

**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 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Administrative Offices of the School Corporation, 5275 Kentucky Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana on October 14, 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 Dixson, 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 7:00 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, questioned how cutbacks at the U.S. Department of Education will affect a district's already struggling to meet students' needs? She urged parents to demand more transparency, accountability, and respect for every child in the classroom and noted three school board seats will be open next year. She provided information on parent rights regarding bullying incidents and promised to attend monthly meetings to demand answers.

2. DECATUR PROUD

- 2.01 Mr. Gearlds was pleased to celebrate and thank the following employee groups for making our schools thrive: School Custodian Appreciation Day on October 2nd, World Teachers' Day on October 5th, National Coaches Day on October 6th, National School Lunch Week this week, National Bosses Day on October 16th, National School Bus Safety Week the week of October 20th, and October is National Principals Month. He then recognized two recipients of the Tomorrow Ready Award for this month:
- Beth Zorman, Secretary/Treasurer at Gold Academy - Goes above and beyond to serve students, staff, and families with efficiency and kindness.
 - Karen Cochran, Math Teacher at Decatur Township School for Excellence – Goes above and beyond with her support and encouragement of students, fostering their excitement for learning mathematics.

3. ACTION ITEMS

- 3.01 Mr. Taylor moved that the minutes for the September 9, 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. Lyday seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jay Lovell, Lynwood Elementary School Principal, was pleased to introduce Ms. Crystal Barthel, Lynwood Elementary School Assistant Principal.

Ms. Barthel stated she was incredibly honored to be back in this district and thankful for the opportunity. She is Decatur Proud because the community has continued to show her what it means to be supported, welcomed, and student-driven. She looks forward to giving back to the community in a new way.

Dr. Collins shared this evening the School Board accepted the retirement of Mrs. Susan Strube, West Newton Elementary School Principal, effective June 30, 2026. On behalf of his team, the School Board, and the entire District, he stated she is an icon at West Newton and a cherished person in her building. He thanked Mrs. Strube for her service.

- 3.03 Dr. McClendon presented the 2025-26 Administrators Handbook for approval. Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the 2025-26 Administrators Handbook as presented. Mr. Henson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.04 Dr. McClendon presented the 2025-26 New Teacher Handbook for approval. Mr. Henson made a motion to approve the 2025-26 New Teacher Handbook as presented. Mr. Lyday seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.05 Mr. Farmer presented claims in the amount of \$5,112,423.26 and payrolls in the amount of \$4,295,445.74 for approval. Mr. Taylor made a motion that the claims and payrolls be accepted as listed. Mrs. Vandeventer seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.06 Mr. Farmer reviewed the budget, tax levy, and tax rate totals with the Board and recommended approval of the Resolution for Appropriations and Tax Rates. Mr. Henson made a motion to approve the Resolution for Appropriations and Tax Rates as presented. Mr. Lyday seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 3.07 Mr. Farmer presented the 2026 Budget Expense Reduction Resolution for Board consideration. Mr. Taylor made a motion to approve the 2026 Budget Expense Reduction Resolution as presented. Mrs. Collins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORT

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

5. OTHER

- 5.01 No items.

6. CLOSING ITEMS

6.01 Dr. Collins congratulated Crystal Barthel and welcomed her back to Decatur Township. He looks forward to her work with Mr. Lovell and his team at Lynwood Elementary. He congratulated Karen Cochran and Beth Zorman as our Tomorrow Ready Award recipients. He shared details about several upcoming events in the district: Decatur Township Fire Department Safe Halloween and our DCHS football game on October 31st, Family Resource Night (for all Decatur Township families) at Stephen Decatur on October 28th, DCHS Safe Halloween on October 29th, Stephen Decatur Trunk-or-Treat on October 30th, and DCHS Holiday Craft Fair on November 8th. He reminded everyone about Fall Break on October 20th-24th.

6.02 Mr. Taylor thanked everyone for attending and expressed his appreciation to Karen Cochran and Beth Zorman as our Tomorrow Ready Award winners. He stated Mrs. Strube will be sorely missed. He wished everyone a safe Halloween and wished good luck to our DCHS football team in the sectionals.

Mrs. Collins thanked everyone for attending and thanked everyone for all they do. She wished everyone a safe Halloween with all the activities going on in the township. She offered congratulations to Karen Cochran and Beth Zorman for being selected as our Tomorrow Ready Award winners. She congratulated Mrs. Strube on her well-deserved retirement, but will miss her.

Mr. Lyday congratulated Karen Cochran and Beth Zorman for being selected as our Tomorrow Ready Award recipients. He is grateful for these “force multipliers” in the district and appreciated how they go above and beyond in their buildings. He welcomed Crystal Barthel back and is glad to have her in the district working with Mr. Lovell. He stated everyone will miss Mrs. Strube, as people look up to her in the district. We are grateful for her investment in the community and all she’s done to impact so many lives and her upcoming retirement is well-deserved.

Mr. Henson thanked everyone for attending. He offered congratulations to Karen Cochran and Beth Zorman as our Tomorrow Ready Award winners. He welcomed Crystal Barthel back to Decatur Township. He thanked Mrs. Strube for all she has done and all her years of service in our district. He thanked Mr. Farmer for his work on the budget and thanked Dr. Collins and his team for all they do. He stated the DTEF recently distributed 21 grants totaling \$20,000 to nine of our schools and thanked Ms. Aundrea Hart, Director of the DTEF, for her work.

Mrs. Vandeventer congratulated Karen Cochran and Beth Zorman as our Tomorrow Ready Award winners and expressed her appreciation for the work they do in our township. She congratulated Crystal Barthel and is excited to have her at Lynwood Elementary. She heard a few people refer to Mrs. Strube as an icon this evening and she couldn’t find a more fitting word to describe her, as she is a pillar in our township and we’re very appreciative of all her years of service here.

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