

**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 6th day of February 2025**

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: George Fievet, Michael Engle, Robin Cleek, Karl Borchers, Julie Clifford 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. Mr. Joel Finfer was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment at this time.

RECOGNITION

Vice President Wes Polen and Board Member Karl Borchers spoke on behalf of the Recognition Committee to formally acknowledge exceptional members of the Hawthorn community.

Deb Zajac was recognized for her outstanding dedication as a lunch/recess supervisor at Hawthorn Townline Elementary. The Townline administration highlighted Deb's commitment to learning every student's name and understanding their unique needs. Her efforts foster a strong sense of belonging and respect among students, contributing to a positive and inclusive school environment. Deb was presented with a certificate of recognition.

Sal Constanza from the Knights of Columbus at St. Mary of Vernon Catholic Church was recognized for his continued commitment to ensuring students stay warm during the winter months. Through the organization's fundraising efforts, Sal and the Knights of Columbus provided brand-new, high-quality coats to students in need. Sal was presented with a certificate of recognition.

Shannon Garcia, sponsor of the National Honor Society at Vernon Hills High School, was recognized for her ongoing collaboration with Hawthorn District 73. Shannon has been instrumental in organizing student volunteers for various community initiatives, including the 4th of July parade, highway cleanups, and food pantry support. Over the past three years, she has coordinated more than 100 student volunteers, significantly contributing to the Hawthorn community. Shannon was presented with a certificate of recognition.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Board Member Karl Borchers extended well wishes to staff and families, encouraging everyone to stay healthy during this season. He also expressed appreciation for the custodial staff's efforts in thoroughly disinfecting the buildings, ensuring a clean and safe environment for students and staff.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Robin Cleek shared the draft 2025-2026 Board of Education calendar with board members, and all unanimously agreed to move forward with the proposed meeting dates as presented. She also reminded the board to RSVP for the upcoming Lake Division Dinner scheduled for March 12, 2025. Lastly, she shared that she recently attended the District 128 Health Committee meeting, where a guest speaker presented their new book. The speaker emphasized the importance of viewing children's behaviors as a form of communication rather than solely as disciplinary issues. It was an insightful presentation, and those interested may want to explore the book *Untethered*.

ED-RED REPORT

No report at this time.

SEDOL REPORT

Mr. Michael Engle reported that the last executive board meeting was held on January 23 and the last governing board meeting was held on December 4. As part of the SEDOL Continuous Improvement Plan, administration will provide advisory updates which focus on improving curriculum and instruction through review and implementation. In regards to the FY23 audit, the board

expects to receive the audit review soon, with finalization to follow. The FY24 audit process will then begin, and administration will provide a financial planning update at the next governing board meeting.

For Fairhaven School projects, four bids were received for roof, window, and rooftop unit replacements, with the lowest bid—just under \$1.5 million—awarded to Efraim Carlson Construction Company. The board approved the contract. Lastly, the executive board recommended one-year contracts for interim superintendents Dr. Judy Hackett and Dr. Tim Thomas, effective July 1, 2025. The next executive board meeting is February 27, and the next governing board meeting is March 5.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

No report at this time.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Julie Clifford reported that the last Wellness Committee met on January 28, 2025. The committee continues to review the five pillars of the Whole Child framework, ensuring alignment with new programs. The committee analyzed behavior data from November to January, comparing 2025 to 2024. It was encouraging to hear that incidents of bullying and harassment decreased from 12 to 7, disorderly conduct dropped by 26%, and physical altercations declined by 29%, reflecting the positive impact of current initiatives. Discussions also focused on improving consistency in behavior response, reinforcing emotional support, and enhancing positive reinforcement strategies. Looking ahead, the next meeting will address nutrition policies, snack guidelines, and potential shifts in focus based on emerging behavior trends.

KEY TO 73 FOUNDATION REPORT

Ms. Julie Clifford reported on the Key to 73's Foundation Report and the committee's recent meeting. The foundation's website is set to launch mid February and she encouraged the community to check out the website through the Hawthorn newsletter and sign up for the D73 Foundation's newsletter for updates on news and events. She also shared that planning is underway for the D73 Foundation and PTO Golf Outing, scheduled for June 6. Sponsorship and volunteer opportunities will be available, with more details to be posted on the new website.

PRESENTATIONS

The Hawthorn Middle School Administration presented the Middle School Schedule Update. The presentation gave an overview on the adjustments being made to the schedule for the 2025-2026 school year. Key changes include moving to a nine-period day, the health rotation is moving into the PE period, students being afforded the ability to select one elective, and the new extended lunch period (Lunch, Learn, and Leisure), which reduces cafeteria crowding and offers structured breaks for academics, socialization, and activities. A daily advisory period has also been added to strengthen student connections. Electives remain student-driven, with options such as Band, Chorus, Orchestra, or a rotating Art, Music, and STEM wheel. The PE/Health Department is finalizing the health rotation structure. Next steps include reviewing student placement data and determining staffing. Administrators will communicate schedule adjustments and course options to families the week of February 10.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning, Dr. Allison Stein, along with the foundational resource pilot teams proposed four middle school foundational resource adoptions. The presentation gave an overview of the district's recommendations for new middle school math, science, Spanish, and social-emotional learning (SEL) resources to support equitable access to high-quality instructional materials. Following a comprehensive pilot process, which included teacher feedback, student surveys, and administrative evaluations, the district recommends adopting *Amplify Desmos Math* for middle school math. This student-driven, problem-based curriculum emphasizes conceptual understanding and real-world application. For science, the district proposes *OpenSciEd*, an inquiry-based program aligned with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) that promotes hands-on exploration and scientific reasoning. In Spanish, *¡Qué Chévere!* is the recommended program, offering a culturally immersive language experience with interactive content and real-world applications. For SEL, the district recommends *Wayfinder*, a research-backed curriculum focused on connection, purpose, and emotional well-being. The total projected cost for a six-year adoption, with a three-year term for the SEL resource, is approximately \$713,590. This includes instructional materials, digital resources, and professional development. Board members asked relevant questions, and this discussion item will be brought back for the next scheduled board meeting. Pending approval, the district will finalize purchase plans, align resources with the district's GVC, and implement staff training to ensure successful implementation in the classroom.

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan and team reviewed the recent Policy PRESS Issue 117. The Policy Sub-Committee met on January 27 to review policy updates incorporated in PRESS Issue 117. The committee reviewed a total of 16 policies. The policy updates will be brought back to seek board approval in the February 20 board meeting.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Business Operations, Ms. Jennifer Akin, provided an update on the bid results for the 2025-2026 summer projects, accompanied by Tom McGrath from LAMP. She shared the good news that the district received strong interest, with approximately 20 bids submitted across four trade packages—an encouraging turnout for this time of year. The preliminary bid results came in very close to the projected budget of \$2.5 million, with the current total at \$2,551,638. One

bidder had a miscalculation, requiring the district to move to the next lowest bid, but even with this adjustment, the overall costs remained within expectations. Additionally, contingencies and allowances are in place to address any unforeseen expenses during the renovation process. Ms. Akin also confirmed that furniture and casework will be planned separately as part of the 2025-2026 facility budget, while \$400,000 for flooring was already allocated in the 2024-2025 budget.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan expressed his gratitude to staff, students, and families for their patience as the district navigated recent internet challenges. He gave a special shout-out to staff for their flexibility in quickly adjusting instructional plans, ensuring minimal disruption to student learning.

He also reminded the community to do their part in maintaining a healthy school environment by keeping sick children home, practicing good hygiene, and reinforcing proper handwashing. Custodial teams continue their efforts to disinfect buildings and enhance cleanliness.

Lastly, he noted that an update on substitute teacher staffing, as requested at a previous board meeting, will be presented at the February 20 board meeting as part of Mr. Adam Palmer's staffing agenda item.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes from January 16, 2025
- 7.2 Closed Session Minutes from January 16, 2025
- 7.3 Personnel Report

3 New Hires:

4 Leaves of Absence:

1 Change of Status:

2 Resignations:

3 New Hires: Rene Plona, Language Arts Teacher, MN; Sana Khan, Instructional Assistant, MS; Hallie Pikrone, Instructional Assistant, Lincoln.

4 Leaves of Absence: Phillip Messina, Music/Vocal Teacher, ES, 05/19/2025; Shannon Cooney, Human Resources Specialist, District, 03/26/2025; Deanna Cusumano, Nurse, HSYL, 01/17/2025; Colleen Hehr, Payroll Specialist, District, 07/09/2025; Udani Hettiarachchi, Instructional Assistant, 01/21/2025.

1 Change of Status: Tricia Welle, Principal Secretary, Aspen, 01/23/2025.

2 Resignations: Nicole Rodrigo, Principal, Dual Language, 06/30/2025; Jake Scheuring, Music Teacher, HSYL, 01/24/2025.

Michael Engle requested to remove section 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from January 16, 2025** and 7.2 **Closed Session Minutes from January 16, 2025** from the consent agenda.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Wes Polen moved that the Board of Education approve 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from January 16, 2025** and 7.2 **Closed Session Minutes from January 16, 2025** as presented; seconded by Karl Borchers.

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

Motion carried: 5 ayes; 1 abstain

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

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Business Operations, Mrs. Jennifer Akin, reviewed the business department's action items. She presented the proposed student registration fees for the 2025-2026 academic year and the fees for the 2025 summer school program, which were previously discussed at the January board meeting. The business office is requesting board approval for these fees.

ACTION ITEMS

2025-2026 Student Fees

MOTION: Wes Polen moved that the Board of Education approve the 2025-2026 Student Fees; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Summer School Fees

MOTION: Wes Polen moved that the Board of Education approve the Summer School Fees; Karl Borchers seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

GENERAL INFORMATION

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

TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

No topics for future discussion.

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, George Fievet made a motion to adjourn to Closed Session, seconded by Karl Borchers. The meeting adjourned at 8:50 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: _____