

MINUTES FOR A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2021, AT THORNRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL, 15000 COTTAGE GROVE AVENUE, DOLTON, IL 60419 AND VIA WEBEX CONFERENCING, BEGINNING AT 6:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 6:37p.m. President Graham made the following announcement: Call to Order. Tonight's meeting is being streamed live via videoconferencing on WebEx and is video recorded. The Board President declares that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of the current Disaster Proclamation issued by the Governor. Physical presence for the meeting is not feasible due to the disaster.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY
BOARD PRESIDENT

On roll call, Members Brown, Graham, Lawrence, Moody, and Whittington answered. Members Banks and Butler were absent. Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Superintendent, Dr. Jerry B. Doss, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources; Mr. Toriano Horton, Assistant Superintendent of Business; Mr. Brett Fickes, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Mr. Thomas Porter, Executive Director of Special Services; and Mr. Adam Dauksas, legal counsel, were also present.

ROLL
CALL

At 6:38p.m., Mr. Banks joined the meeting

MR. BANKS JOINED THE
MEETING

Report from Curriculum Committee: Mr. Fickes reported that the next meeting will be held on November 4, 2021, at 4:00pm.

COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE

Report from Finance Committee: Mr. Horton reported that the last meeting was held on October 5, 2021, at 4:00pm via WebEx. There was an action items approved and will be presented at tonight's meeting for board approval. The next meeting will be held on November 2, 2021, at 4:00pm.

Report from Policy Committee: None.

Report from Discipline Committee: None.

Report from Facilities Committee: Mr. Garrett reported that the last meeting was held on September 23, 2021, at 4:00pm. Items approved were sent to the Finance Committee for review and approval.

Ms. Moody moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded, to **Approve the Consent Agenda**, which includes the following:

CONSENT AGENDA

- Minutes of the Regular Meeting dated September 8, 2021
- The District 205 bills as presented for payment dated September 9, 2021, through October 13, 2021
- Personnel dated October 13, 2021 (Resignations, Leave of Absence, New Hires and Terminations:
- Administrative Employment (2): William Christian, 1 Thornton, Division Leader, effective September 13, 2021; Vincent Jones, Director of Technology & Communications Systems, effective September 27, 2021
- Certified Employment (3): Kym Lewis, 1Thornton, English, Master's +60, Step F, effective September 10, 2021; Reginald Georgia, Thornwood, MTSS Counselor, Master's +45, Step E, effective October 4, 2021; Alfrieda Hull, Thornton, MTSS Behavioral Specialist, Master's +60, Step F, effective November 1, 2021

MINUTES

BILLS

PERSONNEL

- Non-Certified Employment (10): Alberta Lymon, Thornton, Paraprofessional, effective September 20, 2021; Paula Jones, Thornridge, Administrative Assistant – Sub Office, effective September 20, 2021; Kendra Walker, Thornwood, Administrative Assistant – Athletic Office, effective September 20, 2021; Ashley Pettigrew, Thornwood, Administrative Assistant – Sub Office, effective September 27, 2021; Terrence Williams, Thornwood, Permanent Substitute, effective October 5, 2021; Brandon Kyle, District, MTSS Behavior Intervention Extended Learning Specialist, effective October 4, 2021; Jomyron Graham, District, Coordinator of Instructional Technology, effective September 27, 2021; Vanessa Lott, Thornwood, Paraprofessional, effective October 12, 2021; Kathy Avila, Thornridge, Administrative Assistant – Deans/Counselors, effective October 12, 2021; Briana Wayne, Thornwood, Paraprofessional, effective October 12, 2021
- Resignation (7): Kimberly Jones-Franklin, Thornwood, FACS, effective September 15, 2021; Andrew Timbrook, Thornwood, Athletic Trainer, effective October 8, 2021; Kendra Walker, Thornwood, Paraprofessional, effective September 17, 2021; Paul Stirn, Thornton, English, effective September 23, 2021; Jontil Moran, Thornton, FACS, effective October 1, 2021; Keith Hudson, Thornton, Speech, effective October 15, 2021; Paschan Dixon, District, Payroll Clerk, effective October 15, 2021
- Retirement (1): Christine Stott, Thornwood, Administrative Assistant, effective October 29, 2021
- Termination (1): Charlotte Samuels, Thornridge, Administrative Assistant, effective October 13, 2021

- Ratification(s): Thornton Township High School Varsity Football Out-of-State Trip to Richwood High School, Peoria, Illinois, October 1, 2021

RATIFICATION(S)

On roll call, Moody, Lawrence, Banks, Graham and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

At 7:08pm Mr. Brown joined the meeting

MR. BROWN JOINED
THE MEETING

The following individuals spoke during Public Participation:

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Faculty and parents shared questions, comments, and concerns about current issues

Mr. Fickes presented the Public Hearing for the D205 eLearning plan

PUBLIC HEARING

- There have been three (3) submitted - two (2) responded to and one (1) pending

FOIA

Dr. King presented the following information:

COMMUNICATIONS

- Thornridge High School:
 - Celebrated Spirit and Homecoming Week
 - Social Studies students participate in Archeological Dig
- Thornton Township High School
 - Freshmen volleyball team took 3rd place in First Serve tournament
 - Varsity Boys' soccer team celebrating the PepsiCo Championship
 - Outdoor pizza party for Ms. Franco's 11th period class
 - In-door Decorating Contest during Spirit Week
- Thornwood High School
 - Marching Thunderbirds take 2nd at Circle City Classic

- Virtual IB Induction Ceremony
- Student commended in National Merit Scholarship Program
- Outlook Academy
 - Teachers and staff leave inspirational post-it notes on a board for students to take

Mr. Fickes, Ms. Hines, and Ms. Martinez introduced D205 AVID Program

PRESENTATION(S)

Good evening,

SUPERINTENDENT
REPORT

I would like to thank the Board of Education. In the Summer of 2020, they allowed us to work with the community, the teachers, and students to decide how we would return to school. The district determined that the safest way to educate our students was to do it remotely. At that time, the association asked the district to allow teachers to teach from their homes. The board agreed to support the recommendation, so the district agreed to allow staff members that wanted to remain at home to do so as long as they acted professionally. The district collaborated to ensure safety of students, staff, and community.

In the Fall of 2020, the district recommended that we install the Needlepoint system to clean the air in the schools. The system removes viruses by attacking the chemical make-up. Our board of education, before any requirements or any federal money was available, approved the measure for all district buildings knowing that a return to in-person learning would happen - we just didn't know when. The district was preparing to go back to school in the safest manner possible.

During the pandemic, the administration, security, and food service worked daily to ensure our students (and community members) had lunches. We started with over twenty sites to ensure our students didn't have to walk far to get breakfast and lunch.

We delivered hundreds of thousands of meals. While delivering meals we worked to improve the schools. The determination was made to improve the projection system. Although we haven't received our order, which is beyond our control, we did plan for a classroom refresh for the district.

Everyone forgets that during the early part of the pandemic, we were told to stay in our homes unless you were an essential worker. Our essential workers were administrators, food service workers, custodians, maintenance, and security. We worked in our schools even though there wasn't a vaccine or treatment during the time. I am sorry to say that we did lose several of our personnel to the virus. We kept serving because without us, our community would have even more difficulties with food shortages.

When the vaccine became available, the district communicated with the sites, our employees, and contractors to ensure we received the vaccine. We worked hard to get a site of our own in the district for employees, community members, and contractors. Later we worked to get them for students. In the spring, the Illinois State Board of Education let us know that we would return to in-person learning in the fall. We collaborated with the staff on our return to learning plans. We published our plans and asked for input during the summer. We enacted those plans, plans that not only met the requirements but often exceeded them.

We impact bargained with our associations, if they requested, and signed letters of understanding. We have moved into a challenging school year. There are parents that request remote learning. Remote learning is not an option. In September, the state published the option of an adaptive pause, for extreme cases of outbreaks. The school district working with the Cook County Department of Public Health must agree before an adaptive pause is instituted. It is not just a choice for the administration or the board of education. Over forty school districts lost their state designation because they didn't follow the rules of the state. Again, we have followed the rules.

As we entered school there were a lot of questions about contact tracing, cleaning, and other concerns about returning to school. The state guidelines were published and available for all. The district fielded request for guidance. The district added the requested information, our procedures, and links to the state to ensure all information was available to our students, staff, and community. The district went above the requirements and installed Plexiglas shields for our students at lunch. Although it is not required the district contracted with Shield to test our students and unvaccinated staff members. This has been delayed because of the great need in the state but we completed all necessary processes.

At the beginning of the school year, we had significant issues with our internet system. As I stated last month, the district had a three-year plan for moving to the one-to-one system. Our IT committee chose Chromebooks as the device. CDW installed our hardware and backbone to the network. Our plan was to practice and test the system during the 2020 - 2021 School year. We wanted to stress the system and ensure it was ready. The pandemic came and we started one-to-one early. We got all of the computers to the students and staff members and completed the school year. The stress on the system was not tested as planned in 2020. We started this school year with the stress test and some of the designs from CDW failed. It took IT, CDW, and AT&T some time to work out the concerns. Our system has so much bandwidth that even AT&T doesn't have a tool in Illinois to test it. We are awaiting the tools to arrive from Ohio. CDW and IT did the work necessary to handle our issues and currently our system is working. The challenge that we have now is our power grid. Again - something we do not control. We will keep working on our system to ensure it is at its best.

The administration has talked to the parents, staff members, and community about the issues that we face. Our students, staff members and communities are challenged. Our urge is to point fingers at each other instead of realizing that our challenge is from the virus not from people. There are less workers our system and we are having challenges all over with human capital. There are food shortages, less substitutes available, less workers available, and more needs. The district has reached out for assistance and received some - we have a connection for mental health services for students and their parents. We have always had support systems for our employees - SAP is posted in all of our buildings. All these things do not mean that our challenges are over they just mean we are doing our best at this time.

Although some may wish it gone - the pandemic is still here. As you have heard throughout this report - the district never closed. We worked with our staff to meet the shifting needs, and with the support of our board of education and community we will continue to work to meet those needs. We must realize that we have issues because of the pandemic not the district. The nation is sharing those challenges - from conflicts to shortages. The nation has a shortage of workers - CBS news reported that 10.4 M jobs are open in the United States. There are shortages in drivers and goods cannot get to market. There are hundreds of ships in our ports just anchored awaiting an opportunity to be unloaded but the ports do not have the workers to get the goods off the ships, so we wait. We have no control over how these things play out. I know we all want to resume business as usual, but we are not there yet. Our job is to do the best we can with what we have. It won't be easy, there will be new challenges, but we can surpass those challenges if we work together.

Mr. Bearden, President of Faculty Association, and faculty presented concerns of the members and staff

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs. Whittington moved, Mr. Banks seconded the **Approval of eLearning Plan** as presented by Mr. Fickes. On roll call, Members Whittington, Banks, Brown, Graham, Lawrence, and Moody voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE D205
ELEARNING PLAN

Ms. Moody moved, Ms. Graham seconded the **Approval of AVID Students Overnight Fieldtrip to Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, October 22-23, 2021**, as presented by Mr. Fickes. On roll call, Members Moody, Graham, Banks, Brown, Lawrence, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE
OVERNIGHT FIELDTRIP
TO CARBONDALE, IL

Ms. Moody moved, Ms. Graham seconded the **Approval of Thornton Township High School Stage Riggig** as presented by Mr. Horton. On roll call, Members Moody, Graham, Banks, Brown, Lawrence, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE
THORNTON TOWNSHIP
HIGH SCHOOL STAGE
RIGGING

At 8:23p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Brown seconded, to go into **Executive Session** pursuant to Section 2C of the Illinois Open Meetings Act to consider:

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees;

On roll call, Members Lawrence, Brown, Banks, Graham, Moody, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

At 8:55 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded to **Reconvene Regular Session**. On roll call, Members Lawrence, Banks, Brown, Graham, Moody, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

RECONVENE REGULAR
SESSION

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded to **Approve the Award of Six (6) Years Extra Experience Credit for Teacher**. On roll call, Members Lawrence, Banks, Brown, Graham, Moody, Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF EXTRA
EXPERIENCE CREDIT
FOR TEACHER

Ms. Moody moved, Mr. Brown seconded to **Accept the District's Recommendation to Terminate the Employment of Charlotte Samuels**. On roll call, Members Moody, Brown, Banks, Graham, Lawrence, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
TERMINATION OF STAFF
MEMBER

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded to **Deny the Faculty Association's Grievance Regarding Nicholas Stoming**. On roll call, Members Lawrence, Banks, Brown, Graham, Moody, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF TEACHER
GRIEVANCE DECISION

Ms. Moody moved, Mr. Brown seconded to **Table the Discipline of Administrator Appeal Matter**. On roll call, Members Moody, Brown, Banks, Graham, Lawrence, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
DISCIPLINE OF
ADMINISTRATOR

At 8:59p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Brown seconded to **Adjourn the Meeting**. On roll call, Members Lawrence, Brown, Banks, Graham, Moody, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

President

Secretary