

JENNINGS COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION
Jennings County School Corporation
Board Executive Session
Board Work Session
December 9, 2025

Executive Session: The Jennings County School Corporation Board of School Trustees met in executive session on December 9, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the Special Education Conference Room of the Jennings County School Corporation Central Administration Office Building, 34 West Main Street, North Vernon, IN 47265, to discuss the following in accordance with IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b):

- (3) For discussion of the assessment, design, and implementation of school safety and security measures, plans, and systems. *IC 5-14-1.5-6.1 (b)(3)*.
- (9) To discuss a job performance evaluation of individual employees. This subdivision does not apply to a discussion of the salary, compensation, or benefits of employees during a budget process. *IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(9)*.

(16B) Employee handbook changes. *IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(16)*.

Board members present were Dr. Amy Pettit, Cheryl Miller, Pat Sullivan, Chelsea Morrison, Travis Shepherd, Mary Lynn Whitcomb and Curt Nieman. Superintendent Dr. Nicole Johnson, Administrative Assistant Carrie Manowitz, and Philip Marsh were also in attendance.

The Executive Session adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Work Session: A Board Work Session was held on December 9, 2025, in the Board Room of the Jennings County School Corporation Central Administration Office Building, 34 West Main Street, North Vernon, Indiana 47265. The work session will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Pettit called the meeting to order and stated that this was a work session meeting. She reminded everyone that we are live streaming and welcomed those joining us via the web and those present in person.

The President asked if anyone would like to speak on any items on the agenda or any other topic. No comments at this time.

Dr. Johnson explained the purpose of a work session is to fit other lengthy topics in that may not have time for in a regular board meeting. This allows board members to ask questions and have discussion but there are no finalized decisions determined in a work session.

Agenda

- NEOLA Policies and Student Handbook Discussion

Dr. Johnson stated no policies at this time but Mrs. Manowitz had some handbook considerations to review concerning false reporting against students and staff. The presented changes were concerning bullying and harassment changes to the handbook

for second semester. Dr. Johnson stated the changes would be sent out via Parent Square for all families for notification. Dr. Johnson stated that the proposed changes would be brought back for board approval in January.

- **Pre-K Programming**

Mr. Ebinger presented on the Pre-K program, stating that Jennings County has three sites and with the recent cut of the voucher funds and difficulty collecting tuition, there are potential considerations of reducing operations to one site for the next school year, revising our tuition model and revising our staffing from a certified to a non-certified teaching program. Mr. Ebinger stated that we would like to bring some options back in January or February for consideration. Dr. Johnson stated that we have seen a great impact from our pre-k program and that scores from the readiness assessment have been very high. If there are any businesses or other community members who are willing to partner to help subsidize the cost and to keep our pre-k program at all three sites, JCSC is open to discussions. JCSC will be sending out flyers and sharing information with the community.

- **Facilities Updates**

Mr. Marsh shared work site updates completed and in process bond updates at all schools.

Dr. Johnson stated that bonds are very specific money. Those monies cannot be used for any other purpose than what is approved. The first bond was in conjunction with a READI grant with matching funds. The second bond is geared towards the focus of school safety with secured entries. We had a presentation on a portable weapons detection system that would be considered for installation at JCHS and JCMS. The third bond is for HVAC updates at BCE and Scipio.

Mr. Marsh suggested that it would be to our advantage to do a facilities survey study. JCSC would like to start the study in January 2026. Dr. Johnson stated that the survey really tunes into the critical areas for updates in facilities.

- **Strategic Plan Update**

Dr. Johnson stated we are at the last year of our current strategic plan. When we talk about a strategic plan we are not talking about stopping what has been accomplished, we are talking about enhancing on the accomplishments that have already been obtained. Dr. Johnson introduced BLUEprint 2030 as our new strategic plan that would start with a comprehensive needs analysis that would take place in January 2026. This data would come from our community, staff, parents, students and other multiple data sources. In March and April, we will use that data and our accountability frameworks, to come up with our strategic plan goals and action steps. Throughout 2026-2030, we would continue to implement, progress monitor and embed into our culture and activities. Dr. Johnson shared different surveys that could be used to get stakeholder input, including parent survey, staff survey, student, employer & community partner surveys. All surveys will be sent out digitally. All responses are anonymous, with the exception that if someone wants to become a partner.

- Cost Containment

Dr. Johnson stated that we have escalated cost containment in the last year. The background for this is due to enrollment loss, coupled with what we would consider flat-lined funding from the state. Enrollment shows that we have lost an average of 100 students per year for the last 15 years. It is still predicted that if based only on demographic results, we will still have student declining rates over the next seven years. Nationwide most public schools have experienced enrollment loss and this is true across Indiana. The demographer's analysis is driven by employment, birth and death rates, and driven by the housing market. It is very clear that we will have to continue with cost containment.

Dr. Johnson also presented factors we must take into account. Factors are right sizing staff, analyzing outlying schools enrollment vs. in town, what are our priorities, incentives for certified staff retirement, competitive pay, facility upkeep, and what is essential.

Dr. Johnson would like to perform an analysis on our building use and our district boundaries to ensure that we are doing what is best per our strategic plan.

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Marsh would also like to talk about an operations and education budget cash balance policy that is not currently described in our current policy. By adding this to our policy, we would determine what the appropriate cash balance to have in our budget for a reserve cash flow. Dr. Johnson would also like to add a monthly finance report to our regular board meetings to talk about our current position. Dr. Johnson stated our focus has been on continuity amid changes and our goal of our student impact being the least invasive possible.

Dr. Johnson stated that the good news is that over the last three years, we have maintained the higher academic and graduation rates and shown significant improvement. Our staff are getting results regardless of the obstacles we have faced and are facing.

The following link was also available to live stream the Work Session Meeting from your home:

https://youtube.com/live/S_4RR12IjJM

Board members present were Dr. Amy Pettit, Cheryl Miller, Pat Sullivan, Chelsea Morrison, Travis Shepherd, Mary Lynn Whitcomb and Curt Nieman. Superintendent Dr. Nicole Johnson, Administrative Assistants Carrie Manowitz, Philip Marsh, Todd Ebinger, Amanda Sullivan and Board Executive Secretary Deb Johnson were also in attendance.

Adjournment

Mr. Shepherd made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. Ms. Whitcomb seconded the motion. 7 yes, 0 no. Adjourned.

Next Regular Meeting: The next Regular Board Meeting will be December 11, 2025 in the Board Room of the Jennings County School Corporation Central Office, 34 West Main Street, North Vernon, IN 47265. The regular meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

The Board of Trustees of Jennings County School Corporation did not discuss any subject matter in the Executive Session other than that specified in the Public Notice.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Amy Pettit - President

Curt Nieman

Cheryl Miller - Vice President

Travis Shepherd

Pat Sullivan - Secretary

Mary Lynn Whitcomb

Chelsea Morrison