

January 8, 2025

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
DECATUR COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

The Board of School Trustees met in regular session on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at Central Office, 2020 N. Montgomery Rd., Greensburg, IN 47240.

President Todd Mauer called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m., all members were present.

Under routine matters, on a motion made by Matthew Hoeing and a second by Cory Ross, minutes of the regular board meeting held December 11, 2024 and minutes of the and executive session held December 16, 2024 were unanimously approved.

Payment of claims and payroll were ordered on a motion made by Lizette Bell with a second by Cory Ross and passed unanimously.

On a motion made by Cory Ross and a second by Alison Ortman, the following conferences and field trips were unanimously approved.

**CONFERENCES**

***North Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School***

Sierra Kalli – Midwest Music Conference  
Chicago, IL – December 18-20, 2024

Steve Stirn – AFCA Convention  
Charlotte, NC – January 13-14, 2025

**FIELD TRIPS**

***South Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School***

FFA – Freedom Hall  
Louisville, KY – February 14, 2025

On a motion made by Cory Ross and a second by Nicholas Anderson, the following resignations and leaves were unanimously approved.

**RESIGNATIONS**

***North Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School***

Tracy Smith – Bookkeeper  
December 12, 2024

Elizabeth Clines - Instructional Assistant  
January 20, 2025

**LEAVE**

***South Decatur Elementary School***

Payten Peters - 4th Grade Teacher  
Medical Leave - April - May 2025

On a motion made by Matthew Hoeing and a second by Elizabeth Hochstedler, the following appointments were unanimously approved.

**APPOINTMENTS**

***North Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School***

Tracy Smith – Librarian  
December 13, 2024

Taylor Bohman – Bookkeeper  
December 20, 2024

Darin Charles – Custodian  
January 2, 2025

Kylie Ricke – Varsity Volleyball Coach

***North Decatur Elementary School***

Taylor Schroeder - Lead Preschool Teacher  
August 1, 2025

From the delegation, there were several individuals who signed up to speak on a topic not listed on the agenda, specifically regarding the Barb Lecher transitioning from Guidance Counselor to Student Services Coordinator. After President Todd Mauer briefly explained the rules for speaking, each community member who signed up to speak was given the opportunity.

Angel Hocker, Director of Curriculum, was the first speaker. Mrs. Hocker gave the reasoning behind the move of a counselor from a single school to a district position as Student Services Coordinator. This new position will be primarily focused on the support and management of student mental health at both ends of the county. Mrs. Hocker further explained that although the change has been in the works for months, the resignation of a counselor at South Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School prompted the time-table to be moved up. However, each school still retains one full-time Guidance Counselor and Guidance Secretary, as well as have an appointed counselor from Centerstone. Mrs. Hocker stated that several factors, including a new Master Schedule and the commitment of the building administration teams to take some of the scheduling and other duties on, will allow the Student Services Coordinator to be more focused and spend more one-on-one time with students. Mrs. Hocker's final comments were regarding national and local student to counselor ratios, reporting Decatur County Community Schools is above average.

Nicholas Messer, Principal of North Decatur Jr.-Sr. High school was the second to speak. Mr. Messer continued Mrs. Hocker's points regarding student to counselor ratios, stating Decatur County Community Schools guidance to counselor ratio is higher than other area schools. Mr. Messer touched on compensation for the position, stating the position comes with more pay and days in the contract. In regards to concerns that this

shift will spread the guidance counselors too thin, Mr. Messer reiterated that the main role of this position is student needs, limiting other duties to allow more time with students and create a culture and consistency in all of the buildings. Mr. Messer restated the goal of the administration teams to help cover some of those duties and support to the Student Service Coordinator.

Amy Cockburn, Principal of South Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School, was the third speaker. Mrs. Cockburn echoed many of the points made by Mrs. Hocker and Mr. Messer, but further explained her desire to be involved in guidance processes as a building leader to know and ensure her students are doing and getting everything needed to graduate. Mrs. Cockburn briefly touched on the schedule of the Student Services Coordinator, having two to three designated days per week in each of the Jr.-Sr. High School buildings, but that the position also offers the flexibility to be where there is any significant student concern district wide on an as needed basis. Mrs. Cockburn finished by saying the Student Services Coordinator position will be an invaluable resource to the students at highest risk and that need the most support.

Linda Smith, a current teacher with Decatur County Community Schools was the fourth to speak. Mrs. Smith articulated her commitment to the success and the future of the schools. Mrs. Smith went on to state she has had the privilege of knowing Mrs. Lecher for many years as well as working with her in many capacities, Mrs. Lecher has always shown an admirable commitment to supporting all students, but her greatest strength is her ability to connect with struggling students who need support most. Mrs. Smith touched on the fact that with diminishing enrollment, comes diminished funding and while frustrating, the cutbacks can be seen at every level in the district. However,

Mrs. Smith does not believe that any of the changes have negatively impacted the students, as the focus of the administration is always to provide the best possible education for all students.

Sabrina Goolsby, the mother of a current student, was the fifth speaker. Mrs. Goolsby voiced her concerns regarding the new Student Services Coordinator position, stating her belief that this change will have negative impacts on the students and the effectiveness of the guidance program as a whole. Mrs. Goolsby explained that the role of a Guidance Counselor is fundamental to the emotional, academic, and social wellbeing of the students, and that by splitting her time between schools, Mrs. Lecher will have difficulty forming meaningful and consistent relationships with students. Mrs. Goolsby further explained that her own student, who requires support from the guidance team, took time to form a strong relationship with Mrs. Lecher and the thought of Mrs. Lecher not being available at the school full time as it has been, has already affected him negatively. Mrs. Goolsby believes he is likely not alone, as many students seek counseling in moments of emotional and academic distress; limiting the numbers of counselors available full time will also limit these students ability to seek that help.

Diane Bedel, a former Guidance Secretary at North Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School, was the fifth speaker. Mrs. Bedel explained her belief that the decision to not replace the Guidance Counselor that resigned, but rather split the time of another counselor in the district is a mistake. Mrs. Bedel states that the high schools have always had two full time counselors and in her time and experience with the district, that was never enough. Mrs. Bedel states her admiration for the guidance counselors and the work they do, but her belief is that this position shift will no doubt stretch the program too thin, leave gaps, and

not be sufficient to truly support the students. Furthermore, Mrs. Bedel believes that having Mrs. Lecher move around to all of the buildings will not only make it difficult for her to build rapport and relationships with students, but will diminish the relationships with students that Mrs. Lecher has built in her current building. Moreover, the workload for counselors is increasing and reducing the number of counselors will only make the new demands more burdensome.

Barb Lecher, Student Services Coordinator, was the sixth speaker. Mrs. Lecher first pointed out her dedication to Decatur County Community Schools over three decades, and her commitment to doing whatever it takes to support the corporation. Mrs. Lecher made it clear to the board that she did not start, or participate in, the gossip on social media regarding the position change. Mrs. Lecher then voiced her disappointment in Administration's decision to leave guidance staff out of the discussions in creating this position. Mrs. Lecher also voiced her frustration that the job was falsely presented as a promotion and she was given no time to process the proposal before the change was announced to the buildings and on social media, represented as a collaborative move with Mrs. Lecher, which Mrs. Lecher deems unprofessional. Mrs. Lecher stated that the position is in fact not a promotion, as it doubles the caseload and extends the contract by three weeks with no pay raise or mileage reimbursement. Mrs. Lecher stated she believes the decisions being made show a lack of understanding about teenagers and mental health, nor does she believe the decisions being made address the increasing counselor responsibilities. Mrs. Lecher referenced the information presented by Mrs. Hocker regarding counselor to student ratios, pointing out that while our ratio may be higher than surrounding districts, Decatur County is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in Indiana for residents dealing with

depression and anxiety. Mrs. Lecher went on to speak of the funding that guidance is responsible for bringing into the district and community as well as the complexity and importance of the guidance counselors' responsibilities. Mrs. Lecher finished by saying none of her comments were meant to be disrespectful, she is only advocating for her students, and she is open to speaking further with the board and administration about possible solutions.

Under New Business, Rob Smith, Principal of North Decatur Elementary School, presented Carla Kramer, Gina Hoeing, Samantha Grote, and Cassie Meyer, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers, with the Extra Effort Award. Mr. Smith noted that the teachers in this grade level are the most collaborative in the building, that these four teachers are always proactive for their students, as well as each of them participating in many extracurricular activities which help support the students and the school. Jeremy Sherman, Assistant Principal of North Decatur Elementary, pointed out that these teachers have consistently held a 95% or above in I Read assessments and wanted to recognize them for their hard work in that area as well. Steward Durham, Assistant Principal of North Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School, presented Dalton Jones, School Resource Officer, and Roscoe the Therapy Dog with the Extra Effort Award. Mr. Durham describes the kind of work that Roscoe does in the building with Officer Jones, and how much of an impact it has had on students, especially those that sometimes struggle staying calm throughout the day. Mr. Durham also praised Officer Jones for his dedication to his job and the relationships he has built with students.

On a motion made by Matthew Hoeing and a second by Lizette Bell, Transportation Contract Terms and Specifications were unanimously approved.

On a motion made by Cory Ross and a second by Alison Ortman, the following Bus Contracts were unanimously approved.

**2025-2029**

- #12 - Mark Osterling
- #17 - Gary Jackson
- #21 – Lisa Jackson
- #24 – Bob Ramp
- #28 – Bob Ramp
- #34 – Natalie Schroeder

**2025-2033**

- #3 – Brad McCarter
- # 4 – Brad McCarter
- #30 – Stan Snider Jr.

On a motion made by Alison Ortman and a second by Nicholas Anderson, student fundraisers were unanimously approved.

On a motion made by Matthew Hoeing and a second by Elizabeth Hochstedler, the following donations were unanimously approved.

**DONATIONS**

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Cause</i>
<i>North Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School</i>		
Ernest & Ann Ruble	\$350.00	Athletics
<i>North Decatur Elementary School</i>		
The Hageman Foundation	\$500.00	Stop the Bleed Kits

The Board expressed their gratitude and made note of the generosity of these donations.

Under communication and reports, Rob Smith reported about boys and girls basketball, an incoming student teacher in Kindergarten, an incoming OT intern in the OT program, High School Leadership Committee, a good turnout for the Winter Dance,

Character Counts, Cheer Fund Drive, and that report cards are ready to go home when students return to school. Mr. Jeremy Sherman reported about the New Pre-K room and invited the board to stop in and visit sometime. Nick Messer, Principal of North Decatur Jr.-Sr. High School reported on FFA Candy Cane Lane, Breakfast with Santa, North and South Spanish classes had a joint lunch, a successful Holiday Band Concert, I Learn checkpoints, staff days, dress up days, upcoming Winter Formal, upcoming field trip to Honda, and boys and girls basketball.

Under Future Business, the next regular Board Meeting will be on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at Central Office; 2020 N. Montgomery Road, Greensburg, IN 47240.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m. on a motion by Cory Ross and a second by Alison Ortman.

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Lizette Bell, Secretary  
Board of School Trustees  
Decatur County Community Schools

APPROVED BY:

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