



**READING BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOARD WORK SESSION MEETING
APRIL 16, 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 April 16, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by President Beth Wernery at 5:31 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, Mrs. Rebecca Johnson, Mr. Michael Howton, Ms. Gina Sansone, Ms. Amber Stinson.

Motion 94-25 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

Nays: None

The President declared the motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

PRESENTATIONS

Blue Devil Hero – Ms. Amber Stinson

The Board was proud to recognize Ms. Amber Stinson, Elementary Counselor, as the April Blue Devil Hero Award recipient.

Mrs. Stinson has gone above and beyond in supporting students and staff at Reading Elementary. From organizing Career Week and coordinating staff testing encouragements to helping students with challenging behaviors. Her care and positivity make a daily impact. We're so grateful for her contributions to our school community!

BOARD DISCUSSION

U.S. Department of Education

Dr. Davis provided an overview of recent federal developments regarding the potential closure of the U.S. Department of Education. Following President Trump's March 2025 Executive Order, Education Secretary Linda McMahon has been directed to begin phasing out the department "to the maximum extent allowed by law." While full elimination would require Congressional approval and is not imminent, several significant changes are already underway.

Key points from the discussion included:

- Nearly half of the department's workforce has been laid off, and major cuts have been made to the Office for Civil Rights and Federal Student Aid.
- The Trump administration is attempting to transfer programs like student loans and special education to other agencies, such as the Small Business Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services.



- Federal funding plays a critical role in Ohio's Education System, accounting for 11.6% of statewide K-12 public school revenue, approximately \$3.18 billion in 2024. Much of this is targeted toward low-income students (Title I) and students with disabilities (IDEA).
- Closure or downsizing of the department could jeopardize funding for districts like Reading, which rely on these sources for essential student services.
- Statewide, the elimination or reduction of these funds would disproportionately impact urban and high-poverty districts and come at a time when state funding support is declining.

The Board expressed concern over the uncertainty this creates, particularly the threat it poses to Reading's ability to serve students with the greatest needs. They emphasized the importance of advocacy at the state level and continued monitoring of the legislation and executive action as the situation develops.

Legislative Discussion – HB96

Dr. Davis and Treasurer Jennifer Burke shared that the most pressing issue discussed is the significant threat posed by Ohio House Bill 96. Their presentation can be found [here](#). As currently written, HB 96 would undo years of responsible financial planning and educational investment in Reading Schools. Key concerns include:

Elimination of the Fair School Funding Plan (FSFP)

The bill replaces the current, needs-based funding model with a temporary formula based on outdated 2022 data. This disconnects state aid from actual student needs and would cost Reading Schools \$3.1 million over five years, approximately 15% of our annual operating budget.

30% Cap on District Cash Reserves

HB 96 authorizes County Commissioners to roll back property tax rates for one year if a district has more than 30% of its expenditures in reserve, even if those funds were approved by voters. Reading's cash savings are currently 72% of annual operating expenses. This results from long-term planning, one-time federal relief funds, grant efficiency, and fiscal prudence. If this cap goes into effect, Reading Schools would lose an additional \$8.8 million.

Reading Community City Schools has a long-standing reputation for careful financial management. The district went ten years without asking voters for an operating levy until 2022. That levy passed because our community trusted us to be good stewards of their tax dollars, and our financial plan anticipated it lasting ten years before needing to return to the ballot.

Our healthy reserve balance, currently at 72% of prior-year expenditures, results from years of prudent planning, one-time federal relief funds, early-cycle levy strategy, and long-term capital savings. These are not excess funds, but essential safeguards for our financial future.

As Dr. Davis stated, "This is not excess; it is responsible savings. Schools shouldn't be punished for saving responsibly."

If passed, HB 96 could:

- Force the district to return to voters with another operating levy by 2026.
- Require cuts to academic and career-technical programs, including partnerships with workforce initiatives.
- Prevent staffing for the new Career-Technical Education Center.
- It would endanger the district's Aa3 credit rating, increase borrowing costs, and potentially block bond refinancing for taxpayer savings.



- Undermine the strong academic and extracurricular programming that attracts families to Reading and sustains open enrollment.

We urge the community to stand with us and advocate for changes to this harmful legislation. Visit our Facebook page for a full copy of our community letter, talking points, and contact information for elected officials.

End of Year Events

Date	Event	Time	Location
4/1/2025 - 5/14/2025	Applications accepted for NEW Open Enrollment		Link available on website
4/4/2025	Bingo Night	6:30pm	
4/5/2025	BUILDING CLOSED - Police/Fire Drill	6:00am-7:00pm	
4/6/2025	NHS Induction	4:00pm	
4/8/2025	Heroes of Character Award	6:00pm	Delta Marriott, Sharonville
4/16/2025	Policy Meeting	10:00am	District Office Conf. Room
4/16/2025	Building & Grounds Mtg.	4:30pm	Elem. Media Center
4/16/2025	Board Work Session	5:30pm	Elem. Media Center
4/16/2025	Board Regular Session	6:30pm	Elem. Media Center
4/17/2024	1st Grade Fashion Show	8:30am	RCCSD Stage
4/18/2025 - 4/21/2025	Holiday - No School		
4/23/2025	Senior Lunch @ Scarlet	11:00am	Scarlet Campus
4/23/2025	Top 10	7:00pm	RCCSD Cafetorium
4/24/2025 - 4/28/2025	Scholastic Book Fair		Media Center
4/25/2025	Prom	8:00pm	Little Miami Event Center
4/26/2025	Art Show/RES Festival	3:00pm - 5:00pm	RCCSD



4/29/2025	Musical Club Theater Performance	6:30pm	RCCSD Cafetorium
4/30/2025	Musical Club Theater Performance	8:30am	RCCSD Cafetorium
4/30/2025	Softball Senior Night	4:25pm	Hilltop
4/30/2025	NJHS Induction	6:30 pm	Main Gym
5/1/2025	Honors Convocation	7:00pm	RCCSD Cafetorium
5/2/2025	Celebrate Excellence Breakfast	8:00am	Sharonville Convention Ctr
5/5/2025	Baseball/Track Senior Night	4:15pm	Hilltop
5/6/2025 & 5/7/2025	2nd Grade Market	8:30 - 2:00	2nd Grade Classrooms
5/7/2025	Signing Day	1:30pm	Cafeteria
5/5/2025 - 5/9/2025	Teacher Appreciation Week		
5/8/2025	Kindergarten Animal Presentations	8:45am - 9:30am 10:15am - 11:00am	KDG Classrooms and KDG ELA
5/13/2025	Kindergarten Open House	6:00pm- 7:00pm	Kindergarten Classrooms
5/14/2025	RJSH Late Start/ Present Capstone Projects	7:00am- 9:00am	Various Classrooms
5/14/2025	Marc Rossio Assembly	PK & K: 8:45am 1st: 12:50pm	RCCSD Cafetorium
5/15/2025	RJSH Musical	6:00pm	RCCSD Cafetorium
5/16/2025	3rd Grade Wax Museum	1:00pm - 2:00pm	RCCSD Cafetorium
5/20/2025	Band Concert	7:00pm	RCCSD Cafetorium
5/21/2025	Board Work Session	5:30pm	Elem. Media Center
5/21/2025	Board Regular Session	6:30pm	Elem. Media Center
5/23/2025 - 5/29/2025	RJSH Exams		



5/26/2025	Holiday- No School		
5/27/2025	RES Field Day		
5/27/2025	PreK (Reyes) Graduation	5:30pm	RCCSD Cafetorium/stage
5/28/2025	RES Field Day		
5/28/2025	6th Grade Recognition	8:30am	RCCSD Gym
5/28/2025	PreK (Sorge) Graduation	5:30pm	
5/28/2025	8th Grade Graduation	10:15am	RCCSD Gym
5/28/2025	Graduation	7:30pm	Sharonville Convention Ctr
5/29/2025	Last Day Students	Early Dismissal	
5/30/2025	Last Day Staff		

Board Meeting Dates/Times

The Board discussed the new format of the monthly Board Meetings. The Board would like to give additional month or so to determine if the frequency is working. Due to the May 1st Honors Convocation, the Board voted to hold the May Work Session that evening before the ceremony. The meeting will be held at 5:30 in the Media Center and the Regular Board Meeting on May 21st will be moved earlier to 5:30 p.m. in the Media Center.

Motion 95-25 Adjournment

It was moved by Crystal Menner, seconded by Jim Perdue to adjourn at 6:30 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