believes this app could provide an extra layer of support. He mentioned that phones are something that students are growing up with and a lot of times will communicate with them more than face to face. Mrs. Schopmeyer stated that it makes her sad that the corporation is turning to technology for answers when kids are taught at a young age to communicate their feelings. She states that they could look back and say the app could have saved a life, but she doesn't think it would. She said life is all about choices, and there is a choice to take your life or not. Mrs. Schopmeyer then shared a personal story relating to a relative taking his own life. She stated that nothing was going to change his mind about what he was doing. Mr. Fritz added that teachers and administrators do speak to students daily and if they see or hear something that doesn't seem right, they are to report it. Mrs. Schopmeyer stated she wasn't criticizing the teachers. Mr. Fritz continued that they have had things reported that staff was able to stop. He included that the corporation is not turning to technology but rather embracing it since it is highly utilized by students. Mr. Romas shared that he comes from a science background and doing experiments is his specialty. He stated that he used to use an old expression while he was principal, "If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got." Mr. Romas emphasized this program was a pilot, and they could say yes or no after the pilot. Mr. Fritz asked Dr. Rayle if he could provide a report to the board following the program if the pilot program was approved, and he stated he would. Mr. Reberger asked Dr. Rayle if the students would have access to this app 24/7; he said they would. Mr. Reberger stated it would be very hard to staff individuals who could be accessible 24/7 to all students. He agrees with Mrs. Schopmeyer on the technology side but believes this to be a useful tool. He also mentions that if this app can help prevent any harm coming to that student or others, it would be beneficial. He then asked Dr. Rayle if this program would continue

through the summer; he replied that the program would stop on the last day of school. The program would then be evaluated. Mrs. Adams asked if there were words being used that would alarm the AI if the app would contact a human; Dr. Rayle confirmed this. Mr. Reberger shared he has mixed feelings about the app but encourages it to be another tool to try and then evaluate it.

Mr. Keller moved to approve the Alongside Pilot Program. Mrs. Adams seconded, and the motion was approved by a 4-1 vote. Mrs. Schopmeyer opposed.

D. School Nurse Liaison Grant Application

CCS Director of Health Services Amber Sindere provided information to the board regarding a request to apply for the School Nurse Liaison Grant. Former CCS Head Nurse Lynn Stoelting served as the Clay County School Nurse Liaison for the 2022-23 school year, and she has agreed to serve in this capacity for the upcoming school year. Mr. Reberger asked what duties Mrs. Stoelting would have. Mrs. Sindere replied that originally this grant was only going to be for one year, but due to the state of Indiana having a low health grade, they have extended the initiative another year and possibly permanently. She explained this position is held through the Clay County Health Department, so Mrs. Stoelting has been able to help the school nurses stay on track with documenting student immunizations, contacting parents to keep the required immunizations up-to-date, and contacting doctor's offices to obtain needed records. She also aids with all vision, hearing, and dental screenings that are offered in each building for students. Mrs. Sindere noted that in previous years the corporation would see anywhere from 5-10 students in each building for dental screenings, but with Mrs. Stoelting's assistance through this grant, they have increased the number of children being seen for dental work to around 40 students per building; they were able to offer screenings in the fall and spring compared to just once a year. Mrs. Stoelting also provides vaping education to fifth and seventh-grade students through the Catch My Breath program partnered with the Hamilton Center in her role as the School Nurse Liaison. She was able to do an anti-vaping billboard contest where two students were selected to have their posters displayed on a billboard in Clay County. Mrs. Stoelting also served as a mentor to Mrs. Sindere during her first year as the new Director of Nursing, was able to train new school nurses in the corporation, and substitute as a school nurse as needed. Mrs. Sindere added they would like to provide more CPR training to students, and Mrs. Stoelting could lead that as she is a licensed instructor. Mrs. Schopmeyer asked if there was a job description through the health department for this position. Mrs. Kim Hyatt with the Clay County Health Department answered, yes, there is a job description, and that Mrs. Stoelting is an employee of the health department and is paid through the health department. Mrs. Hyatt explained this is a grant that is paid through the state and that most surrounding health departments in the area have a school nurse liaison. She added that Mrs. Stoelting's salary is not the only thing that comes from this grant; they have used it to help pay for the anti-vaping initiatives, and they hope to contract a nurse practitioner to provide free sports physicals. Mrs. Hyatt addressed the lack of dental care a lot of students are receiving outside of school due to insurance not paying for it, and she would like to continue the dental program and offer help to those that have major dental problems. She feels this is a great grant and would like to keep the money in Clay County rather than not using it

and it going to another county in the state. Mrs. Schopmeyer voiced that it was not a secret how she stood on issues over the past three years, and she sees this as a connection to the schools and the government. She noted the bigger the government, the worse it is for the people; she doesn't believe she can support the grant. She thinks there is too much overreach from the government, and everything needs to stay local. Mrs. Hyatt asked Mrs. Schopmeyer if this grant had not been approved last year how would the vision and dental screenings be provided in the schools for the students? Mrs. Schopmeyer asked if those services were offered by the health department; the response was no. Mrs. Hyatt explained the services were paid for through the grant. Mrs. Schopmeyer stated that would have been nice to know. Mrs. Hyatt replied that she did not ask. Mrs. Adams feels fortunate that the corporation still has Mrs. Stoelting's knowledge and guidance. Mrs. Schopmeyer added that her response was nothing against those involved and they do a great job, but rather it was about government overreach. She questioned why the state is involved in healthcare in people's lives, and that she cannot go along with that. Mr. Keller shared that the 181st Air Wing will be bringing medical professionals to Terre Haute to offer medical/vision/dental services to those in need for a week in June. He added that Thrive West-Central will be providing transportation for Clay County and surrounding county residents.

Mrs. Adams moved to approve the application for the school nurse liaison. Mr. Romas seconded, and the motion was approved by a 4-1 vote. Mrs. Schopmeyer opposed.

E. Food2School Purchasing Cooperative Approvals for 2023-24

Mrs. Adams moved to approve the renewal of the contracts with GPO/Distributor for milk and break for the 2023-24 school year. Mrs. Schopmeyer seconded, and the motion was approved by a 5-0 vote. A copy of the cooperative approval was provided in the board packet.

F. ISU Pre-Student Teaching Professional Development Schools Program for NHS

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Tim Rayle provided information to the board regarding a request to allow NHS to participate in the ISU Pre-Student Teaching Professional Development Schools Program.

Mr. Romas moved to approve the ISU program for NHS. Mr. Keller seconded, and the motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

G. Therapy Dog Grant Request

Mrs. Schopmeyer moved to approve the request from Dr. Rayle to seek funding for six additional therapy dogs to be utilized in the schools. Mr. Keller seconded, and the motion was approved by 5-0 vote.

Journey, the Van Buren Elementary therapy dog, was in attendance and received praise from VBE Principal Gail Williams. Mrs. Adams asked what Journey's day looked like. Journey's handler and VBE Special Services teacher Brooke Kraemer, explained that she stays in the classroom with her most of the day, but will walk the hallways to

visit classrooms and greet students. She explained that all students are welcome in her classroom, and Journey has helped students with personal issues and trauma. She believes Journey has made a big impact on her students by recognizing when they are about to have an outburst by sitting by their chairs. She added that Journey is a part of VBE and has been very beneficial to the school.

H. Central Office Summer Hours

It was recommended to allow central office 260-day certified and classified employees to operate on a forty-hour, four-day work week beginning Monday, June 5, and continuing through Friday, July 21, 2023. The office would be open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and would be closed on Fridays.

Mr. Romas moved to approve the central office summer hours. Mr. Keller seconded, and the motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

I. Engineer in the Classroom Program Presentation

Charles Ogborn, Coordinator of the Engineer in the Classroom Program, provided a presentation to the board about the success of the program.

J. CCS Police Officer Recommendation

Mr. Keller moved to approve Matt Weber as a CCS Police Officer. Mr. Weber will begin his duties starting July 1, 2023. Mrs. Adams seconded, and the motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

K. VBE Principal Recommendation

CCS Director of Human Resources Chris Ross, along with the interview committee, requested that Mr. Derik Tipton be hired as the next Principal of VBE to replace retiring Principal Gail Williams. The position will consist of a 200-day contract, and Mr. Tipton will receive the salary and benefits addressed in the CCS Administrator Handbook.

Mr. Keller moved to approve Mr. Derik Tipton as the next VBE Principal. Mrs. Adams seconded, and the motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

VII. Board Member Comments

Cheryl Schopmeyer shared she had a wonderful time visiting the schools, seeing them in action, and commented on how clean they were; she felt they were very inviting. She also shared that she attended some band concerts, and they were awesome. She also participated in a webinar with ISBA with hopes to attend more, and she congratulated Mr. Tipton on the new role.

Amy Burke Adams shared her experience visiting the schools; she was very pleased and felt every building was very genuine. She extended congratulations to Mrs. Raley for her Golden Apple Award and to Mr. Weber and Mr. Tipton for their new positions.

Lynn Romas offered congratulations to Mrs. Raley for her award. He stated that he had written several recommendation letters for teachers and he knows that it is extremely

hard to get. He also extended congratulations to Meridian Elementary for the Family Friendly School designation and thanked Mr. Ogborn for his presentation.

Ryan Keller echoed all the previous comments.

Tom Reberger extended congratulations to Mrs. Raley for her award. He mentioned that CCS has a history of Golden Apple Award winners and that it is something to be proud of.

VIII. Future Agenda Items

Mrs. Schopmeyer requested goals from Dr. Rayle in July.

IX. Adjournment

Having exhausted all agenda items, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

The meeting was audio recorded, and copies may be requested by contacting the Central Administration Office.