



Board Briefs

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[March 18, 2025 Regular Action Meeting](#)

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Approval of Agenda

The Board voted to approve the March 18 agenda as amended.

Board Reports

President

Board President Anne Neumann spoke about attending the March 12 Lake Divisional Meeting with Superintendent Dr. Chala Holland, where attendees received updates on state legislative initiatives, the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) advocacy efforts and how federal Department of Education actions and Executive Orders are being monitored for their impact on schools. Additionally, a presentation on the state of Illinois plan Vision 2030 was provided. Neumann said they learned that legislative activity at the state level is expected to increase over the next two weeks. If IASB requests members to complete witness slips in support of a legislative stance, the Board President or the ED-RED representative will seek guidance from the Superintendent on the potential impact of the proposed bill and IASB's position on the District before informing the rest of the board, allowing individual members to take action accordingly.

Neumann also participated in Deerfield High School Teacher Buffy Sallee's Race and Identity class summit. Neumann participated in one of Sallee's previous classes where she talked about how the school board functions. This particular summit was a culmination of the class' learning over the year. She expressed gratitude for the ideas conveyed by students in the class.

Neumann wished families a safe spring break, noted that it had been one year since Jenny Lupa joined the Board and *Excellence in Effort* reports presented by the building Principals began. She concluded by reminding everyone that the goal of the reports is to provide an opportunity to highlight and celebrate great things happening in the buildings that people may not usually hear about.

TrueNorth

TrueNorth Liaison Jenny Lupa provided a report on the March 12 TrueNorth Leadership Council meeting she attended. Highlights from the meeting included a professional learning session led by Allan Bergman; that more schools are committing to TrueNorth services by the deadline, aiding in the TrueNorth budgeting process; a specialized transportation bid was awarded to the current provider, meaning there will not be an increase in costs for next year; and the adoption of 17 policies. Lupa concluded by sharing that current member Glenview District 34 recently approved a resolution to appeal the disapproval decision of its TrueNorth withdrawal petition,

though no formal submission has been made. She noted that other member district board agendas indicate some discussions on potential withdrawals, but no additional petitions have been filed. The next meeting is scheduled for April 9.

Administration Information Reports

Superintendent

Superintendent Dr. Chala Holland provided the following updates in her report:

DHS Principal Meet and Greet

Dr. Holland began by congratulating Dr. Will Dwyer on his appointment to serve as Deerfield High School Principal, effective July 1. A series of meet-and-greet events will be scheduled to allow stakeholders to engage with Dr. Dwyer over the course of this semester, with the first opportunity taking place on April 2. Stakeholder groups will receive additional communication about these events as details are finalized. For April 2, the schedule includes a parent/caregiver session from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. in the College and Career Resources Center (CCRC) at DHS.

Focus on the Arts Proclamation

Mayor Nancy Rotering has officially declared April 1 - 4 as Focus on the Arts Week in the City of Highland Park, with support from City Manager and City Clerk Ghida Neukirch. Appreciation was extended to the City of Highland Park for this recognition, as well as to Focus Director Tamara Jenkins for her efforts, the HP Fine and Applied Arts Department and the talented guests who contribute to making this a meaningful experience.

District Hiring

The volunteer and feedback surveys for the two Assistant Superintendent openings will close on April 2. Dr. Holland expressed gratitude to those who contributed and showed interest in participating on the hiring panels.

Additionally, the District has adjusted the hiring process for a Chief Operations Officer (COO) role, shifting the position to Executive Director of Facilities Management to better align with current needs. This position is now posted, with the hiring process expected to conclude in early May, following the same timeline as the Assistant Superintendent searches.

Strategic Planning

Appreciation was extended to all who participated in the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis feedback survey and in-person feedback sessions. The feedback will be reviewed in the team's next meeting this week to enhance the initial analysis. The next step in Strategic Planning is defining the preferred future statement. Following the Team's next meeting, the community will be asked to provide feedback through an online survey that will launch in early April.

Spring Break

Dr. Holland concluded by wishing everyone a wonderful spring break.

FOIA

Dr. Holland reported the FOIA requests received since the last meeting and their disposition. The report is posted in BoardDocs online.

Excellence in Effort

DHS Principal Dr. Kathryn Anderson highlighted the following in her report:

- Students in Buffy Sallee's Race and Identity course presented a 1.5-hour summit showcasing research and solutions on key school issues, demonstrating a commitment to dialogue, research and positive change.
- The US History course team, composed of teachers Jeremy Kauffman, Joe Taylor, Amy Skonberg-Reznicek, and Rich Grady, implemented a lesson where students participated in a mock trial debating whether industrialists J.D. Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan, and George Pullman were robber barons or captains of industry, enhancing critical thinking, research and presentation skills.
- DHS physics teachers met with middle school educators to discuss student preparedness, curriculum alignment, and outreach opportunities to improve the transition to high school science.
- The recent inductions into the Chinese, Spanish and Hebrew Honors Societies recognized students' dedication to language studies and cultural appreciation, highlighting the impact of language learning in the academic community.

HPHS Principal Holly Fleischer highlighted the following in her report:

- Big thanks to the PTO who provided staff with hundreds of shamrock shakes for St. Patrick's Day.
- The Highland Park High School community enjoyed a breathtaking Luminosity dance performance, featuring mesmerizing choreography, a dynamic Jazz Band and a meaningful celebration of Latinx culture, emphasizing inclusivity and student talent. Credit to event organizers Rad Olshansky, Hanna Dilorenzim Joel Zishuk, Josh Chodoroff, Tony Avila and Ambar Rizwan.
- The HPHS Model UN team participated in New York City recently, achieving first place overall and second in research. They participated in high-level debates, heard former President Joe Biden speak and eight students received individual honors and addressed the plenary session.
- Physical Education classes are utilizing the new High Ropes Course to develop students' problem-solving, teamwork, confidence and SEL skills, integrating personal goal-setting and hands-on learning experiences.
- The Counseling Department is focused on 504 articulation meetings for incoming freshmen, senior college and career planning, enhanced recommendation letters and expanding student support through The Hub, Check and Connect and 17 active Drop-In support groups. Additionally, counselors continue to discuss postsecondary plans with students while 504 coordinators are in the middle of 504 articulations with middle schools.
- HPHS Social Studies teacher and soccer coach Kate Straka was honored in the February 15 edition of North Shore Weekend for her significant impact on students both in the classroom and on the field.

- The De Padre a Estudiante program, led by Luisa Espinosa-Lara, received the 2025 Community Partner Award from the Park District for its work empowering Latino students and families through cultural, educational and community-building initiatives.

Discussion

Summer 2025 Construction – Control Estimate

The Board reviewed the budget for the Summer 2025 work that was presented at the Facilities Committee Meeting on November 19, 2024. The total budget for the projects is \$9.88 million. The bid package will be presented to the board at the April 8 meeting.

2024 Health/Life-Safety Survey and Amendments Update

The Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Ali Mehanti, along with Matthew Toepper, Senior Associate with FGM Architects, provided the Board with an update on the current status of the submitted 10-year Health/Life-Safety Survey as well as the associated amendments. The decennial submission requirement has been met and completed. As the work is completed, the amendments are closed and are removed from the list.

Resolution providing for the issue of not to exceed \$25,000,000 General Obligation School Bonds, Series 2025, for the purpose of altering and reconstructing school buildings and purchasing and installing equipment therein for fire prevention and safety, energy conservation and school security purposes, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, and authorizing the sale of said bonds to the purchaser thereof.

The Board discussed a resolution to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$25 million for the purpose of altering and reconstructing school buildings and purchasing and installing equipment therein for fire prevention and safety, energy conservation and school security purposes. Mehanti noted that the District's municipal advisor estimated the interest rate at approximately 3.881 percent and nearly identical to what was shared with the Board in January despite interest rate fluctuations.

Action

Approve Multi-Year Employment Contract for Deerfield High School Principal

The Board voted to approve as presented a three-year contract with Dr. William Dwyer to serve as Principal of Deerfield High School effective July 1, 2025.

Approve Amendment to the Employment Contract of Superintendent Dr. Chala Holland

The Board voted to approve as presented an amendment to the employment contract of Superintendent Dr. Chala Holland.

Approve Amendment Modifying Contract Term of Chief Human Resources Officer Employment Contract

The Board approved as presented an amendment to the contract term of the employment contract of Chief Human Resources Officer Thomas Krieger. The amendment extends his employment until July 16, 2025 from June 30, 2025.

Approve Notice to Remedy for Tenured Licensed Staff Member

The Board approved as presented a notice to remedy for a tenured licensed staff member.

Approve Settlement Agreement for Student 2021-08

The Board voted to approve as presented a settlement agreement for Student 2021-08.

Approve Licensed and Non-Licensed Staff FTE Recommendation for 2025-2026

The Board voted to approve as presented the licensed and non-licensed staff FTE recommendation for 2025-26.

Approve of Resolution providing for the issue of not to exceed \$25,000,000 General Obligation School Bonds, Series 2025, for the purpose of altering and reconstructing school buildings and purchasing and installing equipment therein for fire prevention and safety, energy conservation and school security purposes, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, and authorizing the sale of said bonds to the purchaser thereof.

Following the discussion earlier in the meeting, the Board voted to approve as presented a resolution providing for the issue of series 2025 general obligation school bonds, in an amount not to exceed \$25 million for the purpose of altering and reconstructing school buildings and purchasing and installing equipment therein for fire prevention and safety, energy conservation and school security purposes, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, and authorizing the sale of said bonds to the purchaser thereof.

Consent Agenda

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Upcoming Meetings

April 8, 2025

Committee of the Whole Meeting
6:00 p.m. Closed, 7:00 p.m. Open
Administration Building

April 22, 2025

Board Reorganization Meeting
Regular Action Meeting
6:00 p.m. Closed, 7:00 p.m. Open
Administration Building