



Helping people to live, learn, and work in our community

Dot Yeager
Superintendent/CEO

fcbdd.org

Administration
2879 Johnstown Rd.
Columbus, OH 43219
614-475-6440

REGULAR MEETING
Minutes
March 26, 2026

Board Members Present: Dean Fadel; Gene Harshaw Marci Straughter; Becky Swartz; Michael Underwood; Karen Wilkins

Board Member Virtual: Katherine Kelly

Staff Present: Dot Yeager; Shemaine Bakir; Lee Childs; Gwynn Kinsel; Larry Macintosh; Amy Magginis; Elizabeth Roberto; Jennifer Schueneman; Ryan Phillips; Rita Price

The Regular meeting of the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities was called to order by Board President Dean Fadel.

MINUTES

Ms. Swartz moved to approve the organizational and regular meeting minutes held on January 23, 2026, second by Ms. Straughter. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote of yes: Harshaw; Kelly; Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.

Agency Updates by Superintendent/CEO Dot Yeager

Budget & Finance:

Superintendent/CEO Dot Yeager provided agency finance updates through February, 2026. Year to date we have received \$2.6M, which is about 1% of our annual estimate. This is due to the timing of property taxes that are received twice a year and have not been reflected to date. Our expenditures are at approximately \$52M, which is about 18% of our budget and that reflects our quarterly match payment to the State of Ohio. We also reviewed the 5-year forecast which will be submitted to the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) on April 1, 2026.

Human Resources Report:

Superintendent/CEO Dot Yeager provided agency Human Resource updates for January and February, 2026. The Human Resources report is typical for new hires, resignations and retirements. We welcome Shemaine Bakir, new Director of Human Resources who began on Monday, March 2, 2026. Several items on the agenda tonight include an agreement with our bargaining unit for our Bus Driver, Bus Assistants, Mechanics and Parts & Inventory Specialist and there are two resolutions for revisions to board policies that affect administrative leave and religious holidays.

Early Childhood & Family Center
2879 Johnstown Rd.
Columbus, OH 43219
614-475-0564

Early Childhood Learning Community
4141 Rudy Rd.
Columbus, OH 43214
614-451-6418

Intake
1600 Watermark Dr.
Columbus, OH 43215
614-342-5490

Service Coordination
1600 Watermark Dr.
Columbus, OH 43215
614-464-2743

Transportation
2879 Johnstown Rd.
Columbus, OH 43219
614-475-5910

West Central School
1481 W. Town Street
Columbus, OH 43223
614-276-8231

24-hour abuse, neglect and emergency line: 614 464-2743

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Advocacy

Highlights of some March DD Awareness Month Activities:

Franklin Park Conservatory Community Day – March 1

Conservatory admission is free to residents of Columbus and Franklin County on the first Sunday of every month. This year, the theme for the March Community Day was Autism and Arts. Participants of Band Together (autism/disability friendly open mic group), and included Blue Spectrum with Zayne Harshaw and other musicians performing throughout the day. A resource fair was held, for organizations serving children and adults with autism. An adult-sized, universal changing table was available.

Columbus Museum of Art – March 12

Members of the Franklin County DD community had free admission to the Columbus Museum of Art from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. An adult-sized, universal changing table was available.

Franklin County Commissioners Lunch & Learn – March 17

Superintendent/CEO Dot Yeager, Director of Advocacy, Communications and Community Relations Ryan Phillips, and Director of Service Coordination Lee Childs attended the Franklin County Commissioners' Lunch & Learn to discuss Franklin County DD services and March DD Advocacy and Awareness Month.

Self-Advocacy Advisory Committee

The SAAC met on Thursday, February 26, 2026. Ryan Phillips, Director of Communications, Advocacy and Community Relations lead the group. A parent presented about medical advocacy. The March meeting of the SAAC was held on March 19, and advocates were offered the opportunity to write 'Thank You' notes to legislators to whom we have connected. The April 16, 2026 meeting's topic is disaster preparedness.

Inclusion Seekers virtual learning series concludes

February 17, 2026 was the first of the Inclusion Seekers virtual training series available to families, staff and providers. The goal of this program is to create more inclusive lives and local connections with people with disabilities and their families. The final virtual session was completed on March 10, 2026. The next phase will include micro-projects for 10 children and adults and their families to expand their individual communities for those folks. If you know of adult candidates for this program, please coordinate with Lee Childs, Director of Service Coordination. Potential families with small children should contact Kathy Lawton, Director of Early Childhood Education.

Family Support

Family Support meetings are held by the superintendent for family members of individuals who are served by Franklin County DD, meetings are every other month, on the first Wednesday of the month. Superintendent Yeager met with those family members on March 11, due to a conflict on March 4. Discussion of future funding for boards of DD and OACB's synopsis of new ideas and different concepts was shared with families, feedback was requested. A virtual evening Family Support meeting is scheduled for April 29 at 6 p.m.

2025 Progress Report and 2026 Annual Action Plan draft

The draft of the 2026 Annual Action Plan/ 2025 Progress report was included in the Board Members materials for review and approval at the March board meeting. It is consistent with the board's long term strategic plan and incorporates feedback, including the community survey results and focus group meeting that was held in December. A public hearing was held on February 5 at 4 p.m. at 2879 Johnstown Road, for comment and inclusion in the plan.

Combined Charitable Campaign Recognition

At the annual recognition for the 2025 Franklin County Combined Charitable Campaign, Franklin County Board of DD was recognized for exceeding our agency goal. Thanks to Anne Albrecht from Early Childhood, who was the overall coordinator for our agency, for her efforts in making this happen. Our agency raised over \$48,000 to support numerous charitable organizations in our community and met 100% of our goal.

Johnstown Road parking lot - safety crosswalk project

This project will provide crosswalks for designated pedestrian foot traffic in the Johnstown Road parking lot. There will be two safety crosswalks installed during the week of April 6, 2026, when seasonal programs will be on spring recess.

'All Managers' meeting

An 'All Manager' meeting was held on March 5. Each department head reported on the status of follow-up to the Staff Survey and Take Action workshops. The following common themes emerged and are being addressed: need to improve "two-way communication;" recognition for a job well done; freedom to work to be as successful as possible; and the need for more manager support to remove barriers.

Service Coordination Staff Advisory Council

Worked very hard to identify ways to support staff. Two policy revisions are on tonight's agenda that are a result of that collaboration.

InterRai for Service Coordination Assessment

State of Ohio has selected a new way for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services to be assessed. There is a cohort of 1,000 service recipients in the State of Ohio who will participate as a random sample. Franklin County has 136 individuals who are currently being notified. Service Coordinators are contacting those individuals. Training for the assessors will happen in April and assessments will begin in May.

Rita Price will be retiring

Superintendent Yeager announced Rita's retirement and indicated that we would like to not approve her retirement, but we may not have a choice. Rita was presented with a 'Good For You' paperweight. Board President Fadel commented that we are so lucky to have Rita. "If you have followed the Columbus Dispatch over the years, this woman's reporting has been transformational in how we serve our population. You have had wonderful, powerful impact on this community. Not just with your reporting, but what you have done here at Franklin County DD. Thank you so much, the entire disability community is in debt to you, I applaud your career." Board Member Becky Swartz noted that Rita will be missed, and they have known Rita since Taylor was a baby.

RESOLUTIONS

(Due to virtual attendance by several board members, it is required to conduct a roll-call vote for each resolution.)

- a. Mr. Underwood moved to ratify bill payments approved by the Superintendent as distributed to the Finance Committee on February 26, 2026 and on March 26, 2026, second by Ms. Straughter. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote of yes: Harshaw; Kelly; Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- b. Ms. Wilkins moved to declare March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, second by Ms. Straughter. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote of yes: Harshaw; Kelly; Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- c. Ms. Swartz moved to adopt the 2025 Progress Report and 2026 Annual Action Plan, second by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote of yes: Harshaw; Kelly; Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- d. Ms. Wilkins moved to authorize the Superintendent to go to bid for security system upgrades at Johnstown Road and Watermark building, second by Ms. Straughter. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote of yes: Harshaw; Kelly; Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- e. Mr. Underwood moved to authorize the Superintendent to approve Kathy Lawton, PhD, Director of Early Childhood Education, to provide supervision for Michelle Cutler, to serve as the Nisonger Center Early Childhood Education Program Manager, under the Alternate Administrative Specialist license, second by Ms. Swartz. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote of yes: Harshaw; Kelly; Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- f. Ms. Swartz moved to approve revisions to Board Policies 6.10 Administrative Leave with Pay and 6.16 Religious Holidays, second by Ms. Straughter. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote of yes: Harshaw; Kelly; Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- g. Mr. Underwood moved to authorize the Superintendent to renew a contract with The Ohio State University Nisonger Center for dental services for a one-year term, ending June 30, 2027, for an amount not to exceed \$408,353, second by Ms. Swartz. Motion carried with by roll call vote of yes with abstention noted by K. Kelly: Harshaw; Kelly (abstain); Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- h. Ms. Wilkins moved to authorize the Superintendent to renew a contract with The Ohio State University Nisonger Center for clinical support services at an hourly rate of \$122.40, not to exceed the amount of \$300,000, for the period beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027, second by Mr. Underwood. Motion carried with by roll call vote of yes with abstention noted by K. Kelly: Harshaw; Kelly (abstain); Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- i. Ms. Wilkins moved to authorize the Superintendent to renew a contract with The Ohio State University Nisonger Center for the PIECE Transition Services project for the period beginning August 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027, not to exceed the amount of \$59,730, second by Ms. Straughter. Motion carried with by roll call vote of yes with abstention noted by K. Kelly: Harshaw; Kelly (abstain); Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.

- j. Mr. Underwood moved to authorize the Superintendent to renew a contract with The Ohio State University Nisonger Center for behavior support services, not to exceed the amount of \$2,174,550, for the period beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027, at an hourly rate of \$122.40, second by Ms. Swartz. Motion carried with by roll call vote of yes with abstention noted by K. Kelly; Harshaw; Kelly (abstain); Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- k. Ms. Wilkins moved to authorize the Superintendent to renew a contract with The Ohio State University Nisonger Center for social support and recreation services, including Next Chapter Book Club, not to exceed the amount of \$232,140, for the period beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027, second by Ms. Straughter. Motion carried with by roll call vote of yes with abstention noted by K. Kelly; Harshaw; Kelly (abstain); Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- l. Ms. Wilkins moved to authorize the Superintendent to renew an agreement with Ohio State University Nisonger Center for dual diagnosis services, in an annual amount not to exceed \$160,730 for the period beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 30, 2027, second by Mr. Harshaw. Motion carried with by roll call vote of yes with abstention noted by K. Kelly; Harshaw; Kelly (abstain); Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.
- m. Ms. Wilkins moved to authorize the Superintendent to submit the Ohio Association of Public School Employees bargaining unit agreement to the Franklin County Commissioners, second by Ms. Swartz. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote of yes; Harshaw; Kelly; Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS:

- n. Ms. Wilkins moved to authorize the approval of the 2026-2027 Program Year Calendars with the authorization for the Superintendent to revise, change or amend the calendar if needed, second by Ms. Straughter. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote of yes; Harshaw; Kelly; Straughter; Swartz; Underwood; Wilkins and Fadel.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Board Member Gene Harshaw discussed the community day at the Franklin Park Conservatory, and we were very pleased with the turn out. It turned into a resource fair as well, with Special Olympics Ohio; Best Buddies Ohio, Autism Society of central Ohio, Coalition for Education of Children with Disabilities and OSU Nisonger all attending. It was very cold, so they would like to move it to May when it might be warmer. Mark your calendar for May 2, 2027! Thanks so much Ryan & Dot for setting that up.

Mr. Harshaw also noted that Band Together holds a jam session at Gatsby's in Gahanna, the second Sunday of the month. Last week, Spectrum News Ohio attended the jam session to do a story for that will come out in April, coinciding with Autism Awareness month.

Board Member Marci Straughter noted that Christine Brown and she attended a gathering at the Dublin Library with State Rep. Crystal Lett. Marci & Christine used an Uber to attend. They were able to talk with her and made it on her Facebook page.

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC: none

Ms. Swartz motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Wilkins

Karen Wilkins, Secretary
KW/am