

FAIRFIELD CITY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORK SESSION
MARCH 5, 2026

The Board of Education of the Fairfield City School District in the County of Butler, Ohio, held a Work Session Meeting on the 5th of March, 2026 in the Catherine D. Milligan Community room at Fairfield High School.

The meeting was called to order by the President at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Present: Mrs. Berding-Miller, Mr. Clark, Mr. Cline, Mr. McDonald & Mr. Napier
Absent: None

Also present: Mr. Smith, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Hussel, Mrs. Hauer, Mrs. Aug, Mr. Perry & Mr. Clemmons

Absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Scott Clark

PRESENTATIONS/RESOLUTIONS

A. Transportation Update – Janette Flick

Superintendent Mr. Smith introduced Transportation Director Mrs. Flick to provide a transportation update for the 2025-2026 school year.

Mrs. Flick reviewed the current operations of the Transportation Department, including:

- 47 regular routes
- 11 chauffeur/educational assistant routes for special needs transportation
- 43 current drivers, increasing to 44 with a newly trained driver
- 5 substitute drivers
- 5 office staff members

She explained the responsibilities of department staff, including dispatching, route coordination, training, safety oversight, and special needs routing. She also reviewed the qualifications and requirements to become and remain a school bus driver, noting that the hiring and licensure process can take at least four weeks and sometimes longer.

Mrs. Flick reported that the district currently operates:

- 47 regular education buses
- 11 special needs buses
- 10 spare buses
- 3 spare special needs buses

She noted the district is working toward restoring a regular bus replacement schedule to improve safety and reduce long-term maintenance costs. Annual inspections and spot inspections are conducted by the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Additional topics presented included:

- Student safety expectations and bus behavior procedures
- Driver review of safety rules at the beginning of each school year
- Referral procedures for student discipline
- Use of the district's Transfinder routing software and Stopfinder parent communication App

- Continued improvements in parent communication regarding bus delays and routing changes
- Four-tier routing structure
- Walking distance guidelines
- Use of ridership data to maintain route efficiency

Mrs. Flick also shared key transportation statistics:

- Approximately 1 million miles driven this year
- Approximately 8,000 students routed
- Up to 6,500 daily riders
- Service to 8 private schools
- Transportation services provided approximately 262 days per year
- Approximately 1,300 field trips annually

Board members asked questions regarding transportation of non-public school students, associated costs, and practicality requirements under state law. Administration explained that transportation to non-public schools is governed by state guidelines, including time and practicality standards, and that the Board may determine when such transportation is impractical.

Board members expressed appreciation for Mrs. Flick and the Transportation Department, highlighting:

- The complexity of routing and scheduling
- The role of transportation staff in student safety
- The relationships bus drivers build with students
- The professionalism of drivers during athletic and extracurricular travel
- The department's round-the-clock commitment, particularly during inclement weather

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS

26-24 RESIGNATIONS/UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE/EMPLOYMENT– Mr. Hussel

MOTION – Moved by Mr. Napier to approve the following:

- A. Personnel – Professional
 1. Resignations
 - a. Lauren Phillips, East, Intervention Specialist
(effective at the end of the 2025-2026 school year; for personal reasons)
 2. Unpaid Leave of Absence
 - a. Robyn Heidelberg, Compass, 1st grade
(effective for a .25 of a day on April 17, 2026; for personal reasons)
 3. Employment
 - a. Extracurriculars 2025-2026

Senior High

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Joshua Fraasman, Baseball, Reserve Assistant
Timothy J. Seger, Baseball, Assistant

Freshman

Tyler Andary, Track 60%
Jacob Rump, Baseball
Jonathon Stewart, Track 40%
Matt Tyla, Basketball, Boys

Middle – Creekside Middle and Crossroads Middle Combined

Alexis Ring, Track, Middle School, 7th/8th Grade

East Elementary

Melissa Hulley, Talent Show Coordinator

- b. Substitute Teachers 2025-2026
Sierra Mabrey
Brenda Nettles

(All recommendations are for the 2025-2026 school year at a rate of \$125 per day.)

- c. Volunteer 2025-2026 (Athletics)
Marcel Toney

(The above-noted persons are recommended for approval as volunteer coaches for the 2025-2026 school year in district athletic programs. Board approval of volunteers is a requirement of the Ohio High School Athletic Association. Recommendation is contingent upon submission of all required documents.)

(All employment is contingent upon satisfactory submission of all required documents.)

SECOND – Seconded by Mr. Cline

ROLL CALL – Ayes: Mrs. Berding-Miller, Mr. Clark, Mr. Cline, Mr. McDonald & Mr. Napier

Nays: None

Motion Carried: 5-0

26-25 RESIGNATIONS/EMPLOYMENT – Mr. Hussel

MOTION – Moved by Mrs. Berding-Miller to approve the following:

B. Personnel – Support

1. Resignations

- a. Brian Carrier, Maintenance, Temporary Custodian
(effective the end of the day February 27, 2026; for personal reasons)
- b. Robert Graf, North, Head Custodian
(effective the end of the day February 21, 2026; for personal reasons)

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- c. Jenny Haley, Transportation, Bus Driver
(effective the end of the day February 27, 2026; for personal reasons)
 - d. Shawn Mack, District, Custodian
(effective the end of the day March 2, 2026; for personal reasons)
2. Employment
- a. Denisse Braden, East, Educational Assistant
(effective February 18, 2026; for a replacement position)
 - b. Lisa Brown, Transportation, Bus Driver
(effective March 2, 2026; for a replacement position)

(All employment is contingent upon satisfactory submission of all required documents.)

SECOND – Seconded by Mr. McDonald

ROLL CALL – Ayes: Mrs. Berding-Miller, Mr. Clark, Mr. Cline, Mr. McDonald & Mr. Napier
Nays: None
Motion Carried: 5-0

C. Items for Board Discussion

1. Board Policies – Kim Hauer

a. DLC and DLC-R – Expense Reimbursement

Mrs. Hauer presented Board Policy DLC and accompanying regulation regarding expense reimbursements.

She explained that revisions were recommended by OSBA based on a recent Auditor of State bulletin. The revisions address:

- Use of the district’s tax-exempt certificate
- Reimbursement of sales tax paid by employees or officials
- Additional edits reflecting district practices

This policy will return as an item for Board action.

2. Book Study – Billy Smith

The Board discussed pages 57-111 (chapters 7-14) of the current leadership book study.

26-26

APPROVAL OF THE POTENTIAL REDUCTIONS RESOLUTION

MOTION – Moved by Mr. Napier to approve the following:

D. Other Item for Board Action

Mr. Smith explained that one proposed reduction had been separated into its own vote because a family member of Mr. Cline serves as an EL tutor, and therefore Mr. Cline would abstain from that vote.

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1. Recommend approval of the Potential Reductions Resolution as follows:

BOARD RESOLUTION PRESENTING THE FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE DISTRICT AND DIRECTING THE SUPERINTENDENT AND TREASURER TO IMPLEMENT STAFF, PROGRAM, AND SERVICE REDUCTIONS IN THE EVENT THE MAY 5, 2026 INCOME TAX BALLOT ISSUE FAILS.

WHEREAS, without the passage of the May 5, 2026 income tax ballot issue the District will not have the necessary operating funds to maintain a positive cash balance as required by law; and

WHEREAS, the District is not legally permitted to operate with a negative cash balance; and

WHEREAS, the District is required to secure additional funding to maintain current programming and services; and

WHEREAS, further budget reductions would significantly impact current services and programs which are already provided by the District at a cost per pupil ranked second lowest in Butler County in fiscal year 2025, spending \$3,488 less per pupil than the state average and \$2,279 less than the average of similar districts; and

WHEREAS, the last operating levy in November 2011 was projected to last 2-3 years and the District has not approved an additional operating levy in 14+ years; and

WHEREAS, District local property tax revenues do not increase proportionally with property value increases; and

WHEREAS, the current state biennial budget projects a decrease over the current biennium; and

WHEREAS, based on the current financial forecast, a 1.25% school district earned income tax will allow the District to substantially maintain the current programming and services for FCSD through June 30, 2031; and

WHEREAS, the proposed 1.25% earned income tax would generate approximately \$625 annually for every \$50,000 of taxable earned income.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT should the May 5, 2026 earned income tax ballot issue fail, the Board directs the Superintendent and Treasurer to implement the following staff, program, and service reductions:

- Eliminate one and one-half (1.5) District administrative positions, for an estimated cost savings of \$170,000
- Eliminate three (3) administration building support staff positions, for an estimated cost savings of \$183,000
- Restructure the Curriculum and Instruction Department to eliminate five (5) FTE Instructional Specialist positions, for an estimated cost savings of \$577,000
- Reduce fifteen (15) FTE teaching positions through attrition, for an estimated cost savings of \$1,665,000

- Reduce one (1) psychologist position through attrition, for an estimated cost savings of \$100,000
- Eliminate forty-eight (48) grades K-5 unit leader supplemental positions, for an estimated cost savings of \$73,000
- Eliminate thirty-three (33) grades 6-8 department head supplemental positions, for an estimated cost savings of \$78,000
- Eliminate seventeen (17) grades 9-12 department head supplemental positions, for an estimated cost savings of \$54,000
- Reduce building budgets Districtwide by ten (10) percent, for an estimated cost savings of \$90,000
- Reduce the number of extended service days worked, for an estimated cost savings of \$80,000
- Eliminate administrative tuition reimbursement, for an estimated cost savings of \$20,000
- Modify the Chromebook technology replacement cycle for grades K-5, for an estimated cost savings of \$217,000
- Eliminate district funding of college readiness assessments for students including AP and PSAT, for an estimated cost savings of \$90,000
- Eliminate practice of waiving extracurricular participation fees for economically disadvantaged students, for an estimated cost savings of \$55,000
- Modify fee structure for extracurricular participation to include a \$100 increase, for an estimated cost savings of \$150,000
- Reduce elementary building hours to 6:00 p.m., Monday–Friday, and eliminate weekend use, resulting in the reduction of eight (8) custodial positions, for an estimated cost savings of \$500,000
- Eliminate all school field trips, for an estimated cost savings of \$60,000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board directs the Superintendent and Treasurer to implement the aforementioned reductions for the 2026-2027 school year unless such reductions may be made sooner without displacing any staff member for the 2025-2026 school year.

The resolution included findings that:

- *The district will not maintain a positive cash balance without additional operating funds*
- *The district cannot legally operate with a negative cash balance*
- *Additional funding is required to maintain current programming and services*
- *Further reductions would significantly impact services and programs*
- *Fairfield ranks among the lowest in per-pupil spending in Butler County*

- *The last operating levy was approved in November 2011*
- *Property tax revenues do not increase proportionally with valuation increases*
- *The current state biennial budget projects decreased funding*
- *The proposed 1.25% earned income tax would substantially maintain current programming and services through June 30, 2031*

SECOND – Seconded by Mrs. Berding-Miller

ROLL CALL – Ayes: Mrs. Berding-Miller, Mr. Clark, Mr. Cline, Mr. McDonald & Mr. Napier

Nays: None

Motion Carried: 5-0

26-27

APPROVAL OF THE POTENTIAL RESOLUTION TO IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL STAFF REDUCTION

MOTION – Moved by Mrs. Berding-Miller to approve the following:

2. Recommend approval of the Potential Resolution to Implement Additional Staff Reduction as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED, that should the May 5, 2026 earned income tax ballot issue fail, the Board directs the Superintendent and Treasurer to implement the following additional staff reduction for the 2026-2027 school year:

- Reduce ten (10) English learner tutor positions for an estimated cost savings of \$405,000

SECOND – Seconded by Mr. McDonald

ROLL CALL – Ayes: Mrs. Berding-Miller, Mr. Clark, Mr. McDonald & Mr. Napier

Abstain: Mr. Cline

Nays: None

Motion Carried: 4-0

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Legislative Update – John Cline

Mr. Cline provided a legislative update, including:

- House Bill 661 regarding prohibiting middle and high school athletes from earning NIL compensation
- House Bill 671 regarding loss of state funding for school districts involved in certain voucher-related lawsuits
- House Bill 715 regarding chartered nonpublic school EdChoice scholarship reporting and financial transparency

- House Joint Resolution 7 proposing a constitutional amendment to exempt owner-occupied homes from property taxes beginning January 1, 2027, if approved

B. Butler Tech – Abby Berding-Miller

Mrs. Berding-Miller shared Butler Tech updates, including:

- Ribbon cutting for the aviation facility scheduled for March 16 at 10:00 a.m.
- Community open house scheduled for March 18 from 5:00-6:00 p.m.
- Strong student representation at the Business Professionals of America competition:
 - o 77 Butler Tech students qualified
 - o 25 advanced to nationals
 - o 17 of those students were from Fairfield
- Fairfield student Simone Blair was elected President of the Ohio Business Professionals of America chapter

C. Student Achievement – Kevin McDonald

Mr. McDonald reported the following student achievements:

- Junior Peyton Jones hit the game-winning shot to advance the boys basketball team
- Seven wrestlers were crowned GMC Champions:
 - o Girls: Delilah Wisor, Jordin Adams-Jones, Lillian Grogan, Analosa Curtis
 - o Boys: Kaden Carter, Seneca Jackson, Jose Gonzalez
- Junior Kyndle Ledbetter was one of 15 cellists in Ohio selected to perform with the Ohio All-State Orchestra
- The freshman and high school orchestras earned unanimous superior ratings at OMEA state competition
- Junior swimmer Michael Metz finished:
 - o 4th in the state in the 100 backstroke
 - o 7th in freestyle
 - o and set a school record
- Show choir achievements included:
 - o Pure Elegance sweeping competition at Robert C. Byrd in West Virginia
 - o Pure Elegance also finishing first at Ross
 - o Promotion of the upcoming Crystal Classic

D. Parks and Recreation – Scott Clark

Mr. Clark provided a report on the RASKALS program, which allows organizations to sign up to assist senior residents with outdoor tasks such as weeding, trimming, and window washing.

E. Planning Commission – Billy Smith

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Mr. Smith reported that there was nothing of significance for the Board from Planning Commission, and that the March 11 meeting had been canceled.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- March 7, 2026 – Crystal Classic, 8:00 AM – 11:00 PM; Fairfield Senior High School, PAC and Arena
- March 13, 2026 – End of 3rd Quarter, Grades K-12
- March 19, 2026 – Board Meeting (Regular Session), 6:30 PM, Fairfield Senior High School, Catherine D. Milligan Community Room
- March 23, 2026 – Community Conversations with Jay Phillips and Billy Smith, 9:00 – 11:00 AM at Fairfield Administration Building, Conference Room A. Please contact Angie Neal by 4:00 PM on Friday, March 20, 2026 to schedule your appointment at neal_an@fairfieldcityschools.com or 513-858-8568
- March 24, 2026 – Community Conversations with Jay Phillips and Billy Smith, 6:00 – 8:00 PM at Fairfield East Elementary, Media Center. Please contact Angie Neal by 4:00 PM on Monday, March 23, 2026 to schedule your appointment at neal_an@fairfieldcityschools.com or 513-858-8568

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Napier – He thanked Mrs. Flick for her transportation presentation and noted that he appreciates the work performed by the transportation department each day to safely transport students. He also commented that he enjoyed participating in the board’s leadership book study and found it beneficial for the board’s discussions.

Mr. McDonald – He thanked Mrs. Flick and the transportation team for their service to the district and the important role they play in supporting students. He also noted that he appreciated the board’s book study and the opportunity for board members to share perspectives on leadership and teamwork.

Mr. Cline - He expressed appreciation to Mrs. Flick and the transportation department for their work and dedication to student safety. He also commented that bus drivers play an important role in students’ daily experiences as they are often the first and last district staff members students interact with each day. Mr. Cline also noted that he valued the discussion during the board’s book study.

Mrs. Berding-Miller - She thanked Mrs. Flick and the transportation staff for their commitment to transporting students safely. She also highlighted several upcoming district and community opportunities, including Café Lee, the Chamber of Commerce Career Fest event, and the Crystal Classic Show Choir Competition, and encouraged community members to attend and support these events. Mrs. Berding-Miller also encouraged community members to stay informed and engaged regarding issues affecting public education.

Mr. Clark - He thanked Mrs. Flick for the transportation presentation and expressed appreciation for the work of the transportation department. He also acknowledged the district administration for continuing to provide financial and informational updates to the community and encouraged community members to stay informed and engaged with district communications.

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MOTION – Moved by Mrs. Berding-Miller to recess to Executive Session at 7:44 p.m. to discuss the following:

The employment of public employees 121.22 (G) (1)
Court Action 121.22 (G) (3) – Pending or Imminent Litigation

SECOND – Seconded by Mr. Cline

ROLL CALL – Ayes: Mrs. Berding-Miller, Mr. Clark, Mr. Cline, Mr. McDonald & Mr. Napier
Nays: None
Motion Carried: 5-0

The Board resumed the meeting at 9:14 p.m.

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ADJOURNMENT

MOTION – Moved by Mrs. Berding-Miller to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND – Seconded by Mr. McDonald

ROLL CALL – Ayes: Mrs. Berding-Miller, Mr. Clark, Mr. Cline, & Mr. McDonald
Nays: None
Motion Carried: 5-0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. by the President, Mr. Clark.

President

Attest: _____
Treasurer