

**Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of  
Hawthorn Community Consolidated District #73, Lake County, Illinois  
841 W. End Court, Vernon Hills, IL 60061  
7:00 p.m. on the 22nd day of February 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Robin Cleek called the Board of Education meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

The Board Secretary called attendance and the following members attended: Julie Clifford, George Fievet, Robin Cleek, and Wes Polen. Mr. Joel Finfer attended the meeting virtually. Also in attendance were Asst. Supt. of Finance & Business Operations Dr. LeeAnn Taylor; Asst. Supt. of Teaching, Learning & Innovation Dr. Allison Stein; Asst. Supt. of Innovative Learning Dr. Karen Maturo; Asst. Supt. for Human Resources Mr. Adam Palmer; and Superintendent Dr. Pete Hannigan. Board Members Michael Engle and Karl Borchers were not in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment at this time.

**RECOGNITION**

Vice President Wes Polen spoke on behalf of the recognition committee to formally recognize Ms. Shelly Drezek, Occupational Therapist at Hawthorn Elementary North. Shelly was nominated by Ms. Debbie Goodrich for her outstanding achievements and for making a significant difference in the lives of our students, staff, and community. Ms. Drezek was awarded with a certificate of recognition.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Vice President Wes Polen was excited to announce that the Middle South 8th grade volleyball team placed third in the conference, and the 6th and 7th grade volleyball team placed second in the conference.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

No report at this time.

**ED-RED REPORT**

No report at this time.

**SEDOL REPORT**

No report at this time.

**SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT**

Board Member George Fivet highlighted several key projects and partnerships, noting the district's evolving relationship with Quest, which is showcasing Hawthorn as a model for others. Summer 2024 will see flooring upgrades at Middle School North and the successful integration of new spaces at Elementary North. The committee addressed challenges with fire panel and intercom system upgrades, leading to a strategic separation of the projects to meet new fire codes and secure grant funding for the intercom system. Discussions on transportation revealed plans for future bids. He ended his report by reviewing safety audits which are in progress, promising detailed insights post-spring break.

**WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT**

No report at this time.

**PRESENTATIONS**

School of Dual Language representatives presented their Winter Update on their School Improvement Plan, highlighting significant achievements and updates. The team showcased the school's progress toward academic and social-emotional goals based on winter benchmark assessments. They noted the welcoming of twelve new students across various grades, reflecting the school's adaptability in supporting newcomers and maintaining a dynamic student body.

The presentation emphasized the positive growth in math proficiency across all grade levels, with second through fourth graders exceeding expected growth targets and showing evidence of closing the achievement gap for non-native English speakers. Reading proficiency also saw targeted growth, particularly in second and fourth-grade cohorts. The school's commitment to professional development and instructional support was underscored, aiming to enhance both academic outcomes and the social-emotional well-being of students.

The update concluded with an acknowledgment of the school community's efforts, including teachers, families, and students, in achieving these outcomes. The presentation also addressed specific inquiries from the fall presentation, such as additional information on HumanX survey results to understand staff satisfaction and engagement better. The team expressed eagerness to continue this momentum and further discuss the program's success in the spring update.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Mr. Adam Palmer presented the 2024-25 Staffing Plan, emphasizing the collaborative effort involving the administrative team and building administrators to align staffing needs with the district's mission, "Learning for All. Every One, Every Day." This plan, guided by enrollment trends and current staffing analysis, aims to maintain high academic achievement and support the social and emotional well-being of students in a fiscally responsible manner.

The staffing projections began last fall, utilizing a data-informed approach to determine needs across the district. Through discussions with district and building administrators, specific allocations were made to best support student success. Mr. Palmer highlighted the importance of maintaining low class sizes, especially in kindergarten and first grade, and noted that the additional staffing recommendations are focused on specialized roles rather than general education. These include three learning behavior specialists, 1.5 speech language pathologists, one social worker, one occupational therapist, one library media specialist, one Spanish teacher at the middle school, and a half bilingual resource teacher. This approach aims to enhance special education programming and reduce reliance on the special education cooperative, ensuring flexibility to accommodate any additional students while striving to achieve district goals.

Dr. LeeAnn Taylor, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance, along with Ms. Jennifer Akin from the business department, reviewed the process and outcome of the district's food service request effective for the 2024-2025 school year. Following a one-year emergency contract with Quest Food Service for the 2023-2024 school year, the district was required to enter a formal food service solicitation process. Opting for a Request for Proposal (RFP) over a traditional invitation to bid, the district aimed for greater flexibility in selecting a food vendor, incorporating an ISBE-approved rubric with ten criteria totaling 100 points. These criteria emphasized aspects such as cost, experience, food quality, menu interface, health promotion, and food sourcing.

Four proposals were received and scored by the district appointed evaluation team, with Quest Food Service emerging as the top scorer with 94 points across all criteria. The Site and Facility Committee's review on February 15 led to the recommendation to award the contract to Quest Food Service, deemed the best fit based on the comprehensive evaluation.

Dr. LeeAnn Taylor also discussed the 2024-2025 Student Meal Prices, outlining the considerations behind the proposed adjustments. The business office collaborates annually with ISBE to apply the Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) tool, a complex mechanism designed to guide the necessary annual price adjustments for school meals. This tool, alongside Quest's commitment to enhancing food services, informed the decision to propose an increase in meal prices. Following a previous increase from \$3.10 to \$3.25 for lunches last year, the recommendation for the upcoming school year is to raise lunch prices to \$3.50 and breakfast prices from \$1.40 to \$1.50. This proposal aims to align with the calculated needs and Quest's ongoing improvements, with a vote on these recommended prices scheduled for next week.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

No report at this time.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes from February 8, 2024
- 7.2 Closed Session Minutes from February 8, 2024
- 7.3 Expenditure Report from February 22, 2024
- 7.4 Mastercard Report from December 21, 2023
- 7.5 Amazon Expense Report from February 22, 2024
- 7.6 Treasurer's Report from November 2023
- 7.7 Treasurer's Report from December 2023
- 7.8 Personnel Report

3 New Hires:

3 Leaves of Absence:

1 Resignations:

1 Change of Status:

2 Retirements:

3 New Hires: Kimberly Porzel, Assistant Principal, MN; Breana Pitsenberger, 3rd Grade Teacher, EN; Priyadharshini Sendil Kumar, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, TL.

3 Leaves of Absence: Xochitl Willis, Instructional Assistant, Lincoln, 02/12/2024; Irma Almanza, Principal Secretary, TL, 01/29/2024; Natalie Smith, Instructional Assistant, Middle North, 02/26/2024.

1 Resignation: Hanan Qutaishat, Instructional Assistant, ES, 02/05/2024.

1 Change of Status: Lauren Watts, Principal, Elementary North, 07/01/2024.

2 Retirements: Branko Materic, General Maintenance, DO, 05/31/2024; William Fredrickson, Principal, Aspen, 06/30/2028.

Dr. Hannigan announced the recommendation of two appointments during the consent agenda. One involved the selection of a principal for Elementary North, while the other appointed an assistant principal for Middle School North. He publicly discussed the rigorous interview process with the board. After careful consideration, he was happy to announce Ms. Lauren Watts for the Elementary North Principal position and Ms. Kimberly Porzel for the Middle North Assistant Principal position.

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George Fievet requested to remove section **7.1 Board Meeting Minutes from February 8, 2024** and **7.2 Closed Session Minutes from February 8, 2024** from the consent agenda.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Wes Polen moved that the Board of Education approve 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes from February 8, 2024 and 7.2 Closed Session Minutes from February 8, 2024 as presented; seconded by Julie Clifford.

**Roll Call Vote:** Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer, Wes Polen, Julie Clifford, and George Fievet.

**Motion carried: 4 ayes; 1 abstain**

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Wes Polen moved that the Board of Education approve the remaining **Consent Agenda** items as presented; seconded by George Fievet.

**Roll Call Vote:** Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer, Wes Polen, Julie Clifford, and George Fievet.

**Motion carried: 5 ayes; 0 nays**

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Superintendent Dr. Pete Hannigan reviewed the modifications to policies as outlined in PRESS issue 113. The committee convened on January 31 to review a total of 30 policies. Department heads had previously presented their proposed updates at the last board meeting. Dr. Hannigan noted that upon the board's approval, these policies would undergo adjustments to include updated references, footnotes, and any suggested changes to the language, ensuring the district's policies remain current and reflective of the latest guidelines and best practices.

Dr. LeeAnn Taylor reviewed the device lease proposal that was presented by the innovation and technology team at the previous board meeting. LeeAnn detailed two lease agreements for the board's consideration. The first is a three-year lease aimed at acquiring iPads for both students and staff, with the district planning to borrow \$679,950 over the term. The second lease is a four-year agreement for the purchase of MacBook Airs, with the district borrowing \$1,551,569. She assured the board that these expenditures had been carefully incorporated into the district's five-year financial forecast, demonstrating a commitment to fiscal responsibility and ensuring a systematic process for refreshing technology devices within the district.

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**ACTION ITEMS**  
**PRESS Policy 113**

MOTION: Wes Polen moved that the Board of Education approve PRESS Policy Issue 113; Julie Clifford seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer, Wes Polen, Julie Clifford, and George Fievet.

**Motion carried: 5 ayes; 0 nays**

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**Device Lease Approval**

MOTION: Wes Polen moved that the Board of Education approve the Device Lease; Julie Clifford seconded the motion.

**Roll Call Vote:** Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer, Wes Polen, Julie Clifford, and George Fievet.

**Motion carried: 5 ayes; 0 nays**

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Enrollment - Uploaded
2. FOIA Log, Dr. Hannigan reported that the District has not received any FOIA requests since the last board meeting as identified in Section 9.2 of the Board agenda.
3. Media Clips

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**TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION**

No topics for future discussion.

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**ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION**

Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11) President Cleek *read the motion(s) to adjourn to CLOSED SESSION for the purposes of:*

*The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. However, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee of a public body that is subject to the Local Government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and shall be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with this Act. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).*

With no further business to discuss, Wes Polen *made a motion to adjourn to Closed Session, seconded by Julie Clifford.* The meeting *adjourned at 7:51 p.m.* **All in favor? Yes.**

**Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays**

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Respectfully submitted,  
Jessica Flores

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Robin Cleek, President

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George Fievet, Secretary

Date Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_