

# The <sup>CCPS</sup> BOARD REPORT

August 26, 2025

## → Board reduces tax rate

In a move aimed at balancing fiscal responsibility with support for staff and students, the Board voted unanimously to approve a reduced property tax rate for 2025.

The rate will decrease from 66.8 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 65.5 cents — marking one of the largest tax rate reductions the district has implemented in recent years.

Finance Director Aleisha Ellis outlined the context and implications of the new rate. She explained that although the district adopted a 4% increase in revenue — not in tax rate — earlier in the budgeting process, they were able to propose a lower property tax rate thanks to careful financial planning and surplus funds from the previous fiscal year.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY](#) in *The Cardinal Rule*

**FY 2025-25 Tax Revenues & Expenses**

## → Literacy Lift-Off leads to huge gains

Our summer Literacy Lift-Off program resulted in a launch of epic proportions. Over just 18 instructional days, students who attended consistently soared to an average literacy gain of 40.8%. Even students who missed more than three days showed nearly a 20% gain.

The Board honored the staff with certificates.

[CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY](#) in *The Cardinal Rule*



Congratulations to the Clark County Preschool on receiving a 5-Star Rating from the Kentucky Department of Education. [CLICK HERE](#) for the full story on this incredible accomplishment in our online magazine, *The Cardinal Rule*.

## → NEXT REGULAR MEETING: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

## NOTABLE & QUOTABLE

I can tell that all CCPS staff appreciated that we increased their pay. Taking care of our staff helps them take better care of our kids. It's amazing what our staff does every day and I think Literacy Lift-Off is a great example of that. It's just exciting, all the things we do for kids. So, paying taxes is a piece of what we need to do to support education, and knowing that we're able to lower the rate a little bit is a good thing for all of us.

-Vice Chair Dr. Dora Hall before making a motion to approve the tax rate

## PIE Educator of the Year



Superintendent Dustin Howard was awarded the Partners in Education Educator of the Year award, presented by PIE coordinator Greg Yates. Congratulations, Mr. Howard, on this well-deserved recognition.



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Carl Kiser (District 1)

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Full Admin Team

## → In other action, the Board...

- Approved contracts with MindPsi Psychological Services, On Track Orientation and Mobility LLC, and Interpreting Services of the Commonwealth, LLC, for student services.
- Approved additional communication platforms per SB 181: Edmentum, a platform used by the Cardinal Virtual Academy; and School Links, a platform counselors will use for the required Personalized Learning Plan for students in grades 6-12. Both platforms are traceable.
- Approved a Preschool change order to add card readers and hardware upgrades on three doors.
- Approved a Columbia Gas easement in front of Conkwright Elementary to replace an aging steel gas pipeline, noting that it will not cause any disruption.
- Approved the **Student Code of Conduct** for 2025-26 and the 2025–2026 **Aftercare Parent Agreement and Handbook**.
- Acknowledged the monthly financial update and authorized payment of salaries and accounts payable.
- Approved the KDE Grant Management Assurances.
- Acknowledged minor changes to the following HR forms: Criminal History Record Information Procedure, Bullying/Hazing Form, Bullying/Hazing Investigations Form, and approved second reading of the Hours of Duty policy.
- Approved a Memorandum of Agreement for Dual Credit between CCPS and Bluegrass Community and Technical College. **SEE OUR ONLINE STORY**.
- Approved numerous consent agenda items.  
**VIEW AGENDA**



BCTC reps attended the Board meeting: Dr. Sheldon Sharpe, Campus Director; Gavin Colton, Associate Vice President of Advancement; Dr. Wendy Bolt, Associate Vice President of Academics; Er. Erin Tipton, Vice president of Advancement and Workforce Development; and Dr. Greg Feeney, President & CEO.

## BCTC partnership growing

Being able to say “Yes” to everyone has changed everything for Bluegrass Community and Technical College. Most important, it’s been a game changer for GRC students.

Thanks to the tremendous partnership between CCPS and BCTC, GRC students aren’t just thinking about college—they’re already earning credits, collecting certifications, and in some cases, graduating high school with an associate’s degree and \$40,000 in tuition savings.

Since 2022, dual credit participation has soared, with a 190% increase in fall enrollment and 150% in spring, opening doors for students to pursue programs in nursing, welding, construction, allied health, and more.

**CLICK HERE FOR FULL STORY**  
in *The Cardinal Rule*



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## → Superintendent's Report

The 2025–2026 school year is off to a “roaring, successful start,” according to Superintendent Dustin Howard, who praised the work of every department—from bus drivers to educators—for ensuring a smooth and high-quality beginning for students across the district.

“Everything from picking kids up on time, educating them at a high level, feeding them, keeping buildings clean, and getting them home safely—it’s been a full-team effort,” Howard said.

### Academics

The district has launched math and reading screeners to gauge where students are as they return from summer break. Early signs are promising—especially for students who participated in the Literacy Lift-Off summer program, which showed impressive results.

“Forty percent gains in literacy over just 18 half-days? That’s phenomenal,” said Howard, noting that such growth speaks to the dedication and skill of staff involved. “Thank you again to Ms. Fithen and her team.”

### Staff Retention

This year also marks a major milestone in teacher and staff retention. “It’s the highest percentage of returning staff in Clark County history, as far as I’m aware,” Howard shared. He credited increased pay, incentives approved by the board, and the work of the district’s HR team.

### Community Connections

From dunking booths to book giveaways, the district continues to show up in the community in visible and meaningful ways. At a recent event with the Winchester Farmers’ Market, CCPS gave away 249 books, bringing their summer total to 1,905 free books distributed in June and July. The dunking booth was also a huge hit with two of our principals and Superintendent Howard participating.

“This really models our vision of connecting the district and community as one,” said Howard.

### Hall of Fame Weekend

This Saturday, the district will celebrate nine new inductees into the CCPS Hall of Fame—an initiative launched by Howard in his first year as superintendent to honor past contributors and connect them with current students.

Inductees are: Billy Brooks, Ed Burtner, Shannon Cox, William Davis, Maria Johnston, Deatra Newell, RJ Palmer, Imogene Patton, and Phyllis Volz.

The ceremony will be held at 6:15 p.m. with a hospitality tent open for Hall of Fame members and their families. The celebration will roll into the GRC football game against Hurricane (WV) at 7 p.m.—marking the fourth football game that weekend.

“It’s going to be a great time to celebrate all things great in Clark County,” Howard said.

### Enrollment on the Rise

Our district has experienced significant enrollment growth, with over 200 new students joining the district in just one year.

“Last year at this time we had about 5,350 students. Today we’re at 5,534—and I have a feeling more are coming,” said Howard. “That’s a testament to our momentum and the trust families are placing in us.”

He closed by thanking the board and staff once again for making the district’s ambitious vision a reality: “You all are the reason we’re setting the standard.”







## Board Recognitions

# Your Greatness Shows...



## Literacy Lift-Off results in remarkable gains

Our summer Literacy Lift-Off program resulted in a launch of epic proportions.

Over just 18 instructional days, students who attended consistently soared to an average literacy gain of 40.8%. Even students who missed more than three days showed nearly a 20% gain.

Year two of Literacy Lift-Off ran three days a week in both June and July, emphasizing targeted literacy instruction every single day.

“After witnessing strong gains from the first Literacy Lift-Off in 2024, we brought it back this summer with targeted focus,” Kelly Fithen, Assistant Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer, told the Board.

Small class sizes of 12 students or fewer allowed our educators to meet students at their level, providing individualized support and pushing them toward meaningful growth.

The secret? Intentionality.

“We are so proud of the work of our district academic team who analyzed data to determine how to best meet each student where they are and take them across that finish line,” Ms. Fithen told the Board of Education Tuesday.

The program’s teaching staff of 17 took it from there. “Our teaching team for this program was first-class,” Ms. Fithen said. “Every minute of our time together was packed with focused instruction

and fun, engaging experiences that helped build strong reading and writing skills.”

The transformational gains achieved through Literacy Lift-Off are helping students catch up or get ahead, boosting their confidence, and promoting a love for reading.

“What we accomplished in just six weeks is nothing short of extraordinary,” Ms. Fithen said. “It is the result of dedicated teachers and support staff who truly care about our students and their success. It is just beyond belief the amount of time, effort, and support that our staff poured into this program.”

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This story first appeared in  
The Cardinal Rule. [LINK](#)



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## CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



# Hall of Fame

Join us as we welcome the new 2025 Class to the CCPS Hall of Fame!

Billy Brooks  
Ed Burtner  
Shannon Cox  
William Davis  
Marie Johnston  
Deatra Newell  
RJ Palmer  
Imogene Patton  
Phyllis Volz



**SATURDAY, AUGUST 30TH  
6:15 PM**

BETWEEN 1ST GAME- BETSY LANE VS. PINEVILLE MTN LIONS  
AND 2ND GAME- GRC VS. HURRICANE REDSKINS (WV)

**GEORGE ROGERS CLARK HIGH SCHOOL  
FOOTBALL STADIUM**

*Past and current  
Hall of Fame  
members and  
families are invited  
to attend to be  
recognized.  
A hospitality tent  
with refreshments  
will be set up at the  
stadium.*



**GROWING  
GREATNESS**  
CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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