

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD  
NORTHEAST DUBOIS COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION

February 4, 2019

Vol. 2019 No. 4

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Mary Pankey, President

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Bernard Knies, Vice-President

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Kelly Knies, Secretary

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John Siebert, Member

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Brennan Schepers, Member

# NORTHEAST DUBOIS COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION

Board Work Session of the Board of Trustees in the Dubois Middle School Multi-Purpose Room:  
Northeast Dubois County School Corporation

This meeting is a meeting of the School Board in public for the purpose of conducting the School Corporation's business and not to be considered a public community meeting. There will be time for public participation at the end.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by President, Mrs. Mary Pankey.

ROLL CALL:	Mrs. Mary Pankey, President	Present
	Mr. Bernard Knies, Vice-President	Present
	Mr. Kelly Knies, Secretary	Present
	Mr. John Siebert, Member	Present
	Mr. Brennan Schepers, Member	Present
	Mr. William Hochgesang, Superintendent	Present

OFFICIAL GUESTS:	Mr. Arthur Nordhoff, Jr., Attorney	Absent
	Mrs. DeAnn Meyer, Treasurer	Present
	Mrs. Gretchen Brinkman, Deputy Treasurer	Absent
	Mrs. Tina Fawks, Principal	Present
	Mr. Ryan Case, Principal	Present
	Mrs. Brenda Ferguson, Principal	Present

NEWS MEDIA:	<u>NEWSPAPER</u>	
	Daily Herald, Leann Burke	Present
	<u>RADIO</u>	
	WITZ, WQKZ,	Absent
	<u>TV</u>	
	WJTS -TV,	Absent

UNOFFICIAL GUESTS: Amy Mitchell, Andrea Rickelman, Chris Hasenour, Joni Hopf, Kristi Brinkman, Beth Neukam, Brian Dodd, Julie Neukam, Jennifer Ashby, Ashley Seger, Charlotte Schepers, Denise Schroering, Judy Haase, Kelly Beck, Glenda Reckelhoff, Paula Wehr, Tom Heeke, Kelly Bieker, Chris Bieker, Pat Seger, Linda Schmitt, Alan Matheis, Tim Lampert, Jenny Lampert, Mary Poston, Duane Thewes, Kris Buechler, Wendy Jeffries, Shawn Kalb, Kevin Kalb, Michelle Cave, Carla Seng, Michele Messman, Shawn Dooley, Butch Bonifer, and Kim Miley

BOARD PUBLIC WORK SESSION  
February 4, 2019

**OPENING REMARKS**

**George Link:** Discussion of Public Survey: Reviewed information Mr. Hochgesang provided from previous surveys, Do survey; get results back, Class size: what levels are we discussing? STEM education, Life Skills

**BOARD DISCUSSION**

**Topic of Enrollment**

**Kelly Knies:** What grade configuration is the community comfortable with? What grades do the community want to keep segregated.

**Mary Pankey:** How would you arrange so various grades don't mingle?

**Bernard Knies:** comfortable with the schedule being the only barrier to keep certain grades separate or does there need to be more of a physical barrier (separate spaces within buildings)

**Mary Pankey:** How do you format the question? 1-5, etc.

**Brennan Schepers:** Student:teacher ratio. What classes are too big; what number is too small?  
Opinion based

**Brennan Schepers:** How will we divide classes? What electives do we offer? At what size do we offer/not offer?

**Mary Pankey:** High School has small elective classes but limited by scheduling options.

**John Siebert:** Optimum class size per grade level; how do we structure a building or position grades in a building?

**George Link:** There are easy ways to accomplish both of those: physical segregation between certain age groups and scheduling that keeps certain groups of students separated. We need to maximize use of spaces. Hope for more tech programs at MS - how do you get access for all? Dividing doors such as at Pike Central to separate students.

**Mary Pankey:** Latchkey, after school care options

**George Link:** opinion seems to be that there has been a shift in the community that now after school programs might be more needed

**Kelly Knies:** What programs do we currently have that are good? Any to do away with?

**George Link:** Rank on the survey. How important are various programs

**John Siebert:** consistency in how questions need to be asked (1-7 ranking system) three themes: physical facilities and attributes, educational priorities, timing and taxes to complete our desired outcome

**John Siebert:** pre-k and k programs, Afterschool programs, how would minimum disruption in learning environment look? Mixing populations; reducing number of buildings

**Kelly Knies:** timeframe: rip the band-aide off or make the changes over a longer period of time?

**Bernard Knies:** types of responses

**John Siebert:** limited open-ended responses, until the end of the survey; there, ask about strengths, weaknesses, which will allow community members to express ideas if not covered in previous questions.

### **Survey - 3 Categories of questions**

#### **Physical Facilities**

1. Exterior of buildings; enhancements to the outside of all facilities

**Bernard Knies:** recommends using the 1-7 rating scale on this question; or ranking multiple topics to determine where the community's priorities lie

**Mary Pankey:** list priorities in order

**Kelly Knies:** outside appearance so you can find your way around. Education has to be top priority.

**George Link/John Siebert:** look at results of entire survey; Aesthetics, physical image.

2. Do you prefer a phased approach (live within current budget) to the renovation or a project done in a quick manner (short term tax increase)? Would you be in favor of a small tax increase to accomplish a renovation in a quick manner?
3. Class Sizes (students) What would it look like? How does it compare to neighboring schools? 1200 sq ft for kdgn; 900 sq ft for .....
4. Hypotheticals to rank

**Kelly Knies:** do our facilities meet the needs of our sports (Physical)

**Brennan Schepers:** Adequate space for teaching. Meeting needs of all students such as IEP students.

**John Siebert:** brought up using hypothetical situations and ranking those by importance may be more important in another part of the survey.

**Mary Pankey:** would you do a hypothetical situation in each of the three areas?

**John Siebert:** that could be done in each area.

**Mary Pankey:** keep survey manageable

**John Siebert:** 10 minute max to take survey

**John Siebert:** safety (from outside concerns, from within grade level configurations)

**Mary Pankey:** routine (not minimal) maintenance

**John Siebert:** Preschool/Kindergarten physical needs of facilities

### **Educational Priorities**

1. Preschool/Daycare expansion (more options)--rate the need (Brenda: timeframe of need is important to find out)
2. After school programs

**Kelly Knies:** discount for multiple children if keep in our school system

**John Siebert:** sort questions based on who the constituent is (student, parent, staff, etc)

**William Hochgesang:** First, we need to know the priority needs to ask in the survey

### **Educational programs:**

More access to STEM K-12, hands-on learning (already have that info)

**George Link:** many common threads already in survey data from Hub 19

### **Educational priorities:**

3. Extra-curricular activities
4. Integration of STEM / hands on learning
5. Length of time for classes (particularly math and ELA) on the survey or not

**Ryan Case:** We have done away with some programs? Are they important enough to put back into place?

**Brennan Schepers:** from business perspective, many needed classes (robotics, programming, engineering, welding, CNC operators) How do we build up these programs?

**John Siebert:** General technology enhancing, improving what we have? What is next after 1:1?

**Ryan Case:** We need to market ourselves. Robotics team just went to National Competition.

**Tina Fawks:** Science labs need improvements. Biomedical technology needs.

**John Siebert:** Marketing

**Ryan Case:** Length of time for classes (particularly math and ELA)

**Mary Pankey:** cost of scheduling options; will continue to look at it

**John Siebert:** job skills; life skills (Hub 19) how do we make it happen?

**Brennan Schepers:** job shadowing; number of career opportunities/exploration at all levels

**William Hochgesang:** Hub 19 already recognizes the importance of this

### **Timing and Taxes**

1. Short term tax increase to do all the work at once, minimize the movement of kids/teachers? Or, stay within current tax rates and do the work in phases? Public needs to know if taxes raise, what will be the plan?
2. Size of projects; each building

End survey with open ended suggestions.

**Bernard Knies:** willingness to increase taxes for which priorities; Favor of moving to fewer buildings?

**George Link:** I think that everyone would prefer that we stay as we are, but we need to interweave the implications for four buildings, three buildings and two buildings

**Brennan Schepers:** survey must reach everyone

**John Siebert:** 20% response rate is a great response rate (provides an adequate sampling size) REMIND, connect with parents; community

**George Link:** suggests he and Bill work on survey, share out with the Board, board members view and give feedback on survey questions. Decide on date to send out survey to community.

**Bernard Knies:** could we include three weekends for feedback?

**George Link:** hope to get feedback by end of February. At that point, hold next meeting to evaluate the results

**John Siebert:** have you put numbers to anything yet?

**George Link:** 3.2 million will be needed just for High School needs; Can put numbers to renovating all buildings and will provide that at a later time; \$7,000,000 could do much for two buildings

**Bernard Knies:** any directional info is helpful

**John Siebert:** do you feel we have timing questions covered? School personnel, Students, Parent/Guardian, Taxpayers /Community members

It was decided that the Survey be divided into three sections: Physical Facilities, Educational Priorities and Timing & Taxes. William Hochgesang and George Link will work with discussion items to put Survey together and get to the Board by Friday, February 8 for editing and comment before the Survey be eligible to the Public on February 15.

### COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mary Pankey asked if there were additional questions audience would like to see asked on the survey.

**Kelly Beck:** not everyone can be surveyed by electronic means; ensure that paper copies of the survey are available. We need to define terms in the questions being asked so all understand what we mean by it. Ensure that questions aren't leading questions.

**Chris Hasenour:** in reference to number of buildings, "four building option" needs to be included. Would the public be supportive of renewing the general fund referendum to increase programming that would be paid for out of the Education Fund? With the renewal of the referendum for the education fund, could the school corporation maintain current configuration?

**Michelle Messman:** What would be an estimated cap on class sizes? Look at classroom now; is there enough physical space to add students into those classrooms.

**Alan Matheis:** too many buildings; too many rooms; common sense says not to add a new buildings or add on to current buildings; what would closing CES do? increase enrollment or decrease enrollment? If it is going to cost us 7 million to close a building, we could maintain a lot of buildings and make improvements for that kind of money. Don't want to get into the predicament, like Ireland and Holland, where there isn't a high school anymore. Being a small school provides students a lot of opportunities.

**Ashley Seger:** I am in favor of CES staying open, but if we keep fighting to keep all buildings open, what will we do when no money is left to save the JEEPS as a corporation.

**Mary Pankey:** we are spending more for CES than we receive from the state to keep it running. Rural communities across the state have closed elementary buildings because the birth rate is not supporting increased enrollment. We can't evenly divide students when in two different bldgs. The past three superintendents have known the need to close CES. The truth is we don't have enough students for four school buildings, may not have enough children for three school buildings. We have to figure out the most financially solvent way to provide the education of all students in the corporation. I've been told this for 20 years.

**Kristy Brinkman:** Why has it been left this long? The financial situation. This is the responsibility of the school board to determine. Our corporation is starting to fail. My own children are looking at taking their kids elsewhere because of the current status of the corp. I am a small business owner. I have clients considering take their kids to neighboring corporations because we are failing at not providing for our students. Include teachers in defining the questions so parents clearly understand the meanings of the questions. We need better equipment, materials, etc.

**Kelly Knies/Mary Pankey:** the enrollment wasn't in the shape it is now.

**Mary Pankey:** we have great teachers. State funding and decreased enrollment is the real issue here. We need this time to make the decisions needing to be made.

**Kristy Brinkman:** We need to save the JEEPS first.

**Chris Hasenour:** I think there are minimal savings to be had in closing CES. If you want to continue with three sections per grade level, you need to keep this building open.

**Mary Pankey:** I appreciate our public giving us this time to make the best decisions.

**Chris Hasenour:** Without a cost estimate on, you are just guessing. I can maintain two buildings on \$7,000,000 for many years. Those funds can be used differently. Based on January board figures we have a \$1.6 M surplus. Teacher retirement fund expires in 2025.

**William Hochgesang:** Your bills need to be paid for months to come. Bill explained figures from available data.

**Beth Neukam:** You are welcome to come into the classrooms. I am willing to help out if I can.

**George Link:** the \$7,000,000 can't go on salaries, etc.

**Amy Mitchell:** I have pictures showing students in current classrooms to share with the Board.



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**SURVEY**

It was recommended to have the Survey available February 15, 2019 through March 4, 2019.

Motion by      Bernard Knies  
Seconded by    John Siebert  
Vote              5-0

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**MEETING DATE**

It was recommended that the next meeting will be scheduled at the February 19, 2019 regular Board Meeting.

Motion by      Kelly Knies  
Seconded by    Brennan Schepers  
Vote              5-0

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**ADJOURNMENT**

It was recommended that the meeting be adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Motion by      Kelly Knies  
Seconded by    Brennan Schepers  
Vote              5-0

The Board will meet in Executive Session following the regular meeting. I.C. 5-14-1.5-6.1 (b) (2(A), 3 & 9) relating to: collective bargaining, school safety, and job performance evaluations.

1. Call to Order
2. Review & Discuss
3. Adjournment