BOARD NOTES

To help aid communication, we were asked to post notes of what took place at each board meeting. These are not the official meeting minutes, as they will be approved at the next board meeting. These, however, are the running notes from each meeting.

Meeting Date: September 21st, 2026, Time: 6:00 p.m. Location: Newton Elementary School

The September meeting was a regular business meeting and began promptly at 6:00 p.m. with all Board members in attendance. Mr. Hartley provided a report on the district's current state report card, highlighting areas of strength as well as areas requiring continued focus and improvement. The Board was also informed that the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) Capital Conference is scheduled for November 15-17. Additionally, State Representative Kevin Miller recognized and congratulated the Utica FFA Soil Team for its outstanding accomplishments at the National Soils Competition in Oklahoma.

During the Work Session, the Board conducted a first reading of board policies and received an update on Strategic Plan Goal 1 from Adam Reynolds. As part of the discussion, the Board was presented with three facility options for the middle school. Option 1 would involve demolishing the current middle school and constructing a new facility with funding support from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC). Option 2 would involve renovating the existing middle school; however, OFCC funding would not be available because the renovation cost exceeds two-thirds of the cost of a new building. Option 3 would involve renovating the 1960 section of the building while retaining the high school gymnasium and vocational classrooms, with the project being fully self-funded by the district. The Board will receive additional information from the OFCC, and a special meeting will be scheduled to determine the direction the district will pursue.

As part of the Consent Agenda, the Board approved the Licking Regional Educational Service Center Certified Substitute List No. 4 for the 2026-2027 school year. The Board also approved supplemental positions for Softball, Baseball, Track, and Elementary Bowling. In personnel matters, Karen Schmitt was approved as a Home Instruction Tutor on an as-needed basis, and Andrea Perrine was approved for the position of Food Service Server.

Under the Finance Consent Agenda, the Board approved the August 2026 financial and reconciliation reports, the payment of bills for August 2026, and the payment of bills with Then and Now Certificates. The Board also authorized the Treasurer and Superintendent to issue purchase orders in accordance with Board Policy 6400. Additionally, the Board approved the FY27 purpose statements and budgets as presented, as well as the Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior class transfers. Appropriation modifications were approved for Public School Support, Student Activities/District-Managed Student Activities, and the Title IIA Federal Grant.

In other Board action, the Board approved volunteer coaches for Softball and Track, as well as additional volunteers for the 2026-2027 school year. The Board also approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the North Fork Education Association and the North Fork Board of Education. An overnight trip for the Utica FFA Chapter to attend the National FFA Convention was approved, along with early graduation requests for four students. Finally, the Board approved the 2026-2027 Licking Regional Educational Service Center Business Advisory Council (BCAC) Plan

During Board discussion, Mrs. Cooperider inquired about receiving updates throughout the year regarding progress in the district's testing and academic performance areas. Dr. Krueger discussed ParentSquare and noted that community members may be added to receive school closing and alert notifications upon request. Mr. Hartley shared that staff members are continuing to learn and implement ParentSquare, and that the process remains a work in progress. Strategic Plan Goal 1 was discussed briefly as the district awaits additional information related to facility planning. The discussion concluded with Mrs. Paxton reading a letter she had written to the Board.

During the Hearing of the Public, Bethany Simon addressed the Board regarding several topics, including results from the staff survey conducted as part of the Strategic Planning process, the implementation of ParentSquare, concerns related to bullying, and the importance of transparency and community input when considering a potential levy. She also expressed concerns about the limited number of elective course offerings available to high school students.

The meeting concluded at 7:13 p.m. The next regular meeting is on October 19, 2026, at Utica Middle School at 6:00 p.m.