



## **Board Briefs**

[\*Para español, por favor haga click aquí\*](#)

[February 25, 2025 Regular Action Meeting](#)

[Board Meeting Videos](#)

### **Approval of Agenda**

The Board voted to approve the February 25 agenda as amended.

### **Board Reports**

#### ***President***

Board President Anne Neumann spoke about how this week marks Public Schools Week, organized by a coalition of 12 national education groups, Learning First Alliance, which represents over 10 million members. It is an opportunity to recognize the strength of the country's public schools and our educators and staff.

Neumann acknowledged the challenges the D113 continues to navigate as the trial of People vs. Robert Crimo III began on Monday, February 24. Neumann recognized that this is an important step in pursuing justice, though feelings of fear, anger and grief may resurface. Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering also acknowledged the trial in a statement and shared support resources which can be found on the [City of Highland Park's website](#).

Finally, Neumann brought attention to updates regarding public comment procedures. Neumann referenced Board policies [2-230](#) and [8-30](#), which govern public comments at Board meetings. Violations of the expectations laid out in those policies will result in the immediate termination of speaking time. To promote clarity, guidelines for public comment are now printed on the back of cards issued to speakers and posted at the podium. Neumann highlighted that at its core, the work of the Board is about listening and it values public participation but at the same time, staff, students, community members and the Board will be treated with respect.

### **Administration Information Reports**

#### ***Superintendent***

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

#### ***Musicals at D113***

Dr. Holland had the pleasure of attending *Legally Blonde* at Highland Park High School and *9 to 5* at Deerfield High School and said both productions were fun and appreciated by the audience. Dr. Holland also thanked the staff and students who committed their time and energy to the plays.

#### ***EmpowerHER Event***

On February 19, over 700 participants gathered on a day off of school to engage in the EmpowerHER event. Dr. Holland spotlighted DHS Assistant Athletic Director Molly Tomlinson for spearheading the event. EmpowerHER was a day featuring motivational sessions, vendors and keynote speaker, journalist Sarah Spain. Dr. Holland also thanked the volunteers and DHS staff members who helped make the day go smoothly.

#### *Pizza Bowl and Baker's Showcase*

Dr. Holland volunteered at the Pizza Bowl and Baker's Showcase put on by the D113 Education Foundation. She noted that the event was a night of fellowship, fun, music and a lot of food. She thanked the D113 Education Foundation for supporting the District and entrusting our staff with support to create innovative experiences at our schools.

#### *Black History Month Celebration*

Dr. Holland attended the Black History Month breakfast at HPHS. Students shared their stories and experiences and the audience was also treated to poetry and insights from Ms. Janea Harris. Dr. Holland thanked the staff and students who helped celebrate BHM.

#### *Highland Park Chamber of Commerce*

On February 25, Dr. Holland was joined by Board President Anne Neumann and Board Members Rick Heineman and Jenny Lupa for the State of Education event put on by the Highland Park Chamber of Commerce. Members of the Chamber learned more about D113, North Shore School District 112, TrueNorth Education Cooperative 804 and the Highland Park Library.

#### *DHS Principal Update*

Dr. Holland previewed the then-upcoming round of interviews for the vacant DHS Principal position. Finalists will engage with interview panels of various district stakeholders including students, building administrators and staff. The goal of presenting a recommendation to the Board on March 18 is still on schedule.

#### *Chief Operations Officer Update*

Dr. Holland also previewed the then-upcoming interviews for the vacant Chief Operations Officer position. Six candidates were brought to be interviewed.

#### *Security Discussions*

Dr. Holland provided a detailed report on the topic of safety and security. Following a joint statement issued by the District with D112 and the City of Highland Park earlier this month, there was an attempt to manipulate the message and facts surrounding the incident. Dr. Holland noted that she thoroughly reviewed discussions and public comments regarding safety measures that have occurred over the last 20 months with the Board. Unfortunately, misleading and false information was presented during public comment at the February 11 Board meeting, causing confusion and harm. While community concerns about safety are understandable, deliberate misinformation linking unrelated events undermines transparency and the Board's ability to effectively govern. Spreading inaccurate narratives through social or mainstream media is detrimental to public understanding and participation under the *Open Meetings Act*.

Clarifying misconceptions, the incident in question involved an unforeseeable act of video recording in a restroom, which is explicitly prohibited by Illinois law. Claims that the District allows such behavior, that a “tool” was brought into the building, or that metal detectors would have prevented the situation are false. The District follows best practices in safety and security, including the strategic use of weapons detection systems and K9 units, to maintain security. While public feedback remains important, it is crucial to separate fact from misinformation and avoid fear-inducing rhetoric.

Moving forward, the Board remains committed to ongoing security improvements, student well-being, and fostering a sense of belonging, as research indicates that connectedness is a key factor in school safety. Additionally, all community members are reminded to adhere to Board policies governing public participation and conduct. Statements inciting violence, harassment, or intimidation are not tolerated, and respectful discourse is expected at all meetings. The Board will continue evaluating safety measures while prioritizing transparent communication and a secure learning environment for all.

### ***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***

HPHS Principal Holly Fleischer highlighted the following in her report:

- *Legally Blonde* dazzled audiences with the incredible staff and student talent displayed on stage
- The HPHS Debate Team clinched the 2025 Illinois State Championship
- The annual Charity Drive concluded its month-long fundraising effort to raise awareness for the Harold E. Eisenberg Foundation, staff sponsors and student presidents will announce the total funds raised in a few weeks
- Multiple athletics accomplishments were had this winter:
  - Girls basketball clinched its second consecutive conference title before advancing to the Regional Final
  - Boys basketball concluded its regular season second in the CSL North with a record of 20-10, the first 20-win season in 10 years for the boys program
  - Girls gymnastics had a memorable season and scored 131.55 against Maine East in January, the highest team score in the past 15 years
  - Wrestler Dana Holt became the second female wrestler to qualify for state
  - Swimmer Andrew Blauer advanced to state after becoming the sectional champion in the 100 butterfly and setting a school record in the 100 breaststroke
- HPHS hosted the Moraine Township Resource Fair, organized by the Highland Park Latino Advisory Board, featuring 50 organizations promoting safety, support, education and community
- HPHS celebrated Black History Month with student-led initiatives, a balloon wall, a special menu by the Black Student Union, engaging videos, a scavenger hunt, and a powerful performance by the Black Ensemble Singers. The celebration culminated in a breakfast featuring keynote speaker Janae Harris, who shared words of affirmation and empowerment with students, staff and caregivers.

- The HPHS English Department held a retreat at Rosewood Beach, focusing on professional learning, book studies, AI in the classroom, and student-centered instruction. On March 4, English teachers will read their favorite children's books or passages, incorporating creative reading experiences, followed by a book-themed staff lunch.
- HPHS received the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award from the College Board for its commitment to increasing female participation in computer science. Just over 1,100 schools nationwide received the recognition.
- AP Computer Science Principles students are designing and coding unique apps to be uploaded to their AP portfolios, showcasing creativity and technical skills
- A special shoutout to the contributions of our dedicated teachers Deb Wilson, Tesa Edwards, Adam Washburn, Robin Gapinski, and Administrator Liz Waller

DHS Principal Dr. Kathryn Anderson was unable to attend due to a conference.

## **Discussion**

### ***2026-27 School Calendar***

The Board reviewed the proposed 2026-27 school calendar. Chief Human Resources Officer Tom Krieger noted that the Districts 109, 112 and 113 worked together to align the calendar as much as possible. The item will return for Board approval after the calendar is reviewed by the Lake County Regional Office of Education.

## **Action**

### ***Review of Closed Session Minutes***

The Board voted to approve as presented the destruction of closed session audio recordings from September 11, 2017 through August 22, 2023, as well as approve minutes to remain closed or open from June 11, 2024 through January 23, 2025.

### ***Student Discipline for Student B***

The Board voted to approve as presented a resolution regarding student discipline for Student B.

### ***Approve Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Regarding DEA Class Size Grievance***

The Board approved as presented a MOU to the 2023-26 Collective Bargaining Agreement regarding a DEA grievance about class size. LSMs assigned a class section with 2 or more students over the divisor on the 10th day of student attendance for the course shall be paid \$300 for each class they are assigned with such overage, for each semester. LSMs who teach a class section with more than 3 students over the divisor after day 10 of student attendance of the course will be paid \$1000 for each class they are assigned with such overage, for each semester in which the overage occurs. A total of 19 classes meets the criteria with a total dollar impact of \$66,400. The settlement applies to the 2024-25 school year only.

### ***Approve One-Year Employment Contract for Highland Park High School Athletic Director***

The Board approved as presented a one-year contract with Mark Ribbens to serve as Athletic Director 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 7:42 p.m.

**Upcoming Meetings**

***March 4, 2025***

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

***March 18, 2025***

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