



## Board Briefs

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[November 28, 2023 Regular Action Meeting](#)

[Board Meeting Videos](#)

### **Public Hearing**

As required by law, the Board held a public hearing before considering approval of the 2023-26 E-Learning Plan. The E-Learning Plan is listed for action later on the agenda.

### **Approval of Agenda**

The Board voted to approve the November 28 agenda as presented.

### **Board Reports**

#### ***President***

In his report, Board President Dan Struck said he hoped everyone had a great Thanksgiving holiday and he wished everyone a smooth and successful finish to the first semester. Mr. Struck thanked all who participated in the focus groups and survey to provide their input for the search firm, Search Exec Connect, to create the [Superintendent Profile](#). He said he looked forward to their detailed report later in the meeting and he also looked forward to more opportunities for community input on selecting the next superintendent.

#### ***Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee***

Committee Chair Jody Elliott-Schrimmer provided a summary of the DEI meeting held immediately prior to the Board meeting. She said the committee discussed “Operation Red Apple,” the hiring process the District is using to ensure hiring practices are not biased. Ms. Elliott-Schrimmer said the committee also discussed additional efforts the District is making in recruiting and retention.

### **Administration Reports**

#### ***Superintendent***

To eliminate any confusion and avoid delays in construction projects, Superintendent Dr. Bruce Law asked the Board about following a specific protocol in procurement when certain criteria are met. In particular, he asked the Board about a three-pronged test to determine whether an expenditure could bypass the Facilities committee and move directly to the Board for final approval so long as the expenditure:

1. Is part of a project that was vetted first by the Facilities Committee and approved by the Board
2. Is a project that has a component that has a long lead time
3. Comes back from the bidding process with costs in line with expected estimates

Dr. Law said this process does not skip any steps and would be especially helpful when items have a long lead time. The Board directed Dr. Law to move ahead with this approach for items that pass the three-pronged test and directed him to make sure that the details related to the three prongs—dates of Facilities Committee review and Board approval as well as cost projections—are posted in public content for the agenda item.

Dr. Law reminded everyone about the community event being held in conjunction with Deerfield Public Schools District 109, North Shore School District 112 and the Deerfield Parent Network November 30 with Julie Lythcott-Haims. He said this event entitled, “How to Raise Successful Kids,” is for the community as a whole as these concerns are not just high school concerns, they impact everyone. He closed by noting that this event marks the soft launch of the new Performing Arts Center at Deerfield High School. The grand opening of the Performing Arts Center will happen on December 13 with the Holiday Music Extravaganza.

### ***Passion for Excellence – DHS Director of Bands Pam Holt***

This month’s installment of the second season celebrating the passion for excellence in student experiences of District 113 faculty and staff features [DHS Director Bands Pam Holt](#).

### ***FOIA***

Dr. Law reported that there had been no FOIA requests received since the last meeting.

### ***Discussion***

#### ***Superintendent Search***

Representatives from School Exec Connect Drs. Linda Yonke and Kevin O’Mara provided the Board with a report on the stakeholder input they gathered and used to create a profile of the next superintendent to replace the current superintendent who is retiring at the end of this year. That profile includes input from 158 stakeholders who participated in the 20 focus groups/ community forums and the 567 responses to the community online survey. The [profile, focus group input](#) and [survey responses](#), as well as all superintendent search-related items can be found on the District 113 website under the “Superintendent Search” tab.

Drs. Yonke and O’Mara then discussed the timeline of next steps with the Board, saying interviews with the initial slate of candidates would be planned for early January.

#### ***Course Proposals for the 2024-25 School Year***

The Board discussed [the course additions and changes](#) recommended for the 2024-25 Program of Studies. New for next year is a proposal to offer an earned honors option for some courses to make learning more rigorous and make challenging content more accessible to more students. The item will come back for a vote at the December 12 meeting.

#### ***Security Update***

Chief Operations Officer Brian Ahmer shared that he, Director of Security Amy Oliva, and DHS Security Manager George Grubb were part of the limited group of educators and lawmakers invited to tour Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, the site of the horrific 2018 school shooting. Mr. Ahmer reported that safety and security experts made recommendations specific to what was learned from Parkland and that many of those recommendations confirm actions District 113 has already taken or is currently taking.

He then provided the Board with an update on the following security enhancements, including some of the security recommendations the Board approved on August 8, as indicated below.

- Testing of **security film on exterior glass** has been completed and installation of the security film is underway and expected to be completed in February 2024. The film mitigates the risk of an intruder from gaining access to the school by shooting their way in.
- Implementation of **additional exterior card readers for egress** is underway and training for staff will begin second semester. The card readers mitigate the risk of an unauthorized person being let into the building through doors not monitored by security.
- Testing of an interior door **access control system equipped with remote door release and lockdown capability** is underway with full deployment expected in summer 2024. The system allows interior doors to be locked remotely to mitigate the risk of an intruder easily entering classrooms.
- A **building threat assessment** tool has been created to provide step-by-step protocols formalizing coordination with law enforcement when a threat impacting the safety of the school community is reported. This tool mitigates the escalation of a reported threat.
- Installation and testing of **enhanced security cameras** equipped with machine learning have been completed. This system mitigates the risk of an undetected shooter by generating an alert of a brandished weapon within three to five seconds.

Dr. Law spoke about the ongoing effort and commitment District 113 has made to continue to learn and get better to improve security practices every single day. He stressed that the District continues to layer security enhancements to mitigate against the constellation of risks schools face but emphasized that the District cannot eliminate all risks.

Dr. Law then spoke about the staffing required to operate the WDS at each entrance, with at least two to three security staff members required to manage the WDS function. To address this staffing need, the District has tried various strategies to have adequate security staff for weapons screening, all of which have proven unsuccessful. Now the District has posted six school traffic safety guard positions to be stationed outside at both schools during arrival so that trained D113 security staff who are currently directing traffic outside in parking lots or on public streets can be moved inside to conduct more skilled safety work. If the District is able to hire six school traffic safety guards, WDS can be deployed at two doors at each school for student arrival.

After a lengthy discussion about the staffing challenges in expanding WDS to more than one entrance at each school and the long-term plan for WDS in District 113, the Board directed the Administration to move forward with the hire of six school traffic safety guards. The start date of this plan cannot be determined until the six school traffic safety guard positions are filled. The Board and Dr. Law agreed that restricting students and visitors to two entrances at arrival will create inconveniences because of visitor parking and because students arrive by multiple means—bus, driving themselves, walking, or drop-off—and how students get to school has largely determined which door they use to enter the building.

Regarding the long-term use of WDS in District 113, the Board agreed it should vote to determine whether and at what level the use of WDS should continue in the future.

### **Action**

#### ***Approval of District 113 e-Learning Plan 2023-26***

The Board voted to approve as presented the 2023-26 District 113 E-Learning Plan. Pursuant to *Public Act 101-0012*, school districts may conduct e-learning during emergency days, provided that the district's Regional Office of Education (ROE) has approved the plan in advance.

#### ***Approve Amendment to Employment Contract of Special Education Coordinator at Deerfield High School***

The Board voted to approve as recommended an amendment to the 2023-24 employment contract of the Special Educational Coordinator at Deerfield High school.

#### ***Approve Amendment to Employment Contract of Special Education Coordinator at Highland Park High School***

The Board voted to approve as recommended an amendment to the 2023-24 employment contract of the Special Educational Coordinator at Highland Park High school.

### **Consent Agenda**

The Board approved [the consent agenda](#) as presented. The consent agenda includes personnel, stipends and board bills.

The meeting adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

December 12, 2023

Regular Action Meeting

6:00 p.m. Closed Session, 7:00 p.m. Open Session

Administration Building