

MINUTES
OHIO COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT #505
SPECIAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025 AT 6:30 P.M.

The Special Information meeting of the Board of Education of the Ohio High School District #505 was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 in the school auditorium.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

1.1 Roll Call

High School Board members present: Harold Albrecht, Cindy Hacker, Brock Kaecker, Chad Deery, Janice Campbell, Reka Albrecht, Courtney Forristall

Administrator present: Superintendent Jennifer Hamilton

Board Secretary: Kelly Becker

Other attendees: Linsey Deery, Makaila Gonzalez, Liberty Cassidy, Tara Cassidy, Don Reuter, Lee Carter, Janet Miller, Carol Merrill, Marcia Ann Thompson, Deb Anderson, Andrew Hull, Jacob Albrecht, Janielle Albrecht, Robert Albrecht, Greg Albrecht, Brenda Reuter, Bob Reuter, Don Reuter Sr., Angie Lawrence, Donna Popp, Ryan Lawrence, Kayla Freeman, Jarret Freeman, Rebecca Albrecht, Jonathan Albrecht, Cara Kniss, Emilie Davies, Roberta Davis, Brittany Gonzalez, Kim Younge, Delores Crowder, Rita May, Katrin Graff, Tina Anderson, Angie McDonald, Beka Piper, Darren Bell, Jamie K Rogers, Haley Foster, Kristen Ryan

1.2 Approval of Agenda

Motion by Hacker, second by Forristall to approve the agenda as presented. The vote was unanimous. Motion carried.

II. PUBLIC SESSION

2.1 Question and answer for Ohio Community Vote on April 1, 2025 "Resolution to Deactivate Ohio Community High School."

President Albrecht started the Public Session reading the following statement: Public questions and comments will be limited to 30 minutes total. A community member who wishes to ask a question or make a comment is asked to state their name and what specifically they will be speaking about. Each community member speaking will be limited to 3 minutes. The audience is asked to refrain from commenting while others are speaking. The Board members will listen to each speaker, but will not comment. The Board President or Superintendent will respond to questions. Once 30 minutes has expired, the Board will conclude the Public Session and begin its regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Angie Lawrence: What Happens to our assessed value of our property and property taxes if the Grade School cannot sustain without the High School? I came to this town because we had a K-12 school. Will our property taxes go down if this vote goes through?

Harold Albrecht: We have seen our property taxes decline for the last 18 years. We expect that to continue in the future. Assessed value of homes, property and farm ground is all done by the Bureau Co. or Lee County assessor.

Superintendent Hamilton: The Board has no control of the assessed value of your home.

Jamie Rogers: Taxes are based on the school district you go to.

Superintendent Hamilton: The Board levies for a specific amount of dollars that are limited by the tax rate. The High School Board will continue their work with the Grade School Board to maintain the current combined tax rate.

Kim Younge: Will our Freshmen and Sophomores be able to take Drivers Education here in Ohio?

Superintendent Hamilton: We have already signed a contract with our Drivers Education teacher for this summer and will offer the class in June. As always, we will offer Drivers Education to our Ohio students first and then other neighboring students. If the community decides to deactivate, in the future the Ohio students will take Drivers Education at their new school.

Kim Younge: Do other schools offer a summer Drivers Education class?

Superintendent Hamilton: I believe one of the other schools does, but that will need to be answered by those schools.

Haley Foster: I would like to begin by asking a few objective questions of the Board that only require a yes or no answer.

Is it true that whether the high school remains open or deactivated there is no significant change anticipated for the taxpayers up or down?

Superintendent Hamilton: Correct, that is our goal. Once again it will depend on the dollar amount we levy for and the assessed property value.

Haley Foster: So just to clarify our property taxes are not going to go down if we deactivate our High School?

Superintendent Hamilton: Correct

Haley Foster: If we deactivate, is it possible that you will not be able to provide transportation to and from school? Will you be able to supply buses and drivers 3 months down the road for academics?

Superintendent Hamilton: If the vote is to deactivate the Board will negotiate with both schools. There is a possibility that one or both schools will assist with transportation. The Board will negotiate with both schools. We currently do have enough buses and drivers to provide transportation. There of course be changes regarding route times. As we are today, we can facilitate transportation.

Haley Foster: I appreciate everything you are doing but can you tell me you can guarantee transportation to and from.

Superintendent Hamilton: I can't guarantee that.

President Albrecht: There is one more bit of information: If we deactivate the Ohio school district, whether we hire our own drivers or someone else, we are required to determine the transportation of our students to another school.

Haley Foster: I feel the Superintendent understood my question and answered it.

President Albrecht: It is a state statute that the Ohio School District has to supply transportation.

Haley Foster: Are all these questions and answers in the minutes and will be made public?

President Albrecht: Mrs. Becker is taking notes and they will be printed in the Walnut Journal.

Haley Foster: Is it possible that in as early as 5 years, the Grade School could close as well because they are no longer sharing certain expenses with the High School? To simplify is it possible that the Grade School could close because the High School is no longer contributing to the Grade School?

Superintendent Hamilton: I cannot answer that question.

Haley Foster: Is it possible? Does the Grade School rely on the contributions from the High School?"

Superintendent Hamilton: Currently we operate in cooperation with one another. We are working on how much revenue the Grade School needs and the High School. As the High School costs increase the Grade School costs increase. That means the Grade School will levy for more dollars and the High School will levy for less dollars to keep the finances of the Grade School stable. There are a lot of if's in that question that I cannot answer..

Haley Foster: Actually and factually will the numbers align to keep the Grade School open?

Superintendent Hamilton: The High School Board has looked at the current budget and future revenue, I do not know if the Grade School has looked at their specific Budget. The High School will need to levy less and the Grade School will need to levy more in order to to pay bills and sustain the Grade School. There is enough in reserve to continue operating the Grade School for the next 3 to 5 years.

Haley Foster: In the last 5 years, are you aware of any students that were not prepared with adequate credits for college level entry based on the current programs offered at the High School and if not, would you agree our current Education curriculum is providing students what they need for college upon graduation?

Superintendent Hamilton: Any Ohio student who indicated they were interested in a 2 or 4 year college were fully prepared for that step.

Haley Foster: So our teachers have met their needs.

Superintendent Hamilton: Yes, Ohio has had a great staff over the last 10 years who have worked to prepare our students.

Haley Foster: I would like to make a closing statement. It is very clear, no matter what road we travel to get there, we all have a common goal with the same outcome. Academic success: The confidence and determination built in athletic program participation and the adaptability and social experiences necessary to concur the real world as adults. We all want what is best for our children and we can at least agree on that. The decision that this Board and in turn our community is faced with making should not sacrifice any of the three core pillars for our students success, and certainly not at the expense of adding additional opportunity in the area of social development. I would ask any member of the community that is voting on April 1st to consider the answer to these questions when voting. Does Ohio High school currently offer our children a level of academic programming that allows them college level entry upon

graduation? Does Ohio High school currently offer athletic program participation in house, and through established co-op relationships with transportation provided when necessary? Finally, does Ohio High school currently provide students the opportunity to be involved in extracurricular social activities if they choose, and if not, could we agree that exploring co-op club opportunities and transportation for those activities may be the best decision for our community, rather than deactivation and transportation of the entire student body?

Kim Young: Will the fees be similar when we register our students?

Superintendent Hamilton: Registration will be the same process as you register in Ohio. The schools will have similar things that families will have to pay for at both of the schools. I have no idea what the fees are at the other schools. It could be higher and it could be lower.

Kayla Freeman: In the event of closing for the reason of number of students and a better education, will Amboy have the same opportunities that we have? If a child is falling behind academically can they attend Ohio that provides one on one service to that student? The class size is relatively bigger. What will happen to our students who right now get that one on one here in Ohio?

Superintendent Hamilton: If you are asking can someone tuition from Amboy to Ohio if they are falling behind? No they can not. If Amboy wants to tuition students to Ohio they would have to deactivate and send all their students to Ohio. Amboy would have to negotiate tuition, and ours at this time is \$55,000.00. If you are asking if an Ohio student can change schools because they are not doing well, the answer is yes. Each student will have to decide what school they want to attend and they will have to finish that whole year. If they don't want to attend that school the next year they can choose the other school. They can only change school districts one time in their 4 years of high school.

Donna Popp: What if a student goes to Amboy and they fail then they go to Bureau Valley and they fail can they come back to Ohio?

Superintendent Hamilton: No because Ohio High School will be deactivated. When you deactivate you no longer have the High School in this building. Whichever school the student chooses to attend is where the student will take classes and graduate.

Donna Popp: What if in 2 years they decide they want to come back here? What happens?

Superintendent Hamilton: If the Board decides that they want to reactivate the school, a resolution to reactivate will be placed on a ballot and then again the community will make the decision to reactivate or continue with the deactivation. If the decision is to reactivate, all Ohio students will return to Ohio High School.

Don Reuter: What social clubs do we offer, do we offer FFA?


Superintendent Hamilton: The clubs are listed on the informational document. We did offer FFA when we had Intro to Ag and Ag Science classes. Ohio High School no longer has an Ag teacher and cannot offer an FFA club.

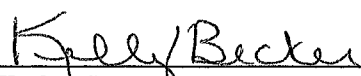
Don Reuter: Do we have a lot of students asking for FFA or the Ag Science class?

Superintendent Hamilton: Not to my knowledge.

III. Adjournment

- 3.1 Motion by Kaecker, seconded by Hacker to adjourn this meeting at 7:02 PM.
The vote was unanimous, whereupon the meeting was declared adjourned.


Harold Albrecht
President


Kelly Becker
Secretary