

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
THE METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT OF DECATUR TOWNSHIP
MARION COUNTY, INDIANA**

The Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township School Board convened at 7:02 p.m. in the Board Room of the Administrative Offices of the School Corporation, 5275 Kentucky Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana on August 12, 2025.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mrs. Estella Vandeventer
Mr. Dale Henson
Mr. Chase Lyday
Mrs. Judith Collins
Mr. Larry Taylor

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:

Dr. Scott Collins, Superintendent
Mr. Chris Gearlds, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Kirk Farmer, Chief Financial Officer
Mr. Justin Dixon, Director of Operations
Dr. Matthew McClendon, Director of Human Resources

REGULAR MEETING

1. OPENING ITEMS

1.01 Mrs. Vandeventer, Board President, called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. All five board members were present.

1.02 Mrs. Vandeventer led in the pledge of allegiance.

1.03 Mrs. Patrice Johnson, Decatur Township parent, stated she began an organization dedicated to transparency and advocacy in education to track how educational funds are used, empower families and students with access to information that should already be public, and act as a nonpartisan watchdog advocating for ethical practices in transparency. At the last board meeting, it was shared that gym renovations and external programs were separated by type. She requested clarity and visibility for how those services are funded and whether allocations are being used fully and appropriately. She has submitted four more requests for information and stated it should not be difficult to get information, as the law requires accountability and proper recordkeeping. This is not personal, but rather policy, accountability, and advocacy. She stated that twice now her public comments have been omitted by technical difficulties from the district's official meeting recordings without notice, acknowledgment, or corrections. Transparency isn't just about recording meetings, it's about preserving all perspectives, even uncomfortable ones. If the district can't explain why those recordings are incomplete, the community deserves to ask how the district can say it's being transparent.

Mrs. Christy Caruso, Decatur Township parent, stated everything is going great at DCHS for her sons (including Back to School Night, as most of the teachers were in attendance). Last year during the first week of school, her son received an iPad with a broken case and took it to the iPad Depot the same day to have the case replaced. At the end of the school year, she received a letter requesting \$130 for the broken case and was later threatened with small claims court. She would like to institute a change that requires students to inspect their iPads the day they receive them to ensure they are in good working order. If they are not, send the student to the iPad Depot so any issues can be corrected and not charge the parents to do so.

Mrs. Lynette Wilson, Decatur Township parent, stated that some students are more introverted and she doesn't want these students to be left behind. She would like the teachers to engage these students so they are inspired to learn. She wants to be involved in the community and is currently on the PTO board at DMS. She is very pleased with Ms. Harvey and feels she is the standard of what the rest of the administration should be, as she is very responsive and listens. With Ms. Harvey, she feels heard. She and her husband want the best for her children and want to help. She doesn't like Facebook and would prefer information be shared via email or postal mail. We want to pour back into our community and our children, but we can't help if we don't know what is needed without open lines of communication.

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS

2.01 Mrs. Vandeventer opened the Public Hearing for the Capital Projects Fund and Bus Replacement Plan at 7:12 p.m. Mr. Farmer discussed the Bus Replacement Plan and Capital Projects Fund. A patron questioned if all buses will have active GPS? It was noted that all buses will have GPS installed and cameras mounted on stop arms. Mrs. Vandeventer closed the hearing.

2.02 Mrs. Vandeventer opened the Public Hearing for Additional Appropriation for 2025 General Obligation Bond Proceeds at 7:20 p.m. Mr. Farmer presented information about project funding for district-wide long term capital maintenance and equipment/vehicle/bus acquisition. The public was asked for any feedback and there were no questions or comments. Mrs. Vandeventer closed the hearing.

3. ACTION ITEMS

3.01 Mr. Taylor moved that the minutes for the July 8, 2025 regular meeting and executive session be approved. Mrs. Collins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3.02 Dr. McClendon presented the staff report and addendum for approval. Mr. Henson made a motion to approve the staff report and addendum as presented. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3.03 Dr. McClendon presented the 2025-26 Educational Support Personnel Handbook for approval. Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the 2025-26 Educational Support Personnel Handbook as presented. Mrs. Vandeventer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3.04 Mr. Farmer presented claims in the amount of \$4,698,802.02 and payrolls in the amount of \$4,006,364.11 for approval. Mr. Henson made a motion that the claims and payrolls be accepted as listed. Mr. Lyday seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3.05 Mr. Farmer recommended approval of a Resolution to Issue 2025 General Obligation Bonds and Related Matters. Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the Resolution as presented. Mr. Henson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3.06 Mr. Farmer recommended approval of an Appropriation Resolution for 2025 General Obligation Bonds. Mr. Henson made a motion to approve the Resolutions as presented. Mrs. Vandeventer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3.07 Mr. Gearlds presented new/revised NEOLA Board Policies for first reading. The Board will be asked for approval at the September meeting.

3.08 Mr. Gearlds asked approval for disposal of outdated and surplus textbooks at Decatur Middle School. Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the disposal of textbooks as presented. Mrs. Vandeventer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously

3.09 Mr. Dixon asked approval of an out of state/overnight trip request by DCHS Band to Disney World in Orlando, Florida on October 16-21, 2026. Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the trip request as presented. Mr. Lyday seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORT

4.01 Mr. Farmer presented a financial report for the Education Fund, Referendum Fund, Operations Fund, and Rainy Day Fund.

5. OTHER

5.01 No items.

6. CLOSING ITEMS

6.01 Dr. Collins stated we had a great start to the school year and thanked our administrators and directors for their work. He thanked Mrs. Wilson for her comments and stated there was a software issue with the GPS on our new buses which had been resolved with the exception of one bus that we are still working through. He thanked our students and teacher who help televise our meetings. We had a glitch that was spoken about with the Wi-Fi connectivity. We put extra steps in place, having Derek Coulombe, Director of Technology, watch the livestream to ensure the Wi-Fi feed is working. This is something new for us. There would never be an attempt to delete or alter our recordings, as that is not ethical and is not something we would do. He recognized Brandy Coulombe as our new Benefits Specialist. She is Decatur Proud and dedicated and we are excited to have her begin.

6.02 Mr. Taylor thanked everyone for attending. He was pleased to see so many of our teachers at the Decatur Proud Conference and stated Dr. Collins' team has worked hard to get school off to a great start. In regard to transparency, he stated the Board and administration is not hiding anything from anyone and to say that we are is untrue. We have nothing to hide and are run by a state agency, so everything gets checked. Our administrators do a great job and everyone sitting around this table will not deceive anyone. This has never happened and it never will happen.

Mrs. Collins thanked everyone for attending. She was thankful for the great start of school. The back-to-school event included a lot of cheering and she thanked all who helped organize the event.

Mr. Lyday expressed his appreciation for the energy from all the staff members at our back-to-school event. He is constantly reminded of the quality leadership we have in our township, especially in the Central Office as well as our administrators in the buildings. It is good to see the passion they bring to work. When school starts, not everything is perfect including bus routes, communication, and traffic plans. There are a lot of moving parts and this team is always working diligently to fix problems quickly. We are off to a great school year.

Mr. Henson thanked everyone for attending and stated all the back-to-school events were great. Dr. Collins and his team had a great start of the year. He asked that the administrators share with their teachers that the DTEF grant cycle is currently open.

Mrs. Vandeventer thanked everyone for attending. She is excited for the school year and appreciated all the hard work to get the new school year started. She is hopeful and excited for this new school year.

- 6.03 Mr. Henson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Estella Vandeventer, President

Mr. Dale Henson, Vice President

Mr. Chase Lyday, Secretary

Mrs. Judith Collins, Member

Mr. Larry Taylor, Member