

**MINUTES OF A
PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR BOARD MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF
PERRY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS
MARION COUNTY, INDIANA**

June 8, 2020

The Board of Education of Perry Township Schools, Marion County, Indiana, held a virtual live-streamed regular board meeting on Monday, June 8, 2020.

Board of Education members present:

Steve Johnson, Board President
James H. Hernandez, Board Vice President
Lee Shively, Board Secretary
Hannah H. Dale, Board Member
Emily Hartman, Board Member
Charles R. Mercer, Jr., Board Secretary
Ken Mertz, Board Member

Administrative staff present:

Mr. Patrick W. Mapes, Superintendent
Mr. Chris Sampson, Associate Superintendent of Operations
Mr. Bob Bohannon, Assistant Superintendent of Career Preparation, 6-12
Mrs. Vickie Carpenter, Assistant Superintendent of Foundational Learning, Pre K-5
Mr. Kent Hatcher, Chief Financial Officer
Mr. Matthew Willey, Chief Technology Officer

VIRTUAL MEETING ROLL CALL

Mr. Steve Johnson	Present physically with social distancing
Mr. Lee Shively	Present physically with social distancing
Mrs. Emily Hartman	Present physically with social distancing
Mr. Ken Mertz	Present physically with social distancing
Mrs. Hannah Dale	Present physically with social distancing
Mr. James Hernandez	Present physically with social distancing
Mr. Charles R. Mercer, Jr.	Present physically with social distancing

CALL TO ORDER THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Mr. Johnson called the regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda by Mrs. Hartman. It was seconded by Mr. Shively. The motion passed 7/0. Included with these minutes are copies of the following items:

- Minutes of the May 6, 2020 Executive Session
- Minutes of the May 11, 2020 Public Hearing and Regular Board Meeting
- Financial Report for April 2020
- Allowance of Vouchers

- Personnel Report
- Fundraiser Requests
- Approval of Acceptance of Donations

Abraham Lincoln

- Abraham Lincoln Elementary received a donation of \$300.00 from the local Indy Kiwanis group. This donation will be deposited in Abraham Lincoln Elementary's Music Programs ECA account and used to pay the registration fees for a course called "Ukulele in the Music Classroom". Mr. Hawkins will attend this online course.
- Center United Methodist Church generously donated \$6100.00 in gift cards to Abraham Lincoln. These gift cards will be used to assist families in need.

- Approval of 2020-2021 Breakfast and Lunch Prices
- Approval of Ricoh Copier Replacements
- Approval of NIET (Nation Institute of Excellence) Renewal Contract to Provide Multiple Resources in an Online Portal

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ITEMS OF INFORMATION REQUIRING ACTION

Mr. Sampson recommended approval of an agreement with Wilhelm Construction to complete parking lot renovations at Southport Middle, Jeremiah Gray, Douglas MacArthur, Rosa Parks and the Transportation/Service Center. Mr. Mertz moved to approve, Mrs. Dale seconded. The motion carried 7/0.

Mr. Hatcher recommended approval of Resolution 20-011, to allow Perry Township Schools to perform temporary transfers between funds to cover cash flow issues created by extended property tax deadlines by the State of Indiana through Executive Order of the Governor of the State of Indiana. These transfers will be repaid to the proper fund as soon as our property tax receipts are received. The refunded amount will be the exact amount transferred to cover the delay in funding. Mrs. Dale moved to approve, Mr. Mertz seconded. The motion carried 7/0.

Mr. Hatcher recommended approval of Resolution 20-012 to allow Perry Township Schools to invest funds with banks outside of Perry Township that are approved by the state. This is an annual requirement and will assure that the school district will benefit from the highest certificate of deposit rates possible. Mrs. Hartman moved to approve, Mr. Mercer seconded. The motion carried 7/0.

Mr. Bohannon recommended approval of 2020-2021 secondary textbook adoptions. Mr. Shively moved to approve, Mr. Hernandez seconded. The motion carried 7/0.

Mrs. Carpenter recommended approval of a contract with Heggerty for phonemic literacy training with Douglas MacArthur Kindergarten Academy via webinar. This training will be paid for with Title I funds. Mrs. Dale moved to approve, Mrs. Hartman seconded. The motion carried 7/0.

Mrs. Carpenter recommended approval of a contract with Heggerty for phonemic literacy training with the Early Childhood Academy via webinar. This training will be paid for with Title I funds. Mrs. Dale moved to approve, Mr. Shively seconded. The motion carried 7/0.

Mrs. Carpenter recommended approval for Glens Valley Elementary fifth graders and staff to travel to Corydon for their outdoor education program. They would depart on October 1 and return on October 2, 2020. The cost per student is \$160 with scholarships provided for students needing assistance. Mr. Mertz moved to approve, Mrs. Hartman seconded. The motion carried 7/0.

Mr. Johnson recommended approval of Superintendent Patrick Mapes' contract. Mrs. Dale moved to approve, Mr. Hernandez seconded. The motion carried 7/0. Mr. Johnson thanked Superintendent for his hard work. He and the board feel confident with Superintendent's leadership.

COMMENTS AND CONCERNS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Johnson stated with the situation in the world because of the incident in Minnesota, that we as a board have to be proactive. He has seen a lot in his lifetime. He has seen the worst of mankind. This is a situation where we need to be reflective. We can't be afraid to speak or let our students speak their minds, which is their first amendment right. It's best to talk about it in an open dialog, even if we are uncomfortable about it. We want to continue to move this township forward. We are a very diverse township and we should look out for all of our students regardless of race, creed or color

Mr. Hernandez thanked Mr. Johnson for his comments and Mrs. Dale's. It is important. We are in a position in education to be able to start uncomfortable conversations earlier. We are all learning and we are in a position where we can help begin these conversations.

Mr. Shively stated in May of 2002, Perry Meridian High School held their top ten percent honors ceremony. I had the honor of recognizing Mr. Johnson as my influential educator. I didn't think about it that night because I grew up in a household where we were taught to respect others. That night in 2002 I remember sitting at the table with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson and a board member. The board member spoke of the time, years before when the district hired Mr. Johnson and his wife and the stir it caused being the first black educators in the history of our schools. What I took from that was we are working for a school district that even back then we were willing to look past surface level in search of a strong educator for our kids. This is significant. We are willing to look beyond color for content and character. The fact that Mr. Johnson is the president of the school board, I greatly respect.

Mrs. Dale stated she had prepared remarks. She mentioned an email she sent to the board members. There are so many people in our country who feel completely defeated and helpless right now. Change can begin in education. We have to discuss anti-racism, white privilege and being very intentful about how to undo what we have been taught. We need to develop an anti-racism curriculum and implement it at all levels and for every staff member including our police officers. There is no quick fix. We need to value this more than test scores.

Mr. Mertz thanked and recognized Superintendent Mapes for his work. Mr. Mertz stated there needs to be more conversation on anti-racism. I bring a different perspective because when I was in 7th grade, integration began. There was a lot of learning going on. Our demographic has changed in Perry Township and my son and daughter will be much better people because of the diversity in Perry Township. I do think we have some work to do, but I think the work is broader than that. I feel we have lost, in this country and society, first amendment rights and the right to agree to disagree. I'm not talking about racism; I'm talking about the political structure. Where a teacher can say let's have a discussion with his/her students. I hope we continue to teach our kids that you may not agree with others, but agree to disagree with civil discourse. I don't think it's just one issue, but a lot of issues. If we are going to go down this path, let's branch this out. If we are going to have teachers be responsible, let's just not focus on racism or equality, but let's teach our students it's okay to have a different opinion. I am just hoping as a society that we can sit down and have a logical conversation; I think it's broader. I think IMPD did a great job when they talked to the protestors. The protestors also communicated. It took both sides. I hope anti-racism curriculum teaches our students how to listen to opposing views whether it be political, financial, about medicine, etc. Listen to others and say I understand your point of view. Help develop our kids and add that resource to their tool kit.

Mr. Mercer stated he is the oldest on the board and probably have seen some of the biggest changes in his lifetime I don't even begin to understand, Steve, what you have seen and been through. I realize that. I think we are better off today than when I was when I was growing up. I can remember going to the movie and the white kids sat on the main floor and the black kids sat in the balcony. I may have been in the 3rd grade, and at the time I didn't think anything about it. The blacks and whites went to different schools until Brown v. Board of Education. I pray we will get there. Hearts are going to have to change, but you can't beat them over the head, that won't work. I pray that we see improvement every day. On social media there was talk about discrimination. If an administrator learns a staff member has discriminated against a student, action should be taken.

Mrs. Hartman said she would like to go back a couple of months to when the COVID-19 shut-down began. She publicly thanked the community as a whole. Numerous parents were working from home, husbands were working from home and kids were home doing e-learning. Some excelled and some struggled. Families and grandparents were serving as teachers, aides, librarians, lunch ladies ... all of those roles. Our staff and administrators worked on providing meals and technology to families and leadership to staff. Mrs. Hartman thanked the students. From all of the numerous teachers I spoke with, I received numerous comments about how great it was seeing the students

looking out for other students. She spoke with several elementary teachers from different schools who told her Student 'A' reached out to them (the teacher) to let them know Student 'B' didn't know how to get online, etc. Students were helping other students. That was so wonderful! Mrs. Hartman acknowledged all of the students missing out on special events such as prom, graduation and more. She commended the high schools who stepped up above and beyond. Things were different this year because of COVID-19. I appreciate the students sticking with it and moving forward.

Mrs. Hartman stated the pandemic has been a traumatic experience for students and she is concerned for them. This is a worldwide pandemic and they are not living their normal lives. Some students will have more anxiety about it than others. Parents are losing jobs, some are being furloughed, loss of wages, etc. and that increases stress. Now we have a racial pandemic in our community and United States. So, we will have students that will have real social and emotional concerns. I have been reading books to educate myself. I want to learn what I can do and how can I impact the children and students of my life. Racism is a trauma. I looked at my personal growth and what Perry Township has given me: race relations, acceptance, love and kindness. When we work together as a community and build relationships, you are showing kindness to all. From starting out in first grade with an African American teacher, moving onto middle school and having traumatic experiences where teachers supported me, to high school where I was given the opportunity to serve others. Now I have been given the opportunity to serve on the board and learn from all of the amazing people in this room who continue to help me grow and learn about educating students, trauma informed learning, race relations, and about cultures. There is so much growth that I have seen in my life that I know these things are happening in the lives of our students. I know that we are not giving up and we are not going to be complacent. We are not a complacent township. We are moving forward. We are about growth. Tomorrow I'm facilitating race relations with a little girl. She is the daughter of my best friend and she is struggling with everything that is going on. She is also a good friend with my daughter. I told my daughter we would be painting flower pots and talk about race relations. Are we making progress? Yes, we are making progress. Am I saying not to continue moving forward? No, that is not what I am saying. There is beauty in 5th grade friends who have known each other since birth, and she doesn't see race. She sees Maren for Maren. That is beauty. That is joy and hope. I commend Perry Township, where these conversations can take place and where we will continue to grow our students and where we will continue to grow our staff.

Mr. Mapes stated just as diverse as the opinions around the room we've got close to 2,000 employees who assure every day that our kids feel safe coming to school. I don't want to lose that our kids, just as Emily's example of her own daughter don't see the racism that is out there, that is embedded in older adults in the United States. We are doing a good job. We will review policies. We will review curriculum. We will make sure that our Social and Emotional Learning Program gets stronger. In regard to Mr. Mertz' comment, another way to solve this is with civics, and understanding you have to vote for change in elected officials if you are going to see change. You are all elected officials that I work for and you do have a voice as an elected official. Marion County Superintendents are sending a message about racism. When the students return to school, we are going to face this, and address this. Because our kids need to be able to voice their opinions and be heard. And we need to get better on how we deal with this. We are not going to ignore it. It is an unprecedented time with COVID-19 at the present. Education is key, but the other part is your first amendment right and your right to vote and the right to make change happen. Otherwise, change doesn't happen. We can have an impact and make an impact.

In regard to graduation, I can't say enough about Mr. Boedecker and Mr. Knight, their admin teams and teachers who made graduation special for the Class of 2020 in Perry Township. We received a lot of positive feedback, even including the monsoon that went through about ¾ the way through and administrators and staff still rallied and continued on. It was a great experience for our kids that brought closure for them as a graduate of Perry Township Schools, Class of 2020.

We have a lot to do. We have sent a letter to our parents thanking them for their help in educating their kids for the last 9 weeks of school. We have sent a letter to our retirees congratulating them on their next adventure and sharing sadness they didn't get to experience retiring and saying goodbye to their colleagues. We want them to know how special they are. We will be sending out a video letting our parents know we are getting ready and when we have information from the Marion County Health Department, we will send that information to them. We know it is not going to be the same. We are going to make certain we meet our kids' needs for those who need to stay at home and provide them an education, as well as those who come back to our buildings. In 2020-2021 we will have two different learning platforms being offered to meet the needs of all of our kids.

I want to thank you for renewing my contract and for the confidence you have in me. I appreciate it. I have a great administrative team. I don't do this by myself. In the 2019-20 school year, we have almost \$25 million dollars in grant dollars. That is because of the work done each and every day by every employee to make certain our kids receive the best education. That is what we need to keep our focus on as well. There is a lot going on. We are going to serve our students and families the best we can, each and every day.

Mrs. Dale stated she had one more thing to add which she thinks is very important. I appreciate the sentiment that was shared tonight, but seeing no color is a disservice. Seeing no race is eliminating an entire part of who someone is. White people say that all the time and it makes us feel better. I'm not calling anyone out specifically. I know this in general from books I've read and from my own experiences as well. But when you say 'I don't see color' it's ignoring an entire part of who each person is. It is truly a harmful statement. A book I just read is "Waking Up White" and it is fascinating. It is written by a white woman who talks about her experience learning about racism and white privilege. I think it's great to say our kids have these friendships and get along. That is wonderful and something to celebrate about children being together, but we have 2 posts on our FB page from 2 students who, I believe are


non-white; I have not had a discussion with them, but taking cues from their posts they are non-white, and have expressed experiencing racial discrimination in our schools I guarantee if we had a large group or a small group of minorities in Perry Township they might feel a little different of what they have experienced versus a white parent in our views about our kids. One thing I have seen in writing that I think I knew in concept but never had really listened to it or acknowledged it, is that white people don't talk about racism very much. It's not a conversation. But specifically, black people in America have to have racism every single day. I have had a conversation earlier today where that was solidified. It is a privilege that we don't have to have that conversation. I talked to my kids about all of this. We went to a protest this week in New York, a peaceful protest and I shared with them different events that were going on. It is a really difficult conversation to have and I acknowledged that to my 7-year old son. I told him 'this is big, that this was a really heavy conversation,' and he said 'yeh mommy, I feel squished.' He's a white boy who doesn't experience discrimination. If he feels squished by learning the events of the world. Take a second to see what it feels like. I get to educate my kids on hard things that are happening, but my friends who are black or have children who are black, they have to talk to their children about racism to protect them. If you are white, you get to talk to your kid about racism to empower them to be the change. It is different for other people and if we don't acknowledge that, if we do not name the differences, we are doing an incredible disservice and I couldn't just sit here. This is where the conversation goes to often when we pat ourselves on the back and say we did this, we taught everybody about MLK. That is not enough, and I will continue to push this.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Johnson sounded the gavel to adjourn the meeting at 6:57 p.m.



STEVE JOHNSON, PRESIDENT



JAMES H. HERNANDEZ, VICE PRESIDENT



LEE T. SHIVELY, SECRETARY



HANNAH H. DALE, MEMBER



EMILY HARTMAN, MEMBER



CHARLES R. MERCER JR., MEMBER



KENNETH J. MERTZ, MEMBER