

**Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of
Hawthorn Community Consolidated District #73, Lake County, Illinois
841 W. End Ct, Vernon Hills IL 60061
7:00 p.m. on the 19th day of September 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL

The Board Secretary called attendance and the following members attended: Michael Engle, Julie Clifford, George Fievet, Robin Cleek, Karl Borchers, and Wes Polen. Also in attendance were Asst. Supt. of Finance & Business Operations Ms. Jennifer Akin; Asst. Supt. of Student Services Ms. Alicia Corrigan; Asst. Supt. of Teaching & Learning 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 member Joel Finfer was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Former Hawthorn D73 parent Beth Wilcox shared concerns about her son's IEP being repeatedly unmet while he was in 7th and 8th grade at Hawthorn Middle North. She expressed a need for improved staff training to support neurodiverse students and noted that the district's services differ from the more robust offerings at Vernon Hills High School. Ms. Wilcox also encouraged the board to assess staffing needs to better accommodate students returning from SEDOL programs.

Matty Wilcox, a former D73 student and current freshman at Vernon Hills High School, spoke during public comment about his experience with special education services at Hawthorn Middle North. He shared that while he now receives the IEP support he needs, his 7th-grade year lacked a case manager and proper accommodations for his dysgraphia and auditory processing issues. Matty praised the supportive environment at the high school and encouraged the district to enhance its special education department by hiring and training staff to better serve students like him.

RECOGNITION

The Recognition Committee was excited to kick off this year's recognition program by honoring three outstanding community members. Holly Marder, Kim Kopin, and Charlie Sostack were recognized for the significant contributions they made to Hawthorn Middle School North's musical productions. Each of them have shown to be incredibly dedicated members of our community, giving their time and efforts to support the Middle North musicals.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Robin Cleek reminded the board to respond to Ms. Jessica Flores for the upcoming IASB Lake Division Dinner on October 9 or the ED-RED Event on October 18.

ED-RED REPORT

No report at this time.

SEDOL REPORT

Mr. Michael Engle reported that the last executive board meeting was on September 19 and the last governing board meeting was on August 7. Staff interviews for a new Assistant Superintendent of Business are underway, and Dr. Hackett and Dr. Thomas presented the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), which includes four SEDOL-wide goals and incorporates 11 of the 36 recommendations from Exceptional Learning Solutions (ELS). The four goals for 2024-2025 are: 1) Provide exceptional programs and services to meet the needs of students in the SEDOL community, 2) Establish an effective and equitable financial structure to support students and district needs, 3) Advance high standards and expectations, and 4) Advance effective collaborative team practices. The executive board also approved an immediate change in meeting start times from 9:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Additionally, several upcoming SEDOL Foundation events were promoted, including One Special Night, Laremont Trivia Night, Dinner Dance, and Pucks for Autism, which takes place across over 40 arenas. More details on these events can be found at sedolfoundation.org. The next executive board meeting is scheduled for October 24th, and the next governing board meeting will be held on December 4.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. George Fievet reported that the Site & Facilities Committee held its meeting on September 10, 2024, during which the committee reviewed several key items. The district is finalizing a new custodial contract with GFS, which will span 18 months to align with the fiscal year, leading to a bid process in 2026. Additionally, the district renewed its energy cooperative agreement,

securing a fixed rate that will save money on energy costs and protect against price spikes through 2027. This rate applies to all buildings and ensures budget stability while keeping facilities powered and air-conditioned for the next three years. The board also began discussions about summer projects, including renovations to the Middle North front office, library, and flooring. Plans for these projects are expected by November to meet the bidding window and begin work as soon as school ends. Year two of the district's two-year mechanical project will also be completed, bringing standard mechanical systems and central controls to all buildings. Facility rental discussions will continue next month.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

No report at this time.

PRESENTATIONS

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Mr. Adam Palmer, presented the 10-Day Enrollment and Staffing Update, offering an overview of Hawthorn District 73's enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year and insights into how current trends might impact future staffing decisions. As of September 3, 2024, the district's total enrollment stood at 3,474 students, with an average class size of 21.9 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Mr. Palmer also shared the 2024-2025 staffing report for individual buildings, along with a detailed breakdown of enrollment by building and grade level. He emphasized the district's commitment to aligning staffing with student needs while maintaining fiscal responsibility. Planning for a comprehensive staffing plan for the 2025-2026 school year will begin this fall.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan reviewed Policy PRESS Issue 115. The Policy Sub-Committee convened on September 11, 2024 to review policy updates incorporated in PRESS Issue 115. A total of 21 policies and exhibits were reviewed by the committee. The majority of the policies are five-year reviews with no changes to the actual policies or updates to references and footnotes. Two policies were highlighted that were not included in PRESS 115 that included introducing a new policy regarding the Audio Recordings of Student-Related Meetings and updates to Policy 7:80 Release Time for Religious Instructions/Observance to align with the district's current practice. The policies will be brought back to seek board approval during the October 17, 2024 board meeting.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Business Operations Ms. Jennifer Akin reviewed the Teacher and Administrator Compensation Report. In accordance with school code, the report must be approved by the Board of Education and posted on the district website by September of each year.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Hannigan welcomed the D120 Finance and Facilities Committee, who provided an update on their referendum. The committee's presentation covered the district's facility needs, current student enrollment, and the improvement plan. They concluded by encouraging the community to visit the D120 website for FAQs and additional details. Dr. Myers concluded by expressing gratitude for Hawthorn D73's continued partnership and positive relationship with D120, noting how this collaboration positively impacts the success of shared students.

The Superintendent's Report concluded with a transportation update given by Ms. Jennifer Akin. She outlined proactive measures taken by the business office to enhance services. Lakeside CFO Tom O'Sullivan attended the May Site & Facility Committee meeting to discuss how Lakeside could support the 2024-2025 goals. With 95% of registrations complete, the business office provided fall student data to Lakeside in June, allowing for earlier route planning and driver assignments. Key leaders met in July to discuss initial routes, resulting in the addition of four routes to reduce average travel time to 40 minutes or less. While unexpected delays occasionally occurred, such as overheated buses, these were addressed promptly. In the first weeks of school, the district collaborated with Lakeside to streamline operations, improve efficiency, and maintain clear communication with stakeholders, ensuring the safe transport of students. Board members followed up on Lakeside's plans to improve their buses, considering the district's three-year contract and the initiative to pilot iPads for routing and substitute drivers. Ms. Akin responded that a significant future initiative involves transitioning to electric buses, although this is a gradual process. She also mentioned plans to replace aging diesel buses with gas buses. While Lakeside is not yet ready to pilot iPads due to lacking the necessary infrastructure, this will remain a topic for future discussion.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes from August 15, 2024
- 7.2 Closed Session Minutes from August 15, 2024
- 7.3 Expenditure Report from September 19, 2024
- 7.4 Amazon Expense Report from September 19, 2024
- 7.5 Mastercard Report from July 22, 2024
- 7.6 Treasurer's Report from July 2024
- 7.7 Personnel Report

18 New Hires:

10 Resignations:

1 Change of Status:

4 Leave of Absence:

18 New Hires: Jodi Berlinger, LBSI Teacher, MS; Jane Kennedy, ELA Teacher, MS; Kerry Appelbaum, Instructional Assistant, MN; Sai Teja Sri Bathina, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, TL; Amy Bennett, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES; Georgina Castellanos, Instructional Assistant, EN; Alejandra Castro, Office Clerk, AS; Pamela Duke, Instructional Assistant, EN; Inessa Fannin, Instructional Assistant, EN; Claudia Gurke, Instructional Assistant, TL; Ashley Gwynne, School Nurse, EN; Adonai Isakova, Student Secretary, TL; Rachel Koza, Instructional Assistant, TL; Meghan Mahler, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, TL; Danielle McGovern, Instructional Assistant, AS; Elizabeth Mibb, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, EN; Kelly O'Connor, Health Clerk, MN/EN; Valerie Smith, Instructional Assistant, MS.

10 Resignations: Jillian Brooks, Interventionist, MS, 09/09/2024; Alexi Viviano, Social Worker, District, 08/15/2024; Ankita Jain, Instructional Assistant, EN, 09/20/2024; Padmaja Yadav Jollu, Instructional Assistant, EN, 09/20/2024; Gayathri Narayanan, Instructional Assistant, MN, 09/19/2024; Priyadharshini Sendil Kumar, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, TL, 06/04/2024; Sandra Sermeno, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, DL, 09/20/2024; Priyanka Srikanta, Instructional Assistant, EN, 09/06/2024; Rachel Sternfield, Instructional Assistant, EN, 09/20/2024; Cheryl Wickland, Instructional Assistant, Lincoln, 09/03/2024.

4 Leaves of Absence: Nicole Cooper, Occupational Therapist, ES, 12/11/2024; Sangita Parande, Library/Media Facilitator, MS, 08/28/2024; Beth Mariella, Instructional Assistant, HSYL, 08/20/2024; Sandra Wingader, Technology Clerk, District, 10/31/2024.

1 Change of Status: Shobhana Parecha, Instructional Assistant, EN, 08/20/2024.

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

Roll Call Vote: Robin Cleek, Wes Polen, George Fievet, Julie Clifford, Michael Engle, and Karl Borchers.

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Ms. Jennifer Akin reviewed the two action items to the board: final approval of the 2024-2025 budget and approval of the 2025-2026 budget calendar. The first draft of the tentative 2024-2025 budget was presented in June, with final revenues and expenses booked in July. The final tentative budget was shared during the August board meeting, where a budget hearing was held. The business office projects a net surplus of approximately \$819,000 for unforeseen expenses during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. With the budget now in its final form, the office requested the board's approval of the 2025-2026 budget calendar to begin work on the next budget, starting with the tentative 2024 levy.

ACTION ITEMS

Final 2024/2025 Budget

MOTION: George Fievet moved that the Board of Education approve the Final 2024/2025 Budget; Julie Clifford seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Robin Cleek, Karl Borchers, Wes Polen, Julie Clifford, George Fievet and Michael Engle.

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Approval of the 2025/2026 Budget Calendar and person to work on the 2025/2026 budget

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board of Education approve the 2025/2026 Budget Calendar and person to work on the 2025/2026 budget; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Robin Cleek, Karl Borchers, Wes Polen, Julie Clifford, George Fievet and Michael Engle.

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Enrollment - Uploaded
2. FOIA Log, Dr. Hannigan reported that the District has received five FOIA requests since the last board meeting and have been responded to as identified in Section 9.2 of the Board agenda.

3. Media Clips

TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

Board member Julie Clifford requested the addition of a future discussion topic concerning policy and procedural changes during the district's reintegration of students from SEDOL. While supportive of the decision, Ms. Clifford emphasized the need to prevent disruptions in combined classes, specifically situations where a classroom might require evacuation due to a student's emotional challenges, potentially impacting the learning environment. All board members present agreed, and the topic will be added to a future agenda.

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:*

Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2).

and

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 George Fievet. The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m. **All in favor? Yes.**

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Flores

Robin Cleek, President

George Fievet, Secretary

Date Minutes Approved: _____