

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
HINCKLEY-BIG ROCK COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #429**



**Regular Meeting
February 26, 2025**

The meeting begins at 6:30 PM in the Hinckley-Big Rock High School Library.
This meeting is also live streamed for public
viewing: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcNJ6ijnqwe0nF8UpSCsB8A>.

- 1) **Call to Order - Regular Meeting of the Hinckley-Big Rock Board of Education**
The meeting was called to order at 6:29 PM by Vice President Greg Pritchard
- 2) **Roll Call**
Policy 2:220 Board of Education Meeting Procedure
Present: Abigail Barrett, Greg Pritchard, Darrin Gengler, Jack Haines and Debi White
Also Present: Dr. Jessica Sonntag and Student Representatives: Savannah McMurtrie
Absent: Deb Winkle, Tim Badal, Student Representatives: Matthew Badal and Alex Casanas
- 3) **Approval of the Agenda**
Policy 2:220 Board of Education Meeting Procedure
Motion to approve the agenda was made by Jack Haines and seconded by Darrin Gengler, passed 5-0
Abigail Barrett: Yea, Debi White: Yea, Darrin Gengler: Yea, Greg Pritchard: Yea, Jack Haines: Yea
- 4) **Consent Agenda**
 - A. **Minutes** - Regular Meeting and Executive Session Minutes
 - B. **Treasurer's Report**
 - C. **Bills and Payroll**
 - D. **Personnel Report**Motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Abigail Barrett and seconded by Debi White, passed 5-0
Abigail Barrett: Yea, Debi White: Yea, Darrin Gengler: Yea, Greg Pritchard: Yea, Jack Haines: Yea
- 5) **Royal Shout Out**
This month, Mary Thurow was recognized for her ongoing dedication to HBR. A video presentation was shown.
- 6) **Citizens Request to Address the Board**
Todd Claxton with Hinckley Area Food Pantry addressed the Board. The HAFP physical location is in Waterman, IL and they would like to return to Hinckley. Todd is requesting the possibility of renting space in the Operations Building located at 540 W Hinckley which was part of the new land purchase
Presentation
 - A. Elementary School- Core Knowledge Language Arts
Hinckley-Big Rock Elementary School Principal, Deb Hervey, addressed the board with an update on the newly purchased reading resource, CKLA, Core Knowledge Language Arts. The scope and sequence of CKLA is improving reading results by implementing a structured, research-based approach that enhances literacy development across multiple areas. She expressed how successful this has been at the elementary level. She presented to the board the MAP scores from a group of students highlighting performance increases over 2 years.
- 7) **Committee Updates**
 - A. IBCC-No Report, the next meeting is scheduled for March 12th.
 - B. IVVC-No Report, the next meeting is scheduled for April 2nd.
 - C. Buildings, Grounds & Transportation
Greg Pritchard updated the board on the February 5th buildings and grounds meeting. The committee discussed the property survey for the new land purchase at 540 W Lincoln Highway

as well as the potential usage for the buildings. At the middle school, a reverse osmosis water filter has been installed at one of the drinking fountains to see how it would impact the water. This may be a solution for all drinking fountains. Brandon Kriesch said he had a positive experience working with TCL putting the new LED lights at the elementary and middle schools. He has been working on getting different quotes for the high school since it's a bigger building and there would be a lot more work involved. The next Buildings & Grounds meeting will be on April 2nd in the District Conference Room.

8) **Student Representative Update**

Student representative McMurtrie presented information on Student Life with updates on sports, chess and band accomplishments, and the upcoming distracted driving assembly.

Distracted Driving Assembly: This assembly will take place on April 30th in the afternoon. The Hinckley and Big Rock Fire Departments, Hinckley Police Department and School Admin will educate students on the dangers and consequences of distracted driving through a realistic mock crash scenario.

Band: Congrats to Middle School students Elena Hornick and Scarlett Ferguson, under the direction of Mrs. Sartori, for earning first ratings at the band solo and ensemble contest

Sports: The HBR Chess team placed 8th in 1A out of 16 teams and 95th overall out of 128 teams.

Coach McMurtrie was also nominated for the 2025 ICCA Coach of the Year award. The Girls Varsity basketball ended their season at 13-11 and 6-1 in conference play. They placed 2nd in the Little Ten Conference Tournament. The Varsity boys' basketball team is currently 21-8 and 8-1 in conference play. They have succeeded in a share of being regular season champions in the Little Ten Conference. They also recently won the Little Ten Conference Tournament championship, the first gold ball since 2013

9) **Administrative Update**

A. 2025-2026 Planning

Dr. Sonntag is starting to plan for next school year. She explained to the board that school registration launches in April and HBR has not raised their registration fees in the last 15 years. Dr. Sonntag has looked at neighboring districts' fees and compared them to ours. She is proposing we charge one fee upfront instead of paying different fees throughout the school year. It would not be an increase for middle or high school but it would be for the elementary level and this would allow us to pay for more learning materials. There would be separate fees like band, sports, parking, Driver's Ed and AP classes. We also do not charge families for IVVC enrollment like other districts do. 50 students next year who would like to participate in IVVC next school year.

Multiple staff members are becoming eligible for retirement. Dr. Sonntag and the admin team are looking at how to support new teachers going forward with the administration's structure.

B. Auditor RFPs

Wipfli has conducted the last 10 independent audits at HBR. It is recommended to change auditors every 5-7 years and Wipfli has given a significant price increase. Two interviews are scheduled for next week and Dr. Sonntag will have an update and recommendation at the next board meeting.

10) **Discussion**

A. PRESS ISSUE 117, 2nd Read

Dr. Sonntag and the board decided that this Press Issue did not have significant changes and decided that a second discussion was not needed at this time.

B. Vision 2030

A second discussion about Vision 2030 took place. Vision 2030 was created with input of over 1000 stakeholders in IL, ranging from the southernmost part of the state to the northernmost. The board discussed not having the need to vote on this or further the discussion.

C. Easement

A land survey on the new purchased property was done. There are two homes landlocked on the property and no easement agreement recorded. The homeowners requested an easement agreement be drawn up to allow access to their homes. Greg Pritchard explained that an

easement for the current homeowners would be an option with an individual agreement per home. The Board reviewed the survey and proposed easements. This will be brought to the next meeting for approval.

D. Board Vacancy

There is still a vacant position on the Board for the upcoming election. This person must be a resident from Big Rock or Pierce Townships and live within the District. This will be for a 2-year term. The district office is accepting letters of interest until March 14th.

11) **Action**

A. Motion to approve the PRESS PLUS ISSUE 117 policy changes as submitted

Motion to approve the PRESS PLUS ISSUE 117 policy changes as submitted was made by Abigail Barrett and seconded by Jack Haines, passed 5-0

Abigail Barrett: Yea, Debi White: Yea, Darrin Gengler: Yea, Greg Pritchard: Yea, Jack Haines: Yea

B. Motion to approve the resolution for the Designation of a Person or Persons to Prepare the FY26 Tentative Budget

Motion to approve the resolution for the Designation of a Person or Persons to Prepare the FY26 Tentative Budget was made by Jack Haines and seconded by Abigail Barrett, passed 5-0

Abigail Barrett: Yea, Debi White: Yea, Darrin Gengler: Yea, Greg Pritchard: Yea, Jack Haines: Yea

12) **FOIA**

A. Adam Florzak: Enrollment by county

B. Owen Wang, Lake County Gazette: Emails and Memos containing "Lucy Calkins" or "Units of Study"

13) **Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

14) **Adjournment**

The Board of Education adjourned the meeting at 7:57pm

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jack Haines and seconded by Darrin Gengler, passed 5-0

Abigail Barrett: Yea, Debi White: Yea, Darrin Gengler: Yea, Greg Pritchard: Yea, Jack Haines: Yea

The next regular meeting of the Hinckley-Big Rock CUSD #429 Board of Education will be March 19, 2025 at 6:30 PM in the Hinckley-Big Rock High School Library.