

**INDIAN HILL EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**MINUTES**  
**Special Meeting of February 28, 2011**

A special meeting of the Indian Hill Exempted Village School District was held on Monday, February 28, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. in the Indian Hill High School Cafeteria, 6865 Drake Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45243 in accordance with notices sent to each member. Roll call showed the following members as present:

Mrs. Barber  
Mrs. Lewis

Mr. Grafe  
Mr. Sharp

Mrs. Johnston

Also present were Dr. Knudson, Mrs. Toth, Dr. Ault, Tracy Quattrone, Nancy Striebich, Josh Kauffman, Kim Miller, Chris Heybruch, Melissa Stewart, Sandra Harte, Arline Pique, Martha Stephen, Forrest Sellers, Eppa Rixey, Jim Troppmann, Glenn Welch, Richard and Carole Cocks, Ruth Hubbard, Jim Barber, Susan Bierer, Susan Crabill, Beth Weber, Cathy Folz, Meredythe Daley, Mary Siegel, Pat White, Erik Lutz, Erin Starkey, Amy Magenheimer, Julie Held, Marci Blachman, Lori Klinedinst, Dan Feigelson, Mark Richardson, Brad Kirk, Pat Carroll, Ann Powers, Pat Bartholomew, Katy Ping, Craig and Barb Hopewell, Ted Jaroszewicz, Lance White, Lyle Fiore, Joe Stephen, Doug Bell, Hilary Kremchek, Ken White, Helen Koselka, Kelly Thorsen, Jen Brunette, Karen Bode, Robin Schwanekamp, Melanie and Bill Toler, Harvey Cohen, Gerri Strauss, Donna Collins, Margaret Robb, Elizabeth Ruebusch, Donna Grafe, Nancy Aichholz, Kara Kokenge, Molly Poling, Jeff and Renee Graham, Kyle Wilkins, Chris Swallow, John Paquette, Steve Fish, Amy Spicher, Rick Vigran, and others.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA (021118)** Mrs. Johnston moved, seconded by Mrs. Lewis, to adopt the agenda for the February 28, 2011 meeting as presented. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Barber, aye  
Mrs. Lewis, aye

Mr. Grafe, aye  
Mr. Sharp, aye

Mrs. Johnston, aye

**BENCHMARKING** – The Board hosted a Benchmarking Forum to share the results of its recent study of academic and financial comparisons to other high performing school districts on a local, state and national basis. Benchmarking is typically defined as the measuring of an organization's policies, products, programs, costs, etc. and their comparison with standard or similar measurements to what is considered to be best-in-class.

Mrs. Barber explained that a Task Force of community members, parents, school board members, teachers and administrators identified a manageable list of thirteen state and local high performing school districts with which to compare as well as ten national schools identified through a national benchmarking organization, School Match. The Task Force also identified the academic and financial measures to be studied. The objectives of the benchmarking project included identification of opportunities for improvement, and utilization of information to improve student achievement as well as contain or reduce costs where possible. Mrs. Barber also spoke of the need to limit the work to a manageable number of districts as well as easily accessible data. Final cautions about the data: the accuracy of data obtained via the Ohio Department of Education website was not confirmed by each district; limitations of the time period benchmarked (one year); the importance of triangulating the data; the inconsistency of data availability across all districts; and "excellence" is more than one set of numbers.

Dr. Knudson presented the academic measures studied and discussed the value added components of our programs. The District's mission is to develop each student's maximum potential, to prepare them to successfully compete on a global stage, and to help them grow to responsible citizenship, leadership and service to others. Our vision is to be the model of educational excellence by providing consistent world-class student achievement, a superior faculty with a common commitment to excellence, an exemplary self-renewing school climate, up-to-date competitive facilities that foster learning, student development and pursuit of individual interests and talents, and diligent responsible stewardship of the District's resources.

Annually the District benchmarks various test results in comparison with other state and national schools. Through this analysis the District is able to identify and target areas for improving student achievement. For example, we have identified areas of improvement in acquisition of vocabulary (grades 3-5), informational and literary text (grades 4-6), data analysis and probability (grade 4 and 8), patterns, functions and algebra (grade 7), and extended responses in math and reading (grades 6-8).

Measures examined at Grades 9-12 included the Ohio performance index, ACT Composite and SAT Mean scores as well as AP Course offerings and AP Passage Rates. Indian Hill is at or near the top of the state and national benchmark comparison groups for these metrics. Comparisons of the number of National Merit Semi-Finalists as a percentage of high school enrollment were also strong in multiple years. Other comparisons of programs, such as world languages and orchestra, extracurricular and co-curricular offerings and participation and showed our District's leadership in providing world language (Spanish) as early as Grade 1 and orchestra beginning in Grade 5. Indian Hill fields approximately 42 high school athletic teams and offers 30 extracurricular clubs for students. Sixty-five percent of students participate on at least one athletic team.

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There are several value added components to the offerings and programs in our school district. A low teacher-pupil ratio and small class sizes are valued by our parents. Indian Hill provides an extended day kindergarten program at no charge to parents. The study and acquisition of another language begins in Grade 1 (Spanish) and expands to three languages beginning in Grade 6 (Spanish, Latin, French) and to four languages beginning in Grade 9 (Spanish, Latin, French, Mandarin). Specialized classes for gifted students are provided in Grades 1 through 8. Fifty-seven percent of Middle School and 71% of High School students participated in one or more athletic and co-curricular programs during 2010. Indian Hill Elementary sponsors 8 student clubs, and 75 students participate in Primary Players in Grade 2. The High School fielded 23 Varsity teams and 19 JV/Freshman teams and sponsored 30 clubs, many of which participated in post-season competition. Our High School Counseling Department provides four counselors and a college and career center to support students and their parents through the college application process. (Seventy-five percent of students from the Class of 2010 were accepted at Barron's Most Competitive & Highly Competitive Colleges. Fifty-five percent of the Class of 2010 received some form of academic or athletic scholarship.) Visual and performing arts programs begin in the Primary School and expand with band and orchestra instruction at the Elementary School. (194 Middle and High School students are participating in band or orchestra this year.) Students have the opportunity to perform in choral, grade level musicals, and/or theatre productions at each school. Thirty-two different K-12 productions are produced annually. Special education faculty and staff support a wide range of students with disabilities from age 3 to 22 (pre-school, support/intervention classes). Extensive technology is available for all students and staff at each school.

Mr. Sharp, Finance Committee Chairperson, presented the financial comparative data noting the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) FY2010 Expenditure Per Pupil for Indian Hill ranks near the top 20 percent of the Ohio comparison group. The ODE categorizes a district's expenditures in five categories: Administration, Operations Support, Staff Support, Pupil Support, and Instruction. Utilizing the ODE categories, we noticed that proportionately our expenditures within the categories were comparable to the others. Other financial metrics studied included unencumbered cash operating balance at fiscal year end, real estate property tax rates, teacher average salary data, pupil teacher ratio, a comparison of benefits as a percentage of total compensation. Indian Hill ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in this comparison study on both average teacher salary and benefits as a percentage of total compensation.

Looking at our actual expenditure categories, we drilled down in Operations Support, for example, to determine what was included in our Facilities, Transportation and Food Service operations compared to other districts. We discovered that our utilities costs seemed a little higher than others in our comparison study and was perhaps an opportunity to find efficiencies that would help us conserve energy. We have undertaken an energy audit which will provide the District with information about our usage, identify aging infrastructure which would be replaced with more energy efficient components, and take advantage of current rebate and grant programs to offset the investment in new more energy efficient equipment.

In addition we learned that the comparison districts each offer varying levels of transportation service, affecting their cost per pupil. Indian Hill transports over 1800 students each day to 35 area schools (13 public and 22 nonpublic) and travels almost 250,000 miles annually. Indian Hill's cost per mile ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the State comparison group, but we believe routing software will allow us to become more efficient in this area as well as do a better job of tracking (maintenance) costs on each bus.

Mr. Sharp summarized the cost impact of the many programs and offerings at Indian Hill Schools, including: low teacher-pupil ratios/small class sizes; extended day kindergarten program at no charge to families; world language studies beginning at grade 1 and expanding to four language options at the high school level; specialized classes for gifted students, students with disabilities, and students needing intervention; large number of Advanced Placement offerings for high school students; four high school counselors who support students and parents through the college application process; visual and performing arts programs at each school; a multitude of co- and extra-curricular programs for students; extensive technology for all students and staff; competitive compensation and benefit programs for employees; up-to-date competitive facilities designed to foster student learning; thirty-two different K-12 visual/performing arts productions annually; and transportation services to 35 public and nonpublic schools daily.

Dr. Knudson reiterated some of the opportunities and action steps to date: identification of areas for improvement in student achievement at selected grade levels; continued study of opportunities for greater efficiency/reduced costs in technology, operations, instruction/pupil support without jeopardizing safety, student achievement, and the quality of programming; ongoing realignment of staff; evaluation and prioritization of programs and course offerings; complete energy audit; review scheduling of weekend activities and events to reduce overtime costs; implement transportation routing and cost tracking software to improve transportation efficiency; and identify and correct data errors reported to ODE.

A question and answer period followed the presentation.

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**ADJOURNMENT (021119)** Mrs. Johnston moved, seconded by Mr. Sharp, to adjourn the February 28, 2011 special meeting of the Indian Hill Board of Education at 8:46 p.m. Roll call vote was as follows:

Mrs. Barber, aye  
Mrs. Lewis, aye

Mr. Grafe, aye  
Mr. Sharp, aye

Mrs. Johnston, aye

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**Board President**

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**Treasurer**