



**READING BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOARD WORK SESSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 5, 2025**

The Board of Education of the Reading Community City School District met in Regular Work Session at Reading Community City School, 810 East Columbia Avenue on November 5, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by President Beth Wernery at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call:	Present Four:	Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Amy Thamann, Beth Wernery
	Absent:	Alycia Bemmes

In Attendance:

Dr. Damon Davis, Ms. Jennifer Burke, Mr. Mark Edwards, Ms. Rebecca Johnson, Mr. Michael Howton, Ms. Gina Sansone.

Motion 291-25 Approve Agenda

It was moved by Jim Perdue, seconded by Crystal Menner to Approve the Agenda as written.

Roll Call:	Ayes Four:	Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Amy Thamann, Beth Wernery
	Absent:	Alycia Bemmes
	Nayes:	None

The President declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

PRESENTATIONS

Blue Devil Hero Award

The November Blue Devil Hero Award was presented to Mrs. Carol Burns, a dedicated High School Science Teacher at Reading Junior/Senior High School. Each month, the district honors a staff member who embodies *The Blue Devil Way*—going above and beyond for students, staff, and the community.

Mrs. Burns was celebrated for her creativity, innovation, and commitment to student success. Known for her passion for science, she constantly looks for new ways to bring learning to life—whether through hands-on labs, technology integration, or connecting classroom lessons to real-world careers. Her famous rocket launch project has become a highlight for students, giving them a memorable STEM experience that combines teamwork, curiosity, and excitement.

A colleague who nominated her shared:

"I have witnessed just how dedicated she is to bringing the most innovative and creative ideas into her classroom. She's passionate about her subject and always helps students learn at their level and pace. Her rocket launch project is an enormous undertaking, and she continues to lead it each year to show students the possibilities in the STEM world. We are very lucky to have her."

Mrs. Burns exemplifies the spirit of *The Blue Devil Way* through her energy, kindness, and the care she invests in every student she teaches.



Principal Recognition

October was National Principal Month, and the Board of Education proudly recognized Mr. Michael Howton and Mrs. Gina Sansone for their outstanding servant leadership and unwavering dedication to student success.

Both Principals were honored for leading with vision, compassion, and commitment. Dr. Davis and Board Members thanked them for “jumping in wherever needed,” guiding their staff, and always putting students first. Mrs. Wernery noted, “We have a great district, and a lot of that has to do with the two of you.”

Mr. Howton, Principal of Reading Junior/Senior High School, was celebrated for his focus on academic excellence, innovation, and building a school culture where students are encouraged to *Learn, Lead, and Serve*.

Mrs. Sansone, Principal of Reading Elementary School, was recognized for her commitment to nurturing a love of learning, supporting teachers, and ensuring every child feels valued and inspired to do their best. Together, their leadership reflects the heart of *The Blue Devil Way*—serving others, empowering students, and strengthening the entire Reading Schools community.

RJSH Report Card – Mr. Michael Howton

Principal Michael Howton celebrated significant gains across Reading Junior/Senior High School’s report card, describing the school as “a good investment — because our stock keeps going up.”

Key highlights included:

- Overall rating of 3.5 stars, a half-point increase.
- Progress: Increased to 4 stars, up two over the past two years.
- Gap Closing: Up two stars from the previous year.
- Graduation Rate: 94.7%, with projections near 97% next year, putting the school on track for five stars.
- College, Career, Workforce & Military Readiness: Improved from 45% to 64%, with diversified pathways including CCP, pre-apprenticeships, and industry credentials.

Mr. Howton praised staff for focusing on growth and relevance: “We’re meeting kids where they are and helping them grow beyond expectations.” He credited Reading’s expanding opportunities — from advanced math to work-based learning — for driving engagement and attendance.

Mr. Howton added that this intentional work is “helping students find their ‘next’ — whether college, career, or service — and we’re doing it the right way.”

RES Report Card – Ms. Gina Sansone

Elementary Principal Gina Sansone shared a report filled with academic progress and innovation, emphasizing the theme of “*intentional improvement*.”

RES earned an overall rating of 3.5 stars, with especially strong progress in student growth and early literacy.

Highlights included:

- Progress: Maintained 4 stars, with multiple grade levels exceeding expected growth.
- Early Literacy: Improved from 250 to 292, marking steady gains in K–3 reading proficiency.
- Math Growth: 4th grade math ranked in the top 9% statewide for growth.



- Interventions: The new 45-minute “Blue Devil Bell” intervention block provides focused small-group support daily.
- Attendance: Increased from 94.06% to 94.44% in first quarter, with ongoing efforts to improve consistency, especially in kindergarten.

Mrs. Sansone noted, “We’re seeing improvement because every strategy is intentional — from data meetings to individualized supports.” She also credited her team’s work in literacy training, curriculum alignment, and new “Pathways to Possibilities” class introducing students to career concepts at an early age.

Dr. Davis commended both principals’ leadership, adding, “Leadership matters, just like teaching matters. The culture you’re building is making a difference every day.”

BOARD DISCUSSION

Weighted Grades

Assistant Superintendent Mark Edwards updated the Board on a new state law (House Bill 96) requiring certain career-technical education (CTE) courses that qualify for college credit (“CTAG” courses) to be weighted equally to CCP and AP courses.

While the change supports equity for students pursuing career pathways, it must be applied retroactively, which could shift GPA rankings for current juniors and seniors. “It only benefits students, but it may slightly change class rankings,” Mr. Edwards explained.

CRA Agreement – City of Reading

Dr. Davis shared information about a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) development at 481 Benson Street — the former Emery Theatre site.

The project, valued at \$8.9 million, includes 35–40 high-end apartment units with rents ranging from \$1,700–\$2,000, plus commercial space and public parking. The city approved a 75% tax abatement for 15 years.

Key highlights of the project:

Type: Mixed-use redevelopment (35–40 residential units with 5,000–15,000 sq. ft. of retail/office space).

Investment: \$8.9 million total.

Tax Terms: 75% abatement for 15 years; Reading Schools retain 25% of property tax revenue.

Timeline: Construction begins in 2026, completion expected by 2028.

Dr. Davis expressed optimism that “a successful project like this can attract more development to Reading, benefiting our community long-term.”

Legislative Hamilton County Commission

Treasurer Jennifer Burke and Dr. Damon Davis provided an update on legislative advocacy, including written and spoken testimony, to the Hamilton County Commissioners. The key points include:

The letter and testimony addressed a proposed measure by the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners that would allow additional local property-tax credits (“piggyback” credits) for homeowners or owner-occupied properties, but *without* full reimbursement to school districts.



If adopted, this proposal could result in significant revenue loss for local school districts. The letter estimated a loss of \$280,000 annually for the Reading district, and more broadly, tens of millions of dollars across Hamilton County.

The District shared that while property tax relief is an essential priority for many homeowners, any relief strategy must *not* shift the burden onto public schools by reducing their funding or compromising their operational stability.

The update also noted that the Commissioners declined to move forward with the credits pending further review, in part due to the advocacy efforts of school districts.

In their letter, Mrs. Burke and Dr. Davis emphasized the district's commitment to *protecting educational quality and ensuring consistent funding, while also ensuring that relief for taxpayers does not compromise services for students.*

Fall Neola Policy Update (1st Reading)

The Board of Education conducted the first reading of the Fall 2025 NEOLA Policy Update, which includes revisions and replacements to several district policies to ensure compliance with updated state and federal regulations. The updates address areas such as nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity, student attendance, personal communication devices, and school safety.

These policy updates help ensure that Reading Schools' practices remain current, transparent, and aligned with legal standards. The Board will review the updates again for final approval at the next board meeting.

po0169.1	(Replacement) Public participation at Board Meetings
po1422	(Replacement) Nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Anti-Harassment
Po1422.02	(Rescind)Nondiscrimination based on genetic information of the employee
po1623	(Tech Correction) Section 504/ADA Prohibition against disability discrimination in employment
po1662	(Rescind) Anti-Harassment
po2260	(Tech Correction) Nondiscrimination and access to equal educational opportunity
po2260.01	(Tech Correction) Section 504/ADA prohibition again discrimination based on disability
po2266	Nondiscrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities
po2431	Interscholastic Athletics
po3122	(Replacement) Nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Harassment
po3122.02	(Rescind) Nondiscrimination based on genetic information of the employee
po3123	(Tech Correction) Section 504/ADA Prohibition against disability discrimination in employment
po3130	Assignment and Transfer



po3362	(Rescind)Anti-Harassment
po4122	(Replacement) Nondiscrimination, equal employment opportunity, and anti-harassment
po4122.02	(Rescind) Nondiscrimination based on genetic information of the employee
po4123	(Technical Correction) Section 504/ADA prohibition against disability discrimination in employment
po4362	(Rescind) Anti-Harassment
po5130	Withdrawal From School
po5136	(Replacement) Personal Communication Devices
po5200	Attendance
po5223	Released time for religious instruction during the school day
po5410	Promotion, Academic Acceleration, Placement and Retention
po5517	Anti Harassment
po6109	(New) Acceptance of payment by credit card
po6152	(Tech Change) Student fees, fines, and charges
po6830	Audits
po7540.02	Digital content and accessibility
po7541	(Rescind) Electronic data processing disaster recovery plan
po8300	Continuity of Organization Operations Plan
po8305	Information Security
po8400	School Safety
po8462	Student Abuse and Neglect
po8500	Food Service
po8640	Transportation and Non-Routine Trips
po9270	Equivalent education outside the schools and participation in extracurricular for students not enrolled in the district

DISTRICT REPORT

Meetings are streamed live and [archived here](#), and board agendas can be found [here](#). Board presentations can be found [here](#). Dr. Davis provided the following updates to the Board of Education.



Community Bridges

Dr. Davis announced the launch of Reading Bridges, a new partnership with Neighborhood Bridges, designed to connect community kindness directly to student needs.

When a district "advocate" (counselor, nurse, or administrator) identifies a need — such as a student without a winter coat or a family struggling to pay a utility bill — it is vetted and posted anonymously on the Reading Bridges Facebook page and website. Community members can then donate or purchase items directly.

Local business leader Dr. Crystal Mee will serve as the area director, with a "*Kindness Council*" including representatives from the schools, police and fire departments, Landmark Church, and local businesses.

Dr. Davis said, "It's a simple idea — removing barriers so kids can come to school ready to learn. Every act of kindness makes a difference."

Safety PD Day – October 24, 2025

The district held a full-day Safety Professional Development Day on October 24 focused on preparedness, prevention, and staff training.

Highlights included:

- AED Training with James Buddy
- Raptor Safety App Training with Mark Edwards
- De-escalation Strategies with Jason Nagel
- Cybersecurity Awareness led by Forward Edge
- Tabletop Reunification Exercise led by Officer Bartlett and Shawn Riley

Staff also practiced building evacuation and communication procedures, refining plans for real-world scenarios.

Dr. Davis praised the day's success: "Safety is everyone's responsibility, and our staff's engagement and teamwork made this day extremely valuable."

Motion 292-25 Approve the Following New Fund:

It was moved by Jim Perdue, seconded by Crystal Menner to approve the Following New Fund.

Fund	Description
019-9601	FY26 Jane Morgan Memorial Fund Recruitment and retainage of district substitutes

Roll Call: Ayes Four: Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Amy Thamann, Beth Wernery
Absent: Alycia Bemmes
Nayes: None
The President declared the motion carried.

Motion 293-25 Approve the Following Invoices Under the Then and Now Certificate (ORC 5705.41(D):

It was moved by Jim Perdue seconded by Crystal Menner to approve the Following Invoices Under the Then and Now Certificate (ORC 5705.41(D)).

Vendor	PO Date	Invoice Date	PO #	Amount	Item
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Language Testing International, Inc.	9/2/2025	6/12/2025 3/10/2025 4/15/2025	20260654	\$218.00 \$60.00 \$324.50	MND- Testing material
Retrievex, Inc	10/14/2025	6/30/2025 7/30/2025 8/30/2025 9/30/2025	20260813	\$984.55 \$966.22 \$990.62 \$1294.02	District Remote File Storage
Terrace Metrics	10/1/2025	7/1/2025	20260864	\$3,171.00	Terrace Metrics Assessments 7/1/25-6/30/2026
Hamilton Co ESC	10/1/2025	9/30/2025	20260817	\$472.59	Visually Impaired Svcs Sept.

Roll Call: Ayes Four: Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Amy Thamann, Beth Wernery
 Absent: Alycia Bemmes
 Nays: None
 The President declared the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Motion 294-25 Approve the Following Non-Staff Supplementals 2025-2026 School Year:

It was moved by Jim Perdue, seconded by Crystal Menner to approve the Following Non-Staff Supplementals for the 2025-2026 School Year.

Name of Staff	Position
Jeff Thamann	Field Maintenance - Baseball 50%

Roll Call: Ayes Three: Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Beth Wernery
 Abstain: Amy Thamann
 Absent: Alycia Bemmes
 Nays: None
 The President declared the motion carried.

Motion 295-25 Approve the Following Revised Dates for Following Non-Staff for 2025-2026 School Year:

It was moved by Crystal Menner, seconded by Amy Thamann to approve the Following Revised Dates for the Non-Staff for the 2025-2026 School Year.

Name of Staff	Position	Recommended Salary	Vendor
Evanne Anderson	LT Substitute for Tracey Wiehe 9/8/2025-10/17/2025	\$120.00/day	SubSolutions

Roll Call: Ayes Four: Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Amy Thamann, Beth Wernery
 Absent: Alycia Bemmes
 Nays: None
 The President declared the motion carried.

Motion 296-25 Approve the Following Non-Exclusive Revocable License for Use of Trademark and Service Marks / Logos:

It was moved by Jim Perdue, seconded by Crystal Menner to approve the Following Non-Exclusive Revocable License for Use of Trademark, Service Marks and Logos for Legitimate Business purposes. Outside businesses agreed to pay a Royalty Obligation of 10% of net sales.



Vendor	Authorized Representative
Reading Athletic Boosters	Danielle Cripe, Vice President
Seas The Day Designs	Alexis Luebbe, Owner

Roll Call: Ayes Four: Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Amy Thamann, Beth Wernery
Absent: Alycia Bemmes
Nayes: None
The President declared the motion carried.

Motion 297-25 Approve the following Contracts for the 2025-2026 School Year:

It was moved by Amy Thamann, seconded by Crystal Menner to approve the Following Contracts for the 2025-2026 School Year unless otherwise noted.

Vendor	Service
Mt. Healthy City School District	SY2025-26 - MOU Title I Services

Roll Call: Ayes Four: Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Amy Thamann, Beth Wernery
Absent: Alycia Bemmes
Nayes: None
The President declared the motion carried.

Motion 298-25 Approve the following Special Education Model Policies and Procedures for the 2025-2026 School Year:

It was moved by Crystal Menner, seconded by Amy Thamann to approve the Following Special Education Model Policies and Procedures ("Model Policies") that were released by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce ("DEW") for 2025-2026 School Year.

Roll Call: Ayes Four: Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Amy Thamann, Beth Wernery
Absent: Alycia Bemmes
Nayes: None
The President declared the motion carried.

Motion 299-25 Adjournment

It was moved by Amy Thamann, seconded by Crystal Menner to Adjourn at 7:26 p.m.

Roll Call: Ayes Four: Crystal Menner, Jim Perdue, Amy Thamann, Beth Wernery
Absent: Alycia Bemmes
Nayes: None
The President declared the motion carried.

President, Reading Board of Education

Attest: Treasurer, Reading Board of Education