

Current Continuations

OC

gave last year.

The school district had one choice with several options - closing one or more of its schools.

The choice was made in May to close Black Oak Elementary School near Hornbeak, Tenn., after the 2024-25 school year ended on May 22.

Those students would be rezoned to either Hillcrest Elementary in Troy, Tenn., or Lake Road Elementary near Union City.

Also, the board voted to close Ridgemont Elementary near Union City at the end of the 2025-26 school year, and rezone all the K-5 grades students to Hillcrest or Lake Road and reopen Ridgemont as Obion County Middle School for all Obion County students in 6-8th grades.

Students enrolled at South Fulton Elementary, South Fulton Middle School and South Fulton High School will see no changes.

Losing Black Oak Elementary was definitely bitter, but the sweet came with the approval of school budgets for the 2025-2026 academic year.

It involves a thorough review of the general fund and athletic budgets, with funds allocated based on projected student enrollment numbers.

The amended budget, reflecting actions such as the closure of Black Oak school and associated staff changes, requires careful consideration and approval by the board.

Discussion around capital projects and funding constraints highlighted the need to balance infrastructure needs with long-term fiscal responsibility.

Delaying the start of certain capital projects until the 2026-27 fiscal year may be necessary because of budget limitations, although proactively beginning some projects now could prevent further delays down the line.

The complex disparities between student enrollment trends, state funding levels, and local funding contributions underscores the importance of diligent financial planning and management to ensure the district can continue to provide high-quality educational programs and facilities for its students.

Watkins addressed the board explaining that Main-

tenance of Effort (MOE) is a legal requirement that mandates a minimum funding level that county governments must allocate to their school systems.

State law prohibits counties from reducing education funding below the MOE threshold. Failing to meet the MOE would cause the county losing all state education funding.

The minimum local match, which is distinct from MOE, refers to the minimum amount of local funding required to qualify for receiving state education dollars.

Counties cannot go below the minimum local match without forfeiting state funding entirely.

Historically, Obion County has consistently funded their school system at the bare minimum MOE level required by law.

Budget records show that Obion County has never exceeded the MOE at any point. Obion County has always allocated the absolute legal minimum to education without ever surpassing that low baseline.

"I am tired of hearing that we get extra money because it's just an outright blatant lie," Watkins said.

Ultimately, the board approved the budget with a 6-1 vote. Graham was the only vote of dissention.

The board approved the consent agenda items, including a lengthy personnel report.

It contained the resignations of Ashton Bragg, an educational assistant (EA) at Lake Road (LR); Brittany Tate, a custodian at OCCHS; Chad Levister, a teacher and coach at OCCHS; Charla Ring, an EA at LR, David Whitesell, a teacher at SFMHS; Eric Knott, a teacher and coach at SFMHS; Guadalupe Mejia, a teacher at LR; Joe Dowdy, a bus driver at SFES, Jonathan Hutado, a teacher at OCCHS; Kenslie Cross, a teacher and coach at SFMHS, Madison Vincent, a teacher at SFES, Teresa Sadler, a teacher at Ridgemont Elementary (RM) and Zackary Vaughn, an EA at SFMHS.

The non-renewal employees and staff reduction list included Angie Fowler, Food Service at SFMHS; Angie Warner, an EA at LR, Ashley Ritz, a teacher at RM; Audri Mendez Vazquez, a teach-

er at SFES, Bailey Stewart, a teacher at HC; Caroline Coleman, a teacher at RM; Christina Rollins, an EA at LR; Connie Kelly-Sanders, a teacher at OCCHS. Deana French, Food Service at SFES, Destinee Walker, a teacher at SFES, Elaine Barnett, a teacher at BO; Eva Ursery, Food Service at HC, Jackie Garis, a teacher at HC, Janice Huey, Food Service at BO, Jessica Hightower, a teacher at SFMHS, Kaitlyn Waites, an EA at HC, Katie Hayes, a teacher at HC, Kim Cooper, a teacher at RM, Kylee Blakesley, an EA at LR, Letha Virden an EA at RM, Mary Kincaide, teacher at HC, Michelle Bell, an instructional coach, Iyra Jeffrey, an EA at HC, Pam Tolley, Food service at BO, Rebecca Bennett, an EA at LR, Tracey Malone, a teacher at BO, Tracey Spicer, a custodian at RM, Tracye Jowers, a teacher at OCCHS and Vicki Douglas, a teacher at RM.

The transfers were Alice Henderson, Custodian from BO to RM, Angie Kendall, EA from BO to LR, Angela Hodge, a FS from BO to HC, Angela Tobian, a teacher from BO to RM. Anns Nunnery, an EA from BO to LR, Brandy Rainey, a teacher from BO to RM, Bryon Freeman, a teacher and coach from BO to OCCHS, Chancy Roach, a teacher from LR to OCCHS, Hannah Malray, a teacher from RM to SFMH, Janet Cunningham, an EA from BO to LR, Jennifer Quinton, Teacher from BO to SFE Jennifer Wilder, a teacher from BO to LR, Jolinda Gurien, a teacher from BO to RM, Julie Stork, a teacher from BO to HC, Kelsi Bullington, a custodian from BO to HC, Kim Dial, an EA from BO to HC, Kim Pruett, an EA from OCCHS to SFMHS. Lana Davis, a teacher from BO to HC, Laura Gooch, a teacher from BO to SFE, Leanne Parnell, a teacher from BO to LR, Linda Mann, a Food Service from BO to OCCHS, Madison Burton, a Food Service from BO to OCCHS, Madison Quinn, a teacher from BO to LR, Matt Waites, a teacher from BO to RM, Michael Quinton, a teacher from BO to LR, Ped Foster, a teacher from BO to HC, Shonda Long, an EA from BO to RM, Staci Butler, Food Service from OC to HC, Stephanie Jones,

EA from BO to LR, Teresa Hutchison, an EA from HC to OCCHS.

And finally, the retirement of Beverly Gidcumb, am EA at RM, Carole Russell, a teacher at LR, Dawn Bullcock, a teacher at HC, Deborah Gammon, EA at SFE, Jennifer Godwin, a teacher at LR, Ralph Turner, a teacher and coach at OCCHS, Sheila Grooms, Food Service at OCCHS and Tracey Montgomery, a teacher at HC.

Under board policy, the board is to appoint members to the Student Disciplinary Hearing Authority for one year appointments, subject to reappointment.

Dr. Greg Barclay had submitted his recommendations for this committee, including Dr. Greg Barclay, SDHA Chairman Kimberly Jackson, George Leake, Sandy Simpson, Alisha Hedge, Chris Lownsdale and Maria Matheny.

The board heard the administration, principal and assistant principal assignments for the 2025-26 school year.

They include: Assistant of Schools, Student Support Services and attendance, Dr. Gregory Barclay; Supervisor of Instruction, Grades 6-12/ CTE & Alternative Education Director, Mr. George Leake; supervisor of Instruction, Federal Projects/ESL/Grant Manager, Ms. Kim Jackson; Supervisor of Instruction, Grades Pre K-5th, Sandy Simpson; System-Wide Data Coach/RTI Specialist/ Technology Coach, Adam Stephen; Supervisor of Special Education, Ms. Alisha Hedge; Coordinated School Health, Ms. Chastity Homra; Supervisor of Child Nutrition, Emily Medley;

Supervisor of Pupil Transportation, Tim Maynard; Supervisor of Maintenance, Tim Barbour; Technology Coordinators, Joe Lewis, Director of Finance, Linda Carney; supervising nurse, Andrea Anderson; Hillcrest Elementary Principal, Dr. Brittany Simmons; Hillcrest Elementary Assistant Principal, Maria Matheny; Lake Road Elementary Principal, Linda Crigger; Lake Road Elementary Assistant Principal, Krista Vise; Obion County Central Principal, Corry Esary; Obion County Central Assistant Principal, Chris Lonsdale; Obion County

Central Assistant Principal, Brenna Ray; Ridgemont Elementary Principal, Melissa Merritt; Ridgemont Elementary Assistant Principal, Candace Thweatt; South Fulton Elementary Principal, Sandi Bigham; South Fulton Elementary Assistant Principal, Shawn Johnson; South Fulton Middle/High Principal, Laura Pitts and South Fulton Middle/High Assistant Principal, J.B. Suiter.

The board approved an agreement which outlined the changes to the annual meeting schedule for the upcoming school year, including a Sept. 2 meeting at Obion County Central and the October meeting will convene Sept. 29, because of a conflict with the system's fall break.

Regular scheduled meetings will continue as previously set.

According to Watkins, one library book that is under a current challenge at one school.

The challenge was based on some of the content not being age appropriate.

The book was available for upper grade students, in grades 10-12. A sixth-grade student checked it out, and it was inappropriate for that student.

According to the findings of the district's review committee, which comprises administrators, teachers parents, it agreed that the book was appropriate for the age that it was intended for, but not for the age of the 6th grade student.

The recommendation given was that the board that the book would stay available in the library, with restrictions by the staff, to ensure that the kids are only checking out books that are age appropri-

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ate for them and the board agreed..

The board granted authority to the Director of Schools or his designee to dismiss the school or any group of students or pupils of the school for permitting them to practice or play baseball, football, basketball, or any other similar game within the regular school hours.

They also approved the merged Application Approval for IDEEA/ESEA for the School Year 2025-2026.

Approval for several overnight trips was given to the OCCHS tennis team to travel to Murfreesboro for its state tournament on May 19-23.

Ridgemont's girls' basketball team to basketball camp in McKenzie, Tenn., on June 12-13, the OCCHS HOSA club to Nashville, Tenn., on June 18-21, SFMHD HOSA club to Nashville, Tenn., on June 18-21.

Also, the OCCHS boys basketball to camp in Murfreesboro, June 13-14, the OCCHS FFA chapter to camp in Doyle, Tenn. on June 23-27, the OCCHS MLP to Atlanta, Ga., on June 23-28, and the OCCHS Volleyball-I team to Cape Girardeau, Mo., on July 23-25.

The board approved of several budget amendments needed to close out the end of the school year.

Watkins reported that the first week of summer school went well and the second week was started on Monday.

Before adjourning the meeting, Poore said, "I just want to publicly thank the Williams family, for all their support of our county schools, it's a pretty huge deal to sponsor the annual Top Ten banquet, so students can enjoy and be celebrated all at the same time."

Bluff

with the current landslides occurring within the City of Hickman, Kentucky.

Beginning in early April 2025, and presently continuing, the City of Hickman is experiencing major soil erosion and collapse of land along with vegetation, trees, and structures. The impacts threaten over 20 residences, four active churches, our Federal Postal Facility, a portion of KY State Route 94, the Fulton County Courthouse, the Fulton County Attorney's office, a major communications tower for the Western half of Fulton County, and numerous city streets and utility infrastructures.

On April 2, 2025, a Declaration of Emergency was

issued by Governor Beshear for the state of Kentucky, Fulton County Judge Executive Jim Martin for Fulton County, and Hickman Mayor Heath Carlton for the City of Hickman.

As part of our correspondence, included are several photos for visual reference of the negative impacts Hickman has experienced from the mudslides.

One older building has already been destroyed, and two homes have visible damage from the sliding.

Access to the Hickman Post Office has been hampered for both its customers and its trucks delivering mail to the facility. We have referred residents and individuals to the Federal Emer-

gency Management Agency (FEMA), but it is our understanding that their help is highly limited.

The City of Hickman now requests any assistance your office can provide to the residents and government entities that have been adversely affected by the land slippage. On-site visits are appreciat-

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ed to gain the full magnitude of the erosion's significantly negative impacts on the city.

For any questions or further discussion, feel free to contact me at 270-994-6180 or City Manager Griggs at 270-236-2535 ext. 5.

The letter is signed by Mayor Carlton and City Manager Griggs.

INVITATION TO BID

HFCRA Crane Clamshell Bucket

The Hickman-Fulton County Riverport Authority is seeking bids for a 4-Rope 4-Yard Crane Clamshell Bucket located at the Hickman-Fulton County Riverport dock.

Sealed bids will be received until 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 23, 2025, at the Riverport Office, 625 Catlett Street, Hickman, Kentucky 42050, at which time all bids will be publicly opened and read aloud in the Riverport Conference Room. Any bid received after that time will be returned unopened.

Specifications and bidding documents are on file and may be obtained at the Riverport at the above address. Prospective bidders shall examine the "Instructions to Bidders" and shall comply and conform strictly to the conditions and instructions contained therein. Questions regarding this proposal should be directed to the Hickman Fulton County Riverport at (270) 236-2563.

Bidders will be required to follow guidelines as outlined by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.

The Riverport reserves the right to reject any and all bids in whole or in part or to waive any informality in bidding if it is determined to be in the best interest of the Hickman-Fulton County Riverport Authority.



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