

FORT THOMAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
Board of Education Regular Meeting

Fort Thomas City Building – 130 N. Fort Thomas Avenue
Fort Thomas, Kentucky 41075

January 12, 2026

6:30pm

Attendance Taken at 6:29 PM:

Present Board Members:

Mr. Jeff Beach
Mr. Clem Fennell IV
Mrs. Sarah Foster
Mr. David Russell

Absent Board Members:

Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein

I. OPENING OF MEETING

Board Vice Chair Clem Fennell called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Recognitions

1. Board Bravos and Updates

The Board shared the following:

- HHS Dance won the State Championship in Pom
- HHS Cheer competed in State over the weekend and will be off to Nationals in February
- Darian Robinson won the Commonwealth Ambassador Award
- We The People will head to Nationals in April
- HMS presents Frozen, Jr. at the end of January
- Winter sports are in full swing
- HHS Wrestling had a match over the weekend and performed very well; program continues to grow
- HHS Archery qualified for State
- HMS Robotics won the Regional Innovation Award
- WES earned the Academic Honor Roll status
- We had 2 elementary students take 1st place at the KY Art Educators competition and 2 students take 2nd place
- A 5th grader at JES will represent Kentucky at Nationals
- Kindergarten registration is January 20-22

2. School Board Recognition Month

Superintendent Brian Robinson recognized the Board and highlighted the many accomplishments from the 2025-26 school year. He presented each with a gift for Board Appreciation Month.

a. Presentation by FTEA to Board Members

FTEA Representative Shauna Luebbers thanked the Board for their service and guidance. She presented each with a gift card for Board Appreciation Month.

3. All-State Groups

Principals Peter Winkler and John Darnell recognized the students who made the All-State programs. The students were recognized by the Board and presented with a Certificate of Achievement and a Champions t-shirt.

Students recognized included:

HHS Students

Cole Noah - Band
Christian Bedinghaus - Choir
Sophia French - Choir
Weston Higgason - Choir
Dylan Kues - Choir
Adelaide Littner - Choir
Natalie Lorenz - Choir
Rafe Pinkston - Choir
Emil Sztanyo - Choir
Logan Szymanski - Choir
Avni Jani - Strings
Elliot Martin - Strings
Amos Oaks - Strings
Chase Pawsat - Strings
Lydia Poteet - Strings

HMS Students

Genevieve Deinlein - Choir
Evie Laber - Choir
Mason Lawson - Choir
Harper Muehlenkamp - Choir

JES Students

Cooper Adkins - Choir
Chelsea Steffen - Choir

MES Students

Annabel Crozier - Choir
Addie Darnell - Choir

C. Student Showcase - HHS: All-State Choir Students

The HHS All-State Choir students performed 2 pieces for the Board. Those students included:

Christian Bedinghaus

Sophia French

Weston Higgason

Dylan Kues

Adelaide Littner

Natalie Lorenz

Rafe Pinkston

Emil Sztanyo

Logan Szymanski

HHS Teacher Chris Eaton thanked the Board for their continued support of the Fine Arts in the district. The Board thanked the students for a beautiful performance and presented each with a t-shirt.

D. Community Forum

There were no community members wishing to speak.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. Organization of Board

1. Election of Officers

Order #2708 - Motion Passed: Appointment of Julie Kuhnhein as Chairperson, Sarah Foster as Vice Chairperson, Brian Robinson as Secretary and Andrew Remlinger as Treasurer passed with a motion by Mr. Jeff Beach and a second by Mr. David Russell.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

2. Schedule of Regular Meetings for 2026

Order #2709 - Motion Passed: Approval to hold the regular monthly Board meetings for 2026 at 6:30pm on the second Monday of each month and hold regular monthly working meetings at 4:30pm on the Thursday prior to each monthly meeting with exceptions as identified on the 2026 Board Meeting Dates list passed with a motion by Mrs. Sarah Foster and a second by Mr. Jeff Beach.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

3. Board Member Per Diem as Per Policy 01.821

Order #2710 - Motion Passed: Approval to donate stipends for the regular monthly meetings into a special fund for targeted purposes to be identified by the Board passed with a motion by Mr. David Russell and a second by Mrs. Sarah Foster.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

4. Appointment of Board Members to Committees

Order #2711 - Motion Passed: Approval of the 2026 Board Committees List passed with a motion by Mr. Jeff Beach and a second by Mrs. Sarah Foster.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

B. Draft Working Budget for the 2026-27 School Year

Order #2712 - Motion Passed: Approval of the Draft Working Budget for the 2026-27 school year passed with a motion by Mr. Jeff Beach and a second by Mrs. Sarah Foster.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

C. SFCC Offer of Assistance

The School Facilities Construction Commission (SFCC) has made an Offer of Assistance in the annual debt service amount of \$24,711 to be used towards proposed construction or major renovation of facilities outlined in our most current approved facility plan.

Order #2713 - Motion Passed: Approval to accept the SFCC Offer of Assistance in the annual debt service amount of \$24,711 passed with a motion by Mrs. Sarah Foster and a second by Mr. David Russell.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

D. Highlands Athletic Complex at Tower Park Renovation

1. Project Update

Chad Niedert shared that the Tower Park complex is being used by Dance, Winter Guard and Track. There are some final touches still being completed on the main building. The storage building is still under construction and nearing completion.

2. Change Order #8

Order #2714 - Motion Passed: Approval of Change Order #8 in the amount of \$58,891.00 for the Highlands Athletic Complex at Tower Park project passed with a motion by Mr. David Russell and a second by Mrs. Sarah Foster.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

3. Morel Construction Co. Pay Application #18

Order #2715 - Motion Passed: Approval of Pay Application #18 to Morel Construction Co. in the amount of \$66,873.05 for the Highlands Athletic Complex at Tower Park Project passed with a motion by Mrs. Sarah Foster and a second by Mr. Jeff Beach.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

E. Calendar for 2026-27 School Year

The recommended beginning and ending times for the school day are as follows:

SCHOOL	SCHOOL DAY	STAFF DAY
HHS	8:00am – 2:45pm	7:45am-3:00pm
HMS	8:00am – 2:45pm	7:45am-3:00pm
JES	8:15am – 3:00pm	8:00am-3:15pm
MES	8:15am – 3:00pm	8:00am-3:15pm
WES	8:15am – 3:00pm	8:00am-3:15pm

The day at each school includes 375 minutes of instruction and 30 minutes for lunch for a total of 405 minutes for each day. The high school may have 2 shortened days during the exam schedule for a total of no more than 2 hours each day.

This school year, we continue to include 6 shortened days when classes will begin one hour later than the typical schedule. The time will be used for Professional Development and will allow teachers time to collaborate on common issues, including curriculum and assessment across grade level and to address school-wide issues. The elementary schools will have classified staff available to work with students whose parents need to keep them on a regular schedule. All late arrival days will be on a Wednesday and there will be three per semester. The proposed dates are September 16, October 14, November 18, January 20, February 17, and March 17.

Our total instructional time exceeds the state minimum requirement of 1062 instructional hours. The number of hours above the state minimum is at least 25 hours at all schools. Although the state no longer allows districts to bank time for early dismissals and school closures, the time does allow the district flexibility in case delays are needed.

The Preschool Program Calendar will consist of a 3 hour day, 4 days per week. During the 2026-2027 school year, the preschool program will be placed at Moyer Elementary. The recommended instructional day for preschool is Monday through Thursday from 8:00am to 11:00am for the morning session and 11:45am to 2:45pm for the afternoon session. It is recommended that preschool begin on September 1, 2026 with two transition days (August 26 and 27), and end on May 6, 2027, to allow time for required screenings, testing, and parent meetings.

Order #2716 - Motion Passed: Approval of the 2026-27 school calendar, the length of the day at each school, the beginning and ending times for each school, and the shortened exam days at HHS and the shortened days for PD at all five schools passed with a motion by Mrs. Sarah Foster and a second by Mr. David Russell.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

F. Tuition Rates for 2026-27 School Year

	In State	Out of State
Grades K-12	\$4000	\$7600
Preschool	\$330 monthly	

Description	Fee
Employees	
Grades K-12	\$1500
Grades K-12 Out of State	\$3000

Order #2717 - Motion Passed: Approval of the tuition rates for the 2026-27 school year for Grades K-12 at \$4000 In State and \$7600 Out of State, and additional tuition charge for Preschool of \$330 per month, and to require a non-refundable application fee of \$50 and continue the procedure to require a \$250 non-refundable deposit for new tuition students to begin participation in athletics/extracurricular activities (all fees will be applied to tuition if the student attends an FTIS school) passed with a motion by Mr. Jeff Beach and a second by Mrs. Sarah Foster.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Comprehensive District Improvement Plan (CDIP)

Keith Faust presented CDIP Phase III to the Board. He shared the CDIP goals with a target date of no later than 2029. Keith further shared the next phase will be professional development and he expects to present that to the Board in the next few months.

B. Board Committee Updates

There were no further Board updates.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Order #2718 - Motion Passed: With all Board members having had the opportunity to review and pursue any questions about all of the items contained therein, approval of the consent agenda passed with a motion by Mr. David Russell and a second by Mr. Jeff Beach.

Mr. Jeff Beach	Yes
Mr. Clem Fennell IV	Yes
Mrs. Sarah Foster	Yes
Mrs. Julie Kuhnhein	Absent
Mr. David Russell	Yes

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of December 8, 2025 and Working Meeting of January 8, 2026

B. Financial Report for Month of December 2025

C. Food Service Report for December 2025

D. Attendance Report for 4th Month of 2025-26

E. Authorization for Payment of Claims

F. District Technology Report - 2nd Quarter

G. Notification and Approval of Student Trips

- 1. FCCLA - Louisville, KY - January 19-20, 2026**
- 2. HHS All-State Programs - Louisville, KY - February 4-7, 2026**
- 3. HMS All-State Choir - Louisville, KY - February 4-5, 2026**
- 4. JES All-State Choir - Louisville, KY - February 4-5, 2026**
- 5. MES All-State Choir - Louisville, KY - February 4-5, 2026**

H. Personnel Action Taken Since December 8, 2025

Employment of the following Certified Employee

Rachel Burnett - Teacher - HHS

Employment of the following Classified Employee

Kathleen Jordan - Bus Driver - Districtwide

Employment of the following Extra-Service Employee

Audrey Kinney - Unified Track Coach - HHS

Employment of the following Paraprofessional Employees

Ricky Buechel - Band - Winter Guard Assistant - HHS

Alex Lindsey - Band - Winter Guard - HHS

Resignation of the following Certified Employee

Marguerite Walker - Teacher - HHS

I. Grant Extended Leave

1. Annie Gold - Maternity - March 27 - June 5, 2026

2. Alicia Knauf - Maternity - June 4 - August 28, 2026

J. Approval of Superintendent Travel

1. NKCES Superintendent Winter Retreat - Lexington, KY - January 25-27, 2026

V. OTHER BUSINESS

No additional business

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Vice Chair Clem Fennell adjourned the meeting at 7:27pm.

Chairperson

Superintendent