

## Cleveland Heights-University Heights (CH-UH) School Board Overview

Based on meeting reports from Oct-Apr 2023

Many issues are brought up at meeting but below are reoccurring themes that are addressed. The school district has a comprehensive strategic plan for the schools, presented on the next page, that directs most of the board's oversight and planning.

### **Equity**

The issue of equity is one that is of huge concern and addressed frequently. Equity in the spending of resources amongst schools, programs and student groups is often discussed. All college bound students are encouraged to take at least one AP class. Fees for AP exams are paid for by the CH-UH School District. The district is concerned with the tested academic gap between minority kids and white students. Progress had been made pre-COVID. The district has issued several proclamations in support of LGBTQ students.

### **Finances**

The Board is committed to putting the district on a 5-year levy cycle. There is always concern about what State resources will be forthcoming. The spending of ARPA funds is a discussion of late. Scott Gainer uses his time to educate the public on issues related to school funding.

### **School Climate**

Labor and contract issues are a frequent discussion item. There have been community, staff and student concerns about sexual assault and harassment. Policies have been developed on reporting of these issues. Staff and students have expressed concern to the Board about teacher assaults and student behavior. The morale of staff has been a part of the above discussion.

### **Data**

The CHUH school district is hyper focused on data. The Superintendent and her team will report on the data behind many issues be it, enrollment in programs, progress toward goals, testing, attendance etc. They report the good, bad, and ugly.

### **Curriculum**

Decisions about adoptions of programs and progress in curriculum programs is discussed.

### **Health and Wellness**

The district has entered a partnership with MetroHealth facilities. A wellness center has been opened at the high school where many health issues can be addressed. There has been an acknowledgment that COVID has had a significant mental health impact of students and their families. An administrator has been hired to explore how to deal with these issues. Students, their families and staff can receive support for mental health issues at the Wellness Center.

*LWV observer, Robin Koslen*

## Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District Strategic Plan

The icon that illustrates the 5-Goal Strategic Plan provides a physical backdrop at every Cleveland Heights – University Heights School Board meeting. Presenters introduce topics as they relate to the strategic plan and how the topics meet one or more of the plan's 5-Goals.

A summary of the plan, a downloadable PDF with details, and articles related to the plan can be found online at: <https://www.chuh.org/StrategicPlanning.aspx>



**Goal 1: Student outcomes – Expectations, Proficiency and Mastery.** *Every student graduates ready to pursue college and career.*

For the metrics to be valid, student expectations must be clearly stated and presented in relation to achieved successes within a designated time frame. Reports on students' outcomes in attendance, grades, and test scores are particularly important. The reports demonstrated the effect of Covid on student success. The focus on measurable data also emphasizes respect for honest transparency in student expectations and successes. Data in readable charts are presented at board meetings.

**Goal 2: Educational Approach – Equity, Empowerment and Opportunities.** *Provide an excellent education to each student in every District school & classroom.*

Educational program and its approach to student learning needs is the focus of Goal 2. Achieving equity is an ongoing process of awareness for student needs to be successful, both individually and in groups—providing opportunities that foster educational success and achieving a sense of empowerment. The desire to achieve equity also fosters opportunities for educators to achieve success in their work and for the families to be engaged with the schools to empower their students. Each board meeting recognizes students, school programs, and staff successes. This recognition focuses on successes that are part of the school program and extensions of the classroom.

**Goal 3: Family and Community – Engagement, Partnerships and Communications.** *Welcome family and community members as equal partners in student learning.*

Family and community are vital elements of support for the schools. The school board is aware of the importance of engagement, partnership, and communication with family, community, and professional groups that provide monetary and professional support, connect with teachers, and organize extracurricular events. The school board recognizes donations of time and resources to numerous enrichment programs, i.e., donations to the art program and classes in jewelry making; support for field trips; athletic support; and more. School plays and concerts are possible because of parent groups' support.

MetroHealth's in engagement with CH-UH schools in needed health services is a positive partnership that includes the New Wellness Center at the High School.

**Goal 4: Valued Professionals and a Culture of Excellence.** *Attract and retain highly qualified and dedicated staff members who have experience working with diverse communities.*

During COVID, school board meetings were concerned with difficulties in acquiring teachers for vacancies and for securing substitutes, tutors, and bus drivers. At one meeting, the superintendent reviewed the problems and explained steps being taken to meet staffing needs. She noted outreach to the community for substitutes and that occasionally administrators, including herself, had filled substitute spots.

The school board and the office of the superintendent worked with the professional unions to ensure an environment of support to promote a positive working environment. A process is in place to address concerns and difficulties.

Maintaining a culture of excellence demands attention to curriculum, teacher and staff in-service, and continued support services to integrate new materials and technology in the classroom.

**Goal 5: Operational Resources – Finances, Technology and Facilities.** *Ensure that the District has the necessary finances and infrastructure to meet its student outcomes goals.*

CH-UH Operational Resources focuses on all things involving money — where it comes from and where it goes. This includes salaries and benefits; technology for the school buildings; supplies for staff, students, and family; and the facilities in which all school related activities begin and operate (school buildings, playgrounds, busses, and other physical components relating to the educational program).

Last summer's meetings heard reports on roofs, windows, heating, and air conditioning systems of various buildings. There were explanations regarding access to websites, family portals, Chromebooks, and installation of whiteboards.

At each board meeting the treasurer presents a financial report of the 5-year plan and follows with an explanation of financial elements including revenue sources for CH-UH Schools whether from local property tax, money allocated by the State of Ohio, or Federal monies. Each revenue source has rules for use.

The school board is also closely watching how the Ohio Legislature is redirecting educational funds away from support of public education.

*LWV observer, Rose Fairman, April 2023*

### **LWV policy positions**

There are many League positions for school policies, especially at the state level. See the accompanying document *LWV policy positions and local government*.