



**Friday, March 12, 2025
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION, THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205
HELD AT THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL 15001 BROADWAY AVE., HARVEY,
ILLINOIS, AT 6:30 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32p.m. President Graham made the following announcement: Any person may record or broadcast an open Board meeting. Special requests to facilitate recordings or broadcast an open Board meeting should be directed to the Superintendent at least 24 hours before the meeting. Recording meetings shall not distract or disturb Board Members or participants. Please know if you participate in public participation, you are part of the Board meeting and may be taped.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY
BOARD PRESIDENT

On roll call, Members Banks, Davis, Graham, Lawrence, Moody, and Owens answered. Member Brown was absent. Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Superintendent; Dr. Jerry Doss, Associate Superintendent; Mr. Toriano Horton, Assistant Superintendent of Business Operations; Mr. Thomas Porter, Executive Director of Special Services; Ms. Rosaura Duran, Director of Human Resources were also present.

ROLL CALL

Report from Curriculum Committee: The last meeting was held on March 6, 2025. Ms. Rouse presented the current CTE programs, the principals presented their prep ACT plans, ATLAS was also discussed.

COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE

Report from Finance & Facilities Committee: The last meeting was held on February 27, 2025. All items reviewed are on the agenda for approval. The next meeting will be held March 27, 2025.

Report from Policy Committee: None.

Report from Discipline Committee: None.

Dr. Davis moved, Mr. Banks seconded, to **Approve the Consent Agenda**, which includes the following:

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES

- Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes and Executive Session Minutes dated February 14, 2025
- The District 205 bills as presented for payment dated February 12, 2025 through March 11, 2025
- Personnel dated March 11, 2025 (Resignations, Leave of Absence, New Hires and Terminations)
- Ratification(s)
 - Approval of the Thornton IHSA State Speech Tournament, Overnight Trip, Peoria, IL, February 20-22, 2025
 - Approval of the Thornwood IHSA State Speech Tournament, Overnight Trip, Peoria, IL, February 20-23, 2025

BILLS

PERSONNEL

RATIFICATION

- Approval of the Thornton Girls Wrestling IHSA State Finals, Overnight Trip, Bloomington, IL, February 27- March 1, 2025
- Approval of the Special Olympics State Basketball Tournament, Overnight Trip, Normal, IL, March 7-8, 2025
- Approval of the Thornwood Athletics Carthage College Tour, Overnight Trip, Kenosha, WI, March 20-22, 2025

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

The following individuals spoke during Public Participation:

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION

- Ms. Crayton of Dolton inquired about federal funding and lunch programs affected by the budget cuts. Dr. Cunningham responded that as of that time, those cuts did not impact our school district.
- Mr. Yamini of Homewood would like to introduce an Expungement Program to the district.
- Ms. Holloway of AKA Sorority would like to have a forum with public officials to speak about the impact of young voters.

Dr. Doss stated there have been no FOIA requests since last board meeting.

FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT

Dr. Ratliff presented the following information:

COMMUNICATIONS

- **Thornridge High School:**
 - Bill Gates Scholarship
 - Kaliah Oparah was selected as one of the 1,500 Finalists for the Bill Gate Scholarship (full-ride scholarship)
 - Trade School Thursdays
 - South Suburban College shared information about their Department of Engineering and Technology, opportunities available to TR students
 - Speech Team
 - Took 7 Individual events to IHSA Regionals
 - Skating Party
 - Activities hosted a skating party for students
 - Black History Month
 - Celebrated through music, art, and crafts
- **Thornton High School:**
 - Intermediate Fashion Students
 - Quilts were made using recycled materials and donated
 - Pyramid of Success Students
 - Two students received Exemplary Status, which includes zero unexcused absences and straight A's
- **Thornwood High School:**
 - Black History Month
 - Assembly held with African Student Association Club Fashion Show
 - Special Olympics Rhythmic Gymnastics Team
 - Excellent performance at the Palatine Sectionals and three students won gold medals; going to State in June.
 - Competitive Dance Team National Competition
 - Won 1st Place at the Contest of Champions in Orlando, FL
 - ATI Ambulance Visits Thornwood

- Students had the opportunity to learn more about becoming a 911 dispatcher or EMT
- University of Illinois- Chicago Visit
 - Counselors took 32 seniors for a college visit and 11 students that applied were all accepted
- **PEACE Center:**
 - Improved Attendance
 - Past 3 quarters attendance rates have shown consistent improvement (3-4%) and student chronic absences have dropped by almost 37%!
 - Resilience Award Honoree
 - Michael Wilson, III was recognized for his remarkable transformation of improving his GPA, attendance, and no discipline referrals

Mu Alpha Theta Presentation – Dr. Ratliff and Mr. Neely spoke about the great success the Mu Alpha Theta, the National Math Honors Society has had over the years at District 205. Mr. Neely spoke of his students’ accomplishments. All students were presents with medals of accomplishment.

PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Doss presented the First Reading of PRESS Plus Policy Update 117 for a 30-day review. This included policy draft updates and policies for review and monitoring. A copy is available to view at our district office. These policies will be approved at our April Board Meeting.

FIRST READING OF
PRESS PLUS POLICY
UPDATE 117, 30 DAY
REVIEW

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Dr. Davis seconded the **Approval of the 2025- 2026 and 2026-2027 School Calendars** as presented by Ms. Duran. Ms. Duran presented the highlights of the two-year calendar that the Joint Calendar Committee agreed upon. This information will be shared with our feeder schools. On roll call, Members Lawrence, Davis, Banks, Graham, Moody, and Owens voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF THE
2025-2026 & 2026-
2027 SCHOOL
CALENDARS

Mr. Owens moved, Mrs. Moody seconded the **Approval of the Thornridge Varsity Baseball Field of Dreams Tournament, Overnight Trip, Dyersville, Iowa, May 10-11, 2025**, as presented by Dr. Moore. Students will get to visit the site of where the movie, Field of Dreams was filmed, visit and play on the field. On roll call, Members Owens, Moody, Brown, Banks, Davis, Graham, and Lawrence voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
THORNRIDGE
BASEBALL OVERNIGHT
TRIP TO DYERSVILLE,
IA, MAY 10-11, 2025

Mrs. Moody moved, Mr. Banks seconded the **Approval of the Transportation Supervisor Office Buildout** as presented by Mr. Horton. Currently, the Transportation Supervisor has been sharing an office since September 2024. The office will be built on the northeast side of our District office. On roll call, Members Moody, Banks, Davis, Graham, Lawrence, and Owens voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF THE
TRANSPORTATION
SUPERVISOR OFFICE
BUILDOUT

Dr. Cunningham stated the following:

Good evening, Board Members, Administrators, Faculty, Community, and Students, It is an honor to address you today as we celebrate the ongoing success of the **District 205 Student Board of Education Superintendent’s Special Committee** and its remarkable work in developing the **Pyramid of Success**. This initiative has profoundly impacted student motivation, attendance, and academic performance across Thornton Township High School District 205.

SUPERINTENDENT
REPORT

The Pyramid of Success: Purpose and Vision

Our mission as educators is to teach, inspire, and empower students to reach their full potential. The Pyramid of Success was designed with this in mind—to create an incentive-based system that encourages students to improve their attendance and academic performance. Through a structured tier system, students are given **realistic goals** to visualize their growth while being **rewarded for their achievements**.

The **Student Board of Education** took the lead in developing this system, ensuring that it reflected the needs and desires of their peers. The committee gathered student input through surveys and data collection to determine the most effective incentives, leading to an engaging and impactful model. This has been completed over multiple years.

Motivation: The Key to Student Success

At the core of the **Pyramid of Success** lies a deep understanding of motivation. The system taps into both **intrinsic and extrinsic motivation** to encourage student progress:

- **Intrinsic Motivation** – Students feel a sense of **accomplishment and pride** when they improve their academic performance and attendance.
- **Extrinsic Motivation** – Meaningful incentives such as **monetary prizes, edible rewards, and parental recognition** provide immediate reinforcement and encourage continued success.

By integrating these motivational strategies, we are improving student engagement and **instilling lifelong habits of discipline and perseverance**.

The Student Board's Process and Implementation

The **Student Board of Education's Superintendent's Special Committee** has worked diligently since 2021 to refine and implement this system. Their process included:

1. **Developing a tiered structure** that categorizes students based on attendance and academic performance:
 - **Exemplary** (Straight A's, 0 unexcused absences)
 - **Honorary** (A's & B's, max 0.5 unexcused absences)
 - **Satisfactory** (A's, B's, up to two C's, max 1 unexcused absence)
 - **Standard** (More than two C's, D's, or below, more than 1 unexcused absence)
2. **Collecting student feedback** through surveys to determine the most effective incentives.
3. **Launching a comprehensive rollout plan**, ensuring parents, students, and faculty were well-informed through emails, orientations, class meetings, student handbooks, flyers, and posters across all three schools.
4. **Quarterly evaluations** where students receive placement notifications in their English classes.
5. **Public recognition and reward distribution** at honor roll assemblies, through mailed certificates, and tier-based incentives such as gift cards, concession stand coupons, and special events.

This Year's Skating Party and Student Feedback

One of the most **anticipated incentives** for students who achieved the highest tier was the **1st annual skating party** that was held on **February 26, 2025**, at the **Lynwood Roller Rink**. This event celebrated student achievement and motivated **continued effort**. The recent skating party was met with **overwhelmingly positive feedback**, with students expressing high satisfaction levels.

- **Survey Results:**

- 36 out of 39 students rated their experience **4 or above** on a satisfaction scale.
- Students suggested expanding reward options to include **arcades, museums, and Six Flags** as potential future incentives.
- **Chaperone and Staff Observations:**
 - Students were **well-behaved and respectful**, receiving positive remarks from the skating rink staff.
 - Minimal cleanup was required, demonstrating a sense of responsibility among the students.

This event showcased the **power of positive reinforcement**—rewarding students for their efforts in a way that is both fun and meaningful.

Next Steps and Continuous Improvement

While the **Pyramid of Success** has been a resounding success, we recognize that **continuous improvement** is necessary. The committee is committed to:

1. **Expanding incentive options** based on student feedback.
2. **Refining attendance tracking processes** to ensure fair and accurate tier placements.
3. **Strengthening communication efforts** with parents and faculty to maximize student engagement.
4. **Exploring additional long-term benefits**, such as scholarships or community-based rewards, to further incentivize academic excellence.

Final Thoughts

The **Pyramid of Success** is more than just an incentive system; it is a **cultural shift** toward academic excellence and student accountability. Through student-led initiatives, evidence-based motivation strategies, and strong administrative support, we are creating an environment where **every student is encouraged to succeed**.

I want to commend the **Student Board of Education's Superintendent's Special Committee** for its dedication, innovation, and leadership in making this initiative a reality. Their work benefits students today and sets a **foundation for future generations** in District 205.

To our Board of Education—thank you for your continued support in empowering student-driven initiatives. Together, we are fostering a district where **success is recognized, effort is rewarded, and every student can thrive. Thank you.**

At 7:12p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mrs. Moody 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;
- Student discipline;
- Collective negotiating matters, and
- Pending, probable or imminent litigation.

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

At 9:33p.m., Mrs. Moody moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Reconvene Regular Session**. On roll call, Members Moody, Lawrence, Banks, Davis, Graham, and Owens voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

RECONVENE
REGULAR SESSION

Mrs. Moody moved, Mr. Banks seconded the **Approval of the Resignation Agreement and Release for Administrator, Brett Fickes**. The board accepts this resignation as presented. On roll call, Members Moody, Banks, Davis, Graham, and Owens voted aye; voted nay, none; Member Lawrence abstained; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
RESIGNATION &
RELEASE
AGREEMENT FOR B.
FICKES

At 9:35p.m., Mrs. Moody moved, Mr. Owens seconded to **Adjourn the Meeting**. On roll call, Moody, Owens, Banks, Davis, Graham, and Lawrence voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT



President



Secretary