

GRANT COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 124

MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

APRIL 24, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Grant Community High School District 124, County of Lake, State of Illinois, was held on Thursday, April 24, 2025 and called to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Library of Grant Community High School, 285 E. Grand Avenue, Fox Lake.

ROLL CALL

On Roll Call, the following Members were found to be present:

Mrs. Kathy Kusiak, President
Mr. John Jared, Vice President
Mrs. Shelly Booth, Secretary
Mrs. Ivy Fleming, Member
Mrs. Laurie Hembrey, Member
Mr. Ed Lescher, Member
Mr. Bob Yanik, Member

Members absent:

None

Administration present:

Dr. Christine A. Sefcik, Superintendent
Mrs. Beth Reich, Business Manager
Dr. Jeremy Schmidt, Principal

Student Representative:

Ms. Casey McCleery

AUDIENCE

Jackelyn Duran, Payton Evans' Family

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Recognition and Informational Items

April Student of the Month

Dr. Sefcik introduced Payton Evans, in the presence of his family, as the April Student of the Month. She read Payton's profile of accomplishments, which included academic achievements, extracurricular activities including being one of the stars in our spring musical "The Wizard of Oz", service to the community, his summer work plans, and future plans which include attending Ball State in the Fall. Dr. Sefcik offered Payton the opportunity to speak to the Board and he thanked the Board for the honor. The Board and audience applauded Payton and Dr. Sefcik presented him with a certificate to commemorate being chosen as the April Student of the Month.

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Oath of Office

Mrs. Kusiak asked the newly elected Board Members to stand and take their Oath of Office. Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Hembrey, Mr. Lescher, and Mr. Yanik recited their Oath of Office.

Elect President of the Board of Education

Mrs. Kusiak asked for nominations for the office of President and Mr. Jared nominated Kathy Kusiak for the office of President. No other nominations were received.

** A motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mrs. Booth to elect Kathy Kusiak as Board President.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak

Nay: None

Absent: None

Motion – **Passed**

Elect Vice-President of the Board of Education

Mrs. Kusiak asked for nominations for the office of Vice-President and Mrs. Kusiak nominated John Jared for the office of Vice President. No other nominations were received.

** A motion was made by Mr. Yanik, second by Mr. Lescher to elect John Jared as Board Vice-President.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak, Jared

Nay: None

Absent: None

Motion – **Passed**

Elect Secretary of the Board of Education

Mrs. Kusiak asked for nominations for the office of Secretary and Mrs. Kusiak nominated Shelly Booth for the office of Secretary. No other nominations were received.

** A motion was made by Mr. Lescher, second by Mr. Yanik to elect Shelly Booth as Board Secretary.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak, Jared, Booth

Nay: None

Absent: None

Motion – **Passed**

Appoint Treasurer to the Board of Education

Mrs. Kusiak asked for a motion to appoint Beth Reich to serve as Treasurer for the Board.

** A motion was made by Mrs. Booth, second by Mr. Lescher to appoint Beth Reich to serve as Treasurer for the Board.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Hembrey, Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming

Nay: None

Absent: None

Motion – **Passed**

Establish day, time, and location of Board of Education Meetings

Mrs. Kusiak asked for a motion to set the day and time of the Grant Community High School Board of Education meetings for the third Thursday of each month, through June 2027, and that the remaining meetings in the existing schedule will be maintained.

** A motion was made by Mr. Lescher, second by Mr. Yanik to set the day and time of the Board of Education meetings for the third Thursday of each month, through June 2027, and that the remaining meetings in the existing schedule will be maintained.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey

Nay: None

Absent: None

Motion – **Passed**

Committee Appointments

Mrs Kusiak asked for, and received, volunteers to fill the following committee appointments:

SEDOL Delegate – Kathy Kusiak

SEDOL Alternate – Shelly Booth

Site & Facility Committee Member – John Jared

Site & Facility Alternate – Laurie Hembrey

IASB Representative – Ivy Fleming

PBIS Committee Member – John Jared

PBIS Alternate – Ivy Fleming

Insurance Committee Member – Laurie Hembrey

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of regular meeting held March 20, 2025

April Bills Payable

March Treasurer's Report

Destruction of closed meeting audio recording from October 19, 2023

Quarterly list of authorized depositories, investment managers, dealers and brokers

** A motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mr. Yanik to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Yanik, Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher

Nay: None

Absent: None

Motion – **Passed**

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Recognition and Informational Items (continued)

Leadership Presentation

Dr. Sefcik advised the Board that there was a recent District Leadership Team meeting in which the team celebrated improvements to curriculum and instruction, college and career planning, social and emotional wellbeing, instructional resources, student voice, community outreach, and much more. She mentioned how proud she is to be a member of this team and greatly appreciates their dedication to improving the educational experience at GCHS.

Stronger Connections/CARES Grant Update

Dr. Sefcik informed the Board that we are completing the third quarter of the Stronger Connections/CARES grant, awarded to enhance access to mental health resources for our school community and beyond. She shared the great news that we have been able to facilitate 84 treatment sessions to date, with each student and/or family participating receiving up to six (6) no-cost 50-minute treatment sessions. Many traditional barriers to treatment are avoided by being free of charge and accessible after school, in the evening and even on weekends. Treatment continues to include individual and family counseling, crisis intervention, care coordination,

trauma-focused needs, psychiatric services, and medication management. Dr. Sefcik advised that we look forward to continuing to provide this tremendous support to students and families.

Title VI Certification

Dr. Sefcik reported to the Board that on April 3, a copy was received of a press release regarding a directive from the U.S. Department of Education to state agencies overseeing K-12 education requiring school districts to certify compliance with Title VI as a condition to continue receiving federal financial assistance. On April 9, State Superintendent Tony Sanders responded that ISBE would not be collecting certifications from individual districts. Additionally, Dr. Sefcik reported that on April 11, a notice was received of pending litigation surrounding the enforcement of this directive. The administration shared these details to keep the Board apprised that we are monitoring the situation to remain in compliance at the state and federal level.

Legislative Update

Dr. Sefcik communicated that legislators have been busy in Springfield, with nearly 4,200 bills posted for committee hearing in March and 541 making it to a 3rd reading. Dr. Sefcik advised that a close eye is being kept on many of the educational bills and they are contacting legislators and/or filing witness slips as appropriate depending on the potential impact. Dr. Sefcik also discussed a presentation that was recently sent to superintendents by IASA, which also included State of Illinois budget details. Illinois is facing a 3.2 billion deficit of which 350 million has been dedicated to Evidence- Based Funding. Dr. Sefcik advised the Board that they are also monitoring potential changes to the teacher evaluation plan and advised the Board that assessment cut scores will be released in October.

Village of Fox Lake Route 12 South Redevelopment Project Area

Dr. Sefcik advised that back in February she had shared an update on the various Village of Fox Lake Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts. As mentioned at that time, plans for the Route 12 South TIF include a residential component. The project includes a total of 154 1-2 bedrooms market rate apartments. In consideration of the fact that the District may receive students from a TIF property, the Village is partnering with Grant and Big Hollow to develop an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to provide payment for schools should we receive new students from the TIF development. The IGA is under review by all parties and Dr. Sefcik expects to have a finalized agreement for review at the May Board of Education meeting.

Protect Lake County Initiative

Dr. Sefcik announced that in April, 2023, the State of Illinois launched the Illinois Targeted Violence and Prevention Initiative. From that initiative, *Protect Lake County* was formed by DePaul University, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Loyola University funded by a Department of Homeland Security grant. The goal of this community wide initiative is to create a “multidisciplinary community support team” to support local entities and their threat assessment teams, enhance communication regarding threats among partners in the community, provide professional development, tools, and advise on challenging cases. Last month, the Fox Lake Police Department requested the administration consider participation and the Village of Fox Lake formally approved that participation on March 11, 2025. Dr. Sefcik extended an invite to Chief Deservi to address the Board next month, when the Memorandum of Understanding to become a Participating Member Agency of Protect Lake County may be proposed as an action item.

Graduation

Dr. Sefcik invited all Board of Education members to our graduation ceremony on Sunday, May 18th, at 2:00 pm in the Fieldhouse.

Principal's Report

Dr. Schmidt presented his monthly report which included information regarding end of semester exams and graduation. Dr. Schmidt also advised that on April 8 we administered the state-required ACT test and outside of technical issues with ACT's Test Center Manager (TCM) platform the testing was successful. Dr. Schmidt also updated the Board on recent activities at the school including the NHS induction, Writer's Expo, Test your Best Week, and our activity fair.

Student Representative's Report

Casey McCleery provided her report which included information on ACT testing, NHS Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser, the spring musical Wizard of Oz, NHS Induction and the upcoming Fido Fest.

TRANSITIONAL SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Recognition and Informational Items

Student Representative to the Board of Education

Dr. Schmidt announced that junior Isabelle Ellington has been selected to serve as the Student Representative to the Board of Education for the 2025–2026 school year. We are excited to welcome Izzy as an active participant on the Board. She will certainly contribute by providing valuable insight from the student perspective and helping to foster continued two-way communication between the student body and the Board of Education. Izzy has been invited to attend the May and June meetings to shadow Casey.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Action Items

Policy Change – Second Reading **

Dr. Sefcik recommended the approval of a change to School Board Policy 5:330 to permit eligible educational support personnel to accumulate up to a maximum of 240 sick leave days, rather than 180. This is higher than required by statute, but allows employees to accrue the number of days that IMRF will recognize towards service credit.

Section 500 Personnel

5:330 Sick Days, Vacation, Holidays, and Leaves

** A motion was made by Mrs. Fleming, second by Mrs. Hembrey to approve the policy change, as presented.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Yanik

Nay: None

Absent: None

Motion – **Passed**

Overnight Travel

Dr. Sefcik requested approval for the following overnight trip requests:

- Four Journalism students performed well at a virtual Sectional event on April 12th and qualified for the State competition on Friday, April 25th. The four students and their

teacher are requesting to travel to Bloomington-Normal for the competition from April 24-25. The District would cover the cost of the trip, which is \$1,476.76.

- Two students qualified for the National FBLA Competition and National Leadership Conference. The competition will take place in Anaheim, California, from June 29 to July 2. The estimated Board paid costs will be \$3,248.46
- One student qualified for the National Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) competition in Orlando, Florida from July 5-9. When students qualify for extracurricular or co-curricular national competitions, the District has traditionally contributed half of the student costs to attend. The estimated Board paid costs will be \$2,538.83.
- The Wrestling Team is requesting to travel to an overnight camp at the University of Illinois in Champaign, Illinois, from June 26-29. Approximately 35-45 student-athletes will attend, in addition to 4 coaches. Interested families will cover the cost of \$375 to participate.
- The Dance Team is requesting to travel to the Dance Team Union overnight camp at Illinois State University, in Bloomington, Illinois, June 24-26. Approximately 30 student-athletes will attend, in addition to 4 coaches. Interested families will cover the cost of \$399 to participate.
- The Dance Team is requesting to travel to the Dance Team Union competitive tournament in Orlando, Florida, February 5-8, 2026. Approximately 16 student-athletes will attend, in addition to 4 coaches. Interested families will cover the cost of approximately \$600 to participate.

** A motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mr. Yanik to approve overnight trip requests as presented.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak

Nay: None

Absent: None

Motion – **Passed**

Personnel

Dr. Sefcik made the following personnel recommendations:

Employment of the following individuals:

- Sara Cossiboon, Special Education Teacher, MA step 5, 2025/26
- Aubrey Wray, Full-time Art Teacher, BA Step 0, 2025/26
- Michael Schneider, Assistant Director of Activities & Athletics, 2025/26
- Elizabeth Melgoza, Administrative Assistant for Student Services, \$21.15/hr. Starting July 1, 2025
- Breanna Adams, Athletic Trainer, \$29.25/hr. Starting June 8, 2025
- Kay Ann Blaszczyk, Full Time Substitute, BA step 0, 2025/26
- Joseph Califf, Full Time Substitute, BA step 0, 2025/26
- JP Gizowski, Full Time Substitute, BA step 0, 2025/26
- Jesse James, Full Time Substitute, BA step 0, 2025/26

Accept the resignation of the following individuals:

- Stephanie Ashmore, School Counselor, effective end of 2024/25 school year.
- Josh Christian, Assistant Football Coach, effective April 15, 2025

Notification of the following Family and Medical Leave Request:

- Jaclyn Schneider, English Teacher, beginning August 28, 2025, ending November 21, 2025
- Michael Schneider, Physical Education Teacher, beginning September 4, 2025, ending October 1, 2025

** A motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mrs. Fleming to approve the personnel recommendations as presented

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak

Nay: None

Absent: Jared

Motion – **Passed**

BUSINESS AFFAIRS

2024-2025 Tentative Amended Budget **

Mrs. Reich advised that since federal grants and state funding has been finalized, our 2024-2025 budget has been amended. We have the final Equalized Assessed Value from Lake County with our extension for the 2024 levy. We have updated the current year levy numbers. Additionally, expenses were trimmed everywhere we can, projecting out the rest of the year. Per statute, the amended budget must be on display for 30 days. It will be on the June agenda for hearing and approval.

Mrs. Reich recommended the approval of placing the tentative amended 2024/25 budget on display as presented:

** A motion was made by Mrs. Fleming, second by Mrs. Hembrey to approve placing the tentative amended 2024/25 budget as presented

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak, Jared, Booth

Nay: None

Absent: None

Motion – **Passed**

2025/26 Budget

Mrs. Reich advised the Board that the 2025/2026 Budget is under construction. Meetings with department heads and teacher leaders have taken place to find out possible expenses that will be a part of next year, and updates have been made accordingly. Additionally, renewal rates for health insurance should be received within the next month. The tentative budget will be brought to you in May for display, with hearing and request for approval occurring in July.

Tax Cap Adjustment

Mrs. Reich gave an update on the Tax Cap Adjustment. The county multiplier from the Illinois Department of Revenue is 1.00 for tax year 2024. This equalizer is then applied to our equalized assessed value (EAV) resulting in a total EAV of \$1,336,219,143. This is an increase of \$157,263,926 from 2023. The EAV increased 13.34% from last year. As a result, the tax rate is 2.021023. The consumer price index for this tax cycle was 3.4%, so it was capped at 3.4%. Approximately, \$264,038 had to be cut from the levied amount to comply with the tax cap limitation. She provided the Board a copy of the detailed cap adjustments, as well as a comparison of Grant High School's tax rate to other high school districts in Lake County.

Multi-Function White Activity Bus – 3 Year Lease **

Mrs. Reich advised the Board that the five activity buses are at the end of their lease as of July 1, 2025. Midwest Transit and Central States Bus Sales, Inc. were contacted for quotes on a new lease. Central States Bus Sales, Inc. explained they cannot guarantee or provide the activity buses for this summer. Midwest Transit provided a lease agreement for either two years or three years. Based on the cost, Mrs. Reich recommended the Board approve the three-year lease agreement for our five white activity buses beginning July 1, 2025.

- ** A motion was made by Mr. Lescher, second by Mrs. Hembrey to approve the three-year lease for five white activity buses as presented
Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:
Aye: Hembrey, Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming
Nay: None
Absent: None
Motion – **Passed**

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Sefcik advised that thirteen Freedom of Information Act requests were received and fulfilled.

CLOSED SESSION

- ** At 7:56 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mrs. Hembrey to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1), Other matters relating to individual students 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(10), student disciplinary cases 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(9);
Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:
Aye: Lescher, Yanik, Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey
Nay: None
Absent: None
Motion – **Passed**
- ** At 8:12 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mr. Yanik to end closed session and return to open session.
Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:
Aye: Yanik, Fleming, Lescher, Hembrey, Kusiak, Jared, Booth
Nay: None
Absent: None
Motion – **Passed**

ACTION CLOSED SESSION

- ** A motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mrs. Hembrey to authorize the termination of Special Education teacher, Raymund Pierce.
Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:
Aye: Fleming, Lescher, Hembrey, Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Yanik,
Nay: None
Absent: None
Motion – **Passed**

ADJOURN

** At 8:13 p.m. a motion was made by Mrs. Fleming, second by Mr. Yanik to adjourn the meeting.

Kathy Kusiak, President

Shelly Booth, Secretary