



TO: EPC Representatives

FROM: Ken Swink, EPC Director

DATE: May 27, 2025

RE: Minutes of May 13, 2025

The Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council met in person and virtually via Zoom at its regular meeting on May 13, 2025, at 12:30 p.m. at Aullwood Audubon Center, 1000 Aullwood Road, Dayton, Ohio. Executive Board Committee Chairperson Scott Gilbert called the meeting to order.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maria Rellinger, Apollo Career Center; John Stephens, Arcanum Butler; Jody Jones, Botkins; Carla Surber, Bradford; Robert Fischer, Dan Bassler, Carlisle; Julie Lowe, Cedar Cliff; Chuck Cowgill, Centerville; Kerry Borger, Darke Co ESC; John Stanley, East Clinton; Rachel Tait, Jeff Parker, Eaton; Kelli Fromm, Franklin; Bonnie Baldridge, Greenfield; Amy Ayers, Hardin Houston; Bryan Janson, Gary Doll, Huber Heights; Craig Jones, Jefferson Township; Scott Butler, Mike Arlinghaus, Lebanon; Jerry Ellender, Mad River; Brad McKee, Stephanie Harshbarger, Miami Valley CTC; Jennifer Couch, National Trail; Brandon Knecht, Ann Ferraro, Northmont; Jeff Patrick, Northwestern; Mike Corcoran, Preble Co ESC; Jean Borchers, Russia; Ben Kitchen, Southeastern; Scott Gilbert, Springboro; Jennifer Bruns, St Henry; Denise Robinson, Tecumseh; Tim Watts, Bill Derringer, Tri-County North; Jeff Price, Troy; Jeff Sakal, Troy Christian; Scott Cottingim, Twin Valley; Anthony Fraley, Steve Verhoff, Upper Valley CC; Erick Depew, Valorie Hill, Andrea Cook, Valley View; Marcus O'Brien, Vandalia Butler; Mike Watt, Wapakoneta; Tom Isaacs, Warren Co ESC; Buckie Caulley, Washington Courthouse; Curt Bone, Wilmington; **Vendors & EPC Staff:** Belinda Kenley, Sara Little, Rachel Street, Energy Optimizers USA; Jon Green, Prodigy; Ashley McGilly, School Insurance Consultants; Ken Swink, Doug Merkle, Connie Wright, Robin Houston, Bonnie Muckenthaler, Cristi Goldshot, JeanAnn Cloud, Mary Armstrong, Bri Listermann, Kendall Pollard, Desiree Bleh, EPC. **Via Zoom:** Randy Dunlap, Blanchester; Tom Faulkner, Clark Shawnee; Carrie Bir, Clinton Massie; Deanna Knapke, Fort Recovery; Jeremy Pequignot, Franklin Monroe; Inga Fisher, Greeneview; Amy Anyanwu, Montgomery Co ESC; Chris Stein, MVECA; Matt Heaston, Ohio Hi Point Career; Mike Corcoran, Preble Co ESC; Cole Roberts, Spencerville.

2025-12. Approval of Minutes - Motion of Bill Derringer, seconded by Jeff Parker, that the [minutes of March 11, 2025](#), be approved. Motion carried.

2025-13. Election of Executive Board Members - The following members: Scott Gilbert – Springboro Community Schools, Tom Isaacs – Warren County Educational Service Center, Curt Bone – Wilmington City Schools, Jeff Patrick– Northwestern Local Schools, and Dan Bassler – Carlisle Local Schools have agreed to seek new [two-year terms on the Executive Board](#). The floor was opened for additional nominations. Motion by Brandon Knecht, seconded by Dan Bassler, to approve the above members as presented. Motion carried.



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2025-14. Membership Request Letters - Ken Swink reported that [Finneytown Local Schools](#), [Five Rivers Metroparks](#), [Germantown Christian School](#), [Holgate Local Schools](#), [Ottawa-Glandorf Local Schools](#), [Pandora-Gilboa Local Schools](#), [Pettisville Schools](#), and [Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic School](#) have requested membership in the EPC. The Executive Board will review this request at its May 13th afternoon meeting. Motion of Ann Ferraro, seconded by John Stephens, that the districts be approved for membership pending Executive Board approval. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE PROGRAM REPORTS

***Air Filters** – Ken Swink reported that Dayton Reliable Air Filter pricing will be extended through December 31, 2025, with zero price changes. You may view the [vendor contact information, information on how to order, and Pricing](#) on the EPC Website.

Classroom/Office Supplies – Ken Swink shared [2025 EPC Vendor Fair](#) Flyers for [Friends Office's Hidden Cost of Convenience and Being Local](#) and [John R. Green's Social & Emotional Learning](#) seminars. We ask that school administrators encourage your Office Staff, Teachers, and Curriculum Specialists to attend the Vendor Fair and these seminars.

Cloud Communication Systems – No report. WebEx, Go-To-Meeting, Multi-party video, Mobility, Redundancy, Disaster recovery, recording, easy-to-use management tools (web-based from anywhere), and Free phones, are just some of the features available to EPC Members from [Nebula Solutions](#). Please email Nebula Solutions at epc@nebulasolutionsinc.com for your no-cost, no-obligation analysis or call 888-824-1755 with any questions.

***Copy Paper** – Ken Swink announced that the [EPC Copy Paper Program was extended with current vendors through June 30, 2025](#). The lowest-priced white 8 ½ x 11 Copy Paper is Millcraft's Natural Choice AJ8931 at \$33.63/case or Sterling Distribution's HiWhite at \$34.75/case. Both vendors will guarantee their paper and also offer a 1% discount if paid in net 30 days. We will continue to request pricing extensions every two months.

Design Build & Performance Contracting Services – [Belinda Kenley](#) of [Energy Optimizers, USA](#), shared [flyers on their No Cost No Obligation Audits and how to use your Budget Dollars that are at risk with HB96](#). [Mary Whitt](#) of [Evans Energy](#) shared a [flyer on facility upgrades that create more efficient buildings](#) and [Jon Green](#) of [Prodigy Building Solutions](#) shared their flyer, which reviews their areas of expertise. All three Design Build representatives gave updates and were available for questions.



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Food Service – Bonnie Muckenthaler shared [EPC Food Service Updates for May](#) with the membership. Topics of the May update include the 2025-26 Food Service Bid Results that will be available at their June 4th Meeting at Aullwood Farm, [required training opportunities through our partnership with Public School Works](#), Health-e Pro Menu Planning Software, EPC Monthly Menu Planning Service Expansion, and updates on our Compliance and Financial Programs.

Be sure to mark your calendars for our 34th Annual EPC Educational Vendor Fair on July 30th. In addition to visiting 136+ vendor booths, food service employees have an opportunity to fulfill their [1-hour required annual procurement training opportunity presented by Brian Davis of the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's Office of Nutrition](#) in the McLin Gym from 8:00 – 9:00 am, and the [EPC Food Service Update Meeting](#) will be held from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. We hope to see you there!

Insurances – Doug Merkle introduced Desiree Bleh to the membership. Desiree, who comes to us from Huber Heights City Schools, is our newest employee in the EPC Benefits office.

Doug also reported that the EPC Executive Board will have the opportunity to approve the 2026 EPC Health Insurance Renewals at this afternoon's meeting. After approval, this information will be emailed out to participating districts.

LED Lighting & Energy Savings Programs – [Belinda Kenley](#) of [Energy Optimizers, USA](#), shared [flyers on their No Cost No Obligation Audits and how to use your Budget Dollars that are at risk with HB96](#). Please contact [Belinda Kenley](#) if you have any questions or if your district is interested in a [Free No Cost Energy and Lighting Audit](#). Thank you to Belinda and Energy Optimizers, USA for sponsoring today's EPC General Membership Meeting lunch.

Liability Fleet & Property Insurance—Maria Rellinger reported that the EPC Liability Fleet & Property Insurance renewal meeting was held immediately prior to today's May EPC General Membership Meeting. If your district is interested in a quote from our EPC Liability Fleet & Property Insurance program, feel free to reach out to Ken Swink with your request.

***Medical Supplies** - Ken Swink reported that the Medical Supply Committee has recommended a one-year extension with the current EPC Medical Supply Discount vendors: Henry Schein, Medco Supply Company, School Health and School Nurse Supply. [Pricing may be viewed on the EPC Website](#).

***Paint** – Ken Swink announced that the Paint Program was recently rebid, and the committee has recommended the approval of Pittsburgh Paint Co (PPG) and Sherwin-Williams. [Pricing](#) will be valid through April 30, 2026, and is available to view on the EPC Website.



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Transportation – Ken Swink reported that the next EPC School Bus Bid Opening will be held on Friday, May 16th at the EPC Office. Once approved, [pricing will be posted on the EPC Website](#) and will be valid for 90 days through July 24, 2025. The EPC will reach out to approved vendors to request an extension prior to this expiration date. Members interested in potentially purchasing a school bus are invited to complete the [EPC Bus Purchase Survey](#) and should obtain their Board Resolution prior to making a purchase. You may view the [2025 EPC Bus Purchasing Calendar](#) on the EPC Bus Page. EPC [Transportation Supply Pricing](#) and [Bus Camera Pricing](#) may also be viewed on the [EPC Website](#).

Ken also invited School Administrators and School Transportation Supervisors to attend the [2025 EPC Transportation Supervisors Update with Heather Free of the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce's Pupil Transportation Department](#). This meeting will be held on July 30, 2025, at the EPC's 34th Annual EPC Educational Vendor Fair at the Wright State University's Nutter Center in Berry Room 2 from 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. There will also be over 136 booths to visit at this free show.

Utilities/Natural Gas – Ken Swink reported that he has shared with the EPC Utilities Committee a market price update showing that calendar year 2026 is currently the highest cost at \$54.08 MWh, and the price falls to \$51.89 for 2027, \$50.61 for 2028, and \$49.96 for 2029. One strategy would be to extend our IGS Energy contract through 2029 and hedge these four out years on a blended rate. Another approach would be to wait and hope for a cooler summer to bring prices down this fall, and then assess the market at that time. Ken also reported that he and Maha Kashani have met with Waibel Energy to review a study they are doing with 11 school districts comparing the cost of Peak Load Contribution per square foot by building. So far, the buildings already in the study with ice and/or solar are performing much better as expected, but it will be interesting to see the data on the return on investment for adding these components. If you are interested in joining this study, please contact Ken Swink.

The natural gas market continues to hold pricing above our hedge targets. The Ohio School Consortium hedging committee placed a buy order of 25% at \$4.00 for next winter, and the market has stubbornly remained higher to date. Our natural gas consultant, Mark Jergens, continues to watch the market and provides us with periodic updates.

Workers Compensation – No Report.

2025-15. Motion of Jeff Patrick seconded by Robert Fischer that the *programs be approved via consent. Motion carried.



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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Financial Report – Connie Wright reviewed the [financial summary of the general operating fund](#). The balance of the General Fund as of April 30, 2025 was \$1,133,721.73. Please contact [Connie](#) with any questions or concerns.

Ken Swink also congratulated Connie Wright for earning [the Ohio Auditor of State Award Certificate](#) for the fiscal year that ended in 2024. ([Click here for photo.](#)) Connie will be retiring in June after 30+ years at the Southwestern Ohio Educational Purchasing Council. Thank you, Connie – we greatly appreciate everything you contributed to the EPC, and we will miss you. Enjoy your retirement!

2025-26 EPC General Membership Meeting Schedule – A schedule of the [EPC General Membership Meetings](#) for the 2025-2026 School year was distributed. All membership meetings are scheduled at Aullwood Audubon Center, and we will continue to use Zoom for those who cannot attend.

AEPA – Ken Swink reviewed a flyer from AEPA approved vendors: [SHI – IT Solutions](#), [Total Technology – Buyback Service](#), [Total Technology – Lease Release](#), [Tremco – Roofing, Building Envelope & Construction Services](#).

District Contact Information Request - Please take a moment to update your district's contact information so we can update our email communication database and EPC Member Directory. [Click here to update your information](#), or you may send us your updates via email.

Vendor Fair – A [Save the Date flyer for the 34th Annual EPC Educational Vendor Fair](#) was shared. This year's event will be held on July 30, 2025, at Wright State University's Nutter Center from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please let your staff know the date and encourage them to attend and support this important event.

A list of [Participating Vendors So Far](#) and flyers for each of the [EPC Vendor Fair Meetings and Seminars](#) we also reviewed:

- [EPC Food Service Update, SWEPC USDA Federal Commodity Update & ODEW Presentation](#)
- [1 Hour Required Annual Food Service Requirement Training Opportunity](#)
- [Transportation Supervisors Update – Presentation by Heather Free of ODEW's Office of Pupil Transportation](#)
- [Overwhelmed & Over It – Managing Career & Personal Life](#)
- [John R. Green – Social & Emotional Learning](#)
- [Friends Office – Hidden Cost of Convenience & Being Local](#)

[Please RSVP to the Vendor Fair and any meetings and/or seminars on the EPC Website](#). You may find all 2025 EPC Educational Vendor Fair information on the [EPC Vendor Fair page](#) of the website.

Motion to adjourn by Anthony Fraley, seconded by Ann Ferraro. Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.