

MINUTES OF A **REGULAR MEETING** OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, HELD ON **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2009** IN THE AUDITORIUM AT THORNTON HIGH SCHOOL, HARVEY, ILLINOIS, BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. On roll call, Members Banks, King, Lawrence and Penman answered. Members Coriano, Burton and Ware were absent. Dr. J. Kamala Buckner, Superintendent; Mr. Steven Gress, Director of Business; Dr. Paige Dague, Director of Accountability, Research and Information Service; Ms. Maria Brunson, Director of Technology and Information Services; Dr. Betheny Lyke, Thornton Principal; Mrs. Darcelle Williams, Thornwood Principal; Mr. Rick Shields, Thornridge Assistant Principal; Mr. Tony Ratliff, Thornton Assistant Principal; and Mr. Ken Wendorff, Faculty Association President, were also present.

ROLL  
CALL

The minutes of the regular session and the minutes of the executive session of the regular meeting of January 14, 2009. The minutes of the executive session of this meeting shall be confidential and closed to the public until such time that the Board of Education determines that it is no longer necessary to protect the public interest or privacy of an individual by keeping them confidential.

MINUTES:  
January 14, 2009

Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded, to **Approve the Minutes for January 14, 2009**. On roll call, Members Banks, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

Dr. Penman moved, Dr. King seconded, to **Approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting on January 26, 2009**. On roll call, Members Banks, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

MINUTES:  
January 26, 2009

Dr. King moved, Dr. Penman seconded, to **Approve the District 205 Bills**. On roll call, Members Banks, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

DISTRICT 205  
BILLS

None.

RESIGNATIONS

None.

LEAVE OF  
ABSENCE

None.

EMPLOYMENT

At 7:10 p.m., Mr. Burton joined the meeting.

MR. BURTON  
JOINED MEETING

Mr. Doss reported on the following:

COMMUNICATIONS

- The Superintendent has visited the Villages of Blue Island, South Holland, Markham, Hazel Crest as well as School Districts 151 and 133 to present the 2008-2009 Annual Report and the District's progress made during the 2007-2008 school year.
- Mr. Frank Zuccarelli, Thornton Township Supervisor, was very impressed with the talent of the District 205 students at the Martin Luther King Celebration and has offered every student who performed an opportunity to take one free class at South Suburban College. He hopes to encourage more District 205 students to enroll in South Suburban.
- The Thornton Speech Team has won seven consecutive speech tournaments this season. Speech Team Co-captain Anthony Boyd was captured practicing after school by a Chicago Tribune photographer.
- The following dates were announced for the month of February and March:  
February 16      Presidents' Day – No School  
February 13      Grade/Progress Reports mailed  
February 17      7:00 p.m. South Suburban College  
Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr.'s South Suburban Town  
Hall Meeting

February 25	Late Start
February 27	Black History Month Assemblies at Thornwood, Thornton and Thornridge held during school
February 27	ACT Registration Deadline for April 4th Test
February 28	1:00 p.m. Village of Hazel Crest, Senior Center, 3000 W. 171st Place, Black History Program
March 2	Casimir Pulaski Day – No School
March 6	Grade/Progress Reports mailed
March 11	Late Start

COMMUNICATIONS,  
Con't.

The following individuals spoke during public participation:

PUBLIC  
PARTICIPATION

- Edward Crayton (Dolton) asked 1) are students' grades are improving and 2) will there be public participation after the curriculum and the IP presentation. Dr. Buckner answered 1) there is no data available at this time and 2) public participation will not be re-opened and the curriculum meeting scheduled for February 24 would better address any questions.
- Pamela Moss-Jones (South Holland):
  1. stated that the District 2008 report card is not on the website;
  2. asked each Board member how to formulate an intelligent question regarding subject matter that has not yet been presented to the public;
  3. asked if the decision was unanimous to reformat the Board meetings;
  4. asked if the Board was interested in the community's comments regarding unfinished business, new business and the Superintendent report for February 11 and if so, how will this information be obtained from the public;
  5. questioned the data in the 2008-2009 annual report regarding safe harbor as it is not the same figure as reported by ISBE;
  6. asked for the expiration date of the Superintendent's contract;
  7. asked if it is a one-year or multi-year contract;
  8. asked if it is performance based;
  9. asked for the academic performance measures of the contract and
  10. requested the District policy on Freedom of Information Act requests and the Superintendent's contract.
- In response:
  1. Dr. Buckner stated it will be corrected;
  2. Dr. King suggested that Dr. Moss submit her questions in writing;
  3. Mr. Banks responded that one Board member voted no;
  4. Mr. Banks stated that the person could be placed on the Executive Session agenda if desired and that the Board now has the advantage of hearing public comments before voting on any agenda item;
  5. Dr. Buckner said that the State changed this figure a number of times and it will be discussed at the curriculum meeting on February 24;
  6. 2008;
  7. multi-year;
  8. yes;
  9. it will be put in writing, and
  10. instructed her to submit any requests in writing.
- Felita Crayton (Dolton) stated: 1) Public participation is inappropriately placed on the Board meeting agenda; 2) parents have questions about In Progress, and 3) asked for the definition of an IP. Dr. Buckner responded: 2) all 3 schools had IP presentations at parent/teacher conferences; parents have called the Superintendent and individual meetings have been scheduled. Parents may call Principals at any time about IP's to address a students' individual needs; 3) an In Progress presentation will take place at this Board meeting; letters explaining IP's were sent to parents last week and IP information is available on the District website.

Mr. Burton moved, Dr. King seconded, to **Approve the Submission of Grants** as presented by Mr. Doss. The four grants are two biodiesel grants from Walmart Foundation in the amount of \$15,000 and BP Amoco in the amount of \$5,000 for Mr. Brian Sievers physics class at Thornridge; and the District-wide grants--Improving Literacy Through School Libraries in the amount of \$231,000 and Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative from the U.S. Department of Education in the amount of \$1,500,000. On roll call, Members Banks, Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF  
SUBMISSION OF  
GRANTS

Dr. Buckner spoke about transparency and accountability of education as instructed by the Board. Under the District Improvement Plan, the District must improve education for all children. She defined a standards-based education as a process for planning, delivering, monitoring and improving academic programs in which clearly defined academic content standards provide the basis for content in instruction and assessment. The standards must outline what students need to know, understand and be able to do which requires the curriculum, assessments and Professional Development to be aligned to the standards. We must narrow the academic gaps between groups such as race, income and gender. Approximately 70% of the District population is on free and reduced lunch. In 2008-2009 the District went to a full-year schedule to afford students a better opportunity to master the subject. One of the goals of In Progress grades is to master the content before advancing. Student expectations must be clearly communicated and assessments must be clearly reported to the parents. More discussions on assessment access will take place at the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. The four keys to success are: curriculum, instruction, assessment and environment. The Board is insisting on improvement in these areas.

STATE OF THE  
DISTRICT DATA  
PRESENTATION

Mr. Truesdale cited the Smaller Learning Communities Grant expectations: to make students proficient in reading and math by the end of their sophomore year; support systems and mentoring for all students and career experiences for students. There is now an SLC coordinator for the District and facilitators in each school as well as house leaders and senior project coordinators. Teacher teams for freshmen and sophomores in 2009-2010 will allow students to be in cohorts with common teachers so issues such as parent communication can be handled in a team approach. Another goal is to increase the number of students engaged in course completer sequences. Freshman Academy includes a reading course and career tech course and also provides space for an elective (or double-dose of algebra, if needed). Literacy and math coaches support freshmen, upper house students and teachers. The goal of upper houses is to provide career concentrations. Senior Project allows students to explore career opportunities, including scholarships, beginning their freshman year. A rigorous curriculum will provide that:

- All students take high school curriculum.
- Area Instructional Leaders support consistency and alignment to the standards.
- Co-teaching coordinators support special programs.
- The goals are to have a truly standards-based curriculum; modernize curriculum mapping web-based software for better electronic access, and to increase AP enrollment and AP exam scores.
- To support students, progress reporting is every three weeks, after-school programs are available in all three schools and students receiving less than a C grade are issued IP grades.
- New offerings include the Biomedical Project Lead The Way; National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship; Future Digital Media Production; Pre-Pharmacy, and Future AP Government.

Thornton Township Teaching and Learning Partnership's (TTTLP) goal is to improve data sharing and analysis of EXPLORE and ISAT assessments with feeder districts to improve alignment.

Mrs. Lawrence commended everyone involved in the presentations made at the Special Board Meeting on January 26, 2009. She also stated that parents need clear information on the placement of freshmen and test scores.

In response to the Board, Mr. Truesdale explained that TTTLTP has been in existence for 13 years, is the vehicle for articulation with feeder schools and strives to share student data over time.

STATE OF THE  
DISTRICT DATA  
PRESENTATION,  
Con't.

In response to Mr. Burton's concern that there are serious problems with reading in the feeder schools, Mr. Truesdale said that despite the inconsistency in the support for their students, ISAT scores in reading have improved.

At 7:46 p.m., Mr. Banks left the meeting.

MR. BANKS LEFT  
MEETING

In Mr. Banks' absence, Mr. Burton assumed the role of President *Pro Tem*.

PRESIDENT *PRO TEM*

Dr. Lyke, Mr. Shields and Mrs. Williams recited their respective school's vision and gave the following presentations.

STATE OF THE  
BUILDING DATA  
PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Lyke, Principal of Thornton Township High School, began with the following PSAE Score Comparisons.

THORNTON

	2007	Safe Harbor Target	2008	Difference
Reading	29.2	36.3	37.8	+8.6
Math	19.1	27.2	42.6	+23.5

Converted ACT scores have improved also. Attendance rates are going up. The graduation rate has increased from 76.7% in 2005-06 to 80.3% in 2007-08. Post-secondary attendance rate has increased from 70% in 2005-06 to 76% in 2007-08. Recent graduates attend Northwestern, Stanford and many others; the president of the Stanford University Black Student Union is a Thornton alumni. For the 2007-08 school year Thornton has four Gates Millennium scholars whose entire education is paid for by Bill and Melina Gates. This is the highest number of Gates scholars in the State of Illinois. The number of expulsions and suspensions has decreased. Parent attendance at conferences and back to school night as well as participation in parent advisory meetings has increased. Technology is on the rise with more computer labs and equipment. All freshman math classes have smart boards.

The following programs are offered to Thornton students:

- Students participating in the TTHS Pre-Pharmacy Program receive credit at Thornton and South Suburban College.
- Students in the Feinberg School of Medicine Program at Northwestern University travel to the University for medical school curriculum.
- National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) provides small business management programs for 51 participating students.
- Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Engineering Program. Thornton has been selected from more than 3000 schools as one of the 12 PLTW model schools.
- Saturday School is open to all students from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Tutors are available for English, math, science and social studies for students as well as parents. Transportation is provided. Suspensions are reduced if students attend Saturday School.
- A pilot program of single-sex classrooms is underway, with positive feedback.

Athletics: SICA champions include varsity and sophomore football, varsity boys' and freshmen/sophomore cross country. The Varsity basketball team is the 2008 Big Dipper Champion. The Cheerleading team has qualified for state.

Current activity titles include :

Chess team – State qualifiers  
Contest play drama – 5<sup>th</sup> place at State  
Speech team – 6<sup>th</sup> Place at State

Two State Speech Champions  
3-time SICA varsity speech champions  
7-time SICA novice speech champions,  
which is a record in the SICA division.

College bound students have increased nearly 10% from last year. Many successful alumni return to Thornton to help ensure the students lead prosperous lives.

STATE OF THE  
BUILDING DATA  
PRESENTATIONS,  
Con't.

Thornton Basketball team is currently ranked No. 1 in the State and 21 in the nation. Four football players have signed with colleges for full scholarships.

Mr. Rick Shields, Assistant Principal of Thornridge, provided the following data.

THORNRIDGE

- Over the past three years, attendance has been between 94% and 95%; in and out-of-school suspensions and fighting and weapon violations have decreased. Five students were expelled last year and none in this school year.
- PSAT Reading scores rose by 4.6% last year, making safe harbor. Math had a gain of 15.8%.
- Interim assessments show increases in reading from a converted ACT score of 15 to 23; in math the increase went from 11 to 16.
- Support through the Thornridge After School Program (TASP) is available Monday through Thursday for one-on-one and small group sessions.
- The PLATO lab is available Monday through Thursday after school.
- Princeton Review Classes begin in February for PSAT Juniors who registered.
- Senior Project workshops are available Monday through Thursday for anyone needing assistance.
- 68% of the Class of 2008 went on to some type of post-secondary education.
- Members of the District Band received honors at The Illinois Music Education Association (IMEA) Band competition and Band Director David Eanes was a Golden Apple Award recipient.
- Members of the Fine Arts Department performed at the Dr. King Celebration and were offered a free class at South Suburban College by Thornton Township Supervisor Frank Zuccarelli.
- There are 10 Illinois state scholars at Thornridge.
- The Student Board members elected to provide a voice for the Thornridge students.
- The Biodiesel program is expanding their project involving green energy.

Mrs. Williams, Thornwood Principal, presented the following information.

THORNWOOD

The PSAT reading score was 38.6, for a 5.3% gain. The math score was 40.1, for a 15.8% gain. The accountability of the new Attendance Center has provided accurate data and shows the attendance for 2008-09 is 94.34%. In and out-of-school suspensions are 2442, and the number of expulsions is 2.

Parent attendance has increased with large numbers attending back-to-school night, parent-teacher conferences and parent advisories.

The graduation rate has also increased from 81.8% in 2006 to 83.8% in 2008.

The After School Assistance Program (ASAP) provides one on one tutoring sessions with teachers and the Student Academic Success Plan (SAS) helps students who are struggling with their grades and includes a study skills workshop.

Interim Assessment scores have improved from the four tests given as follows :  
Reading improved from 44% to 64%; Algebra II improved from 35% to 43% and the practice ACT improved from 16% to 23%.

Extra-curricular programs include Band which has received a superior rating for 12 consecutive years at the IHSA State Band Competition.

The Speech Team has competed for the last year 6 years and received 8<sup>th</sup> Place in the National Forensic League tournament this year.

Group Interpretation has won 8 state championships and holds the state record.

STATE OF THE  
BUILDING DATA  
PRESENTATIONS,  
Con't.

Other programs include scholastic bowl, Mathletes, national honor society and the audio-visual club. Sports include girls and boys track, basketball, soccer and tennis, wrestling, football, swimming, softball, volleyball, baseball and cheerleading.

Technology provides a computer in every classroom and there is a computer lab in each house as well as the library. PLTW offers opportunities in technology with smart boards, computer-aided drafting (CAD) class, and a radio/TV studio.

The media center consists of over 32,000 holdings. The Poetry Slam meets once a month. ABE Reader program is through the Illinois Library Association and encourages students to read.

There are 2 National Board teachers at Thornwood; 115 hold degrees above bachelors and 4 hold degrees above masters. The average years of experience is 15.

Advanced Placement Courses include Calculus, US history, English and more. PLTW courses introduce students to advanced ideas including an introduction to engineering design, digital electronics and the health and medical fields. The Special Programs Department has fully trained instructors for students with very low reading abilities and programs for visually and physically impaired.

46% of Thornwood graduates will attend a 4-year college; 18% will attend a 2-year college.

At 9:05 p.m., Dr. King moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded, to go into **Executive Session**. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

ADJOURNED  
TO EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

At 10:15 p.m. Dr. King moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded, to **Return to Regular Session**. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

RETURNED TO  
REGULAR SESSION

Dr. King moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** for Student Case #1F-0809-01 for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school year and the 2009-2010 year and recommended placement in the Academy For Learning, Second Chance or RISE, contingent upon a seat being available, as presented to the Board by Mr. Ratliff. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

STUDENT  
DISCIPLINE CASE  
NO. 1F-0809-01

Dr. King moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Uphold the Suspension** for Student Case #3AC-0809-07(S) as presented to the Board by Mrs. Johnson. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

STUDENT  
DISCIPLINE CASE  
NO. 3AC-0809-07(S)

Dr. King moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Uphold the Suspension** for Student Case #3B-0809-08(S) as presented to the Board by Mrs. Johnson. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

STUDENT  
DISCIPLINE CASE  
NO. 3B-0809-08(S)

Dr. King moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** for Student Case #2B-0809-08 for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school year and the 2009-2010 school year and recommended enrollment in the South Suburban College GED Program, Lincoln's Challenge or the Job Corps as presented to the Board by Mr. Shields. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

STUDENT  
DISCIPLINE CASE  
NO. 2B-0809-08

Dr. King moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** for Student Case #2H-0809-09 for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school year and the 2009-2010 year and recommended placement in the Academy For Learning as presented to the Board by Mr. Shields. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

STUDENT  
DISCIPLINE CASE  
NO. 2H-0809-09

Dr. King moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** for Student Case #2H-0809-10 for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school year and the 2009-2010 year and recommended placement in the Academy For Learning as presented to the Board by Mr. Shields. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

STUDENT  
DISCIPLINE CASE  
NO. 2A-0809-10

Dr. King moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** for Student Case #2A-0809-11 for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school year and the 2009-2010 year and recommended placement in the Academy For Learning as presented to the Board by Mr. Shields. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

STUDENT  
DISCIPLINE CASE  
NO. 2A-0809-11

Dr. King moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Hold the Expulsion in Abeyance** for Student Case #2H-0809-12 for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school year and the 2009-2010 year and recommended placement in the Academy For Learning as presented to the Board by Mr. Shields. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

STUDENT  
DISCIPLINE CASE  
NO. 2H-0809-12

At 10:19 p.m. Dr. Penman moved, Mr. Burton seconded, to **Adjourn the Meeting**. On roll call, Members Burton, King, Lawrence and Penman voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

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President *Pro Tem*

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Secretary