

**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
6:00 p.m. on the 18th day of September 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

President Robin Cleek called the Board of Education meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken prior to the meeting during the closed session portion of the meeting. The following members attended: George Fievet, Karl Borchers, Michael Engle, Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer (virtually) and Julie Clifford. 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. for Human Resources Mr. Adam Palmer; and Superintendent Dr. Pete Hannigan. Ms. Stephanie Peters was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dan Greene from BOW Renewables made a public comment inviting the district to consider fully funded solar projects that generate revenue and reduce energy costs. The program includes annual scholarships, energy savings, and STEM learning opportunities at no cost to the district.

RECOGNITION

No recognition at this time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Robin Cleek shared that the school year is off to a good start, with positive feedback from parents and successful curriculum nights. She reminded Board members to inform Ms. Jessica Flores if they plan to attend the IASB dinner on October 8, the ED-RED luncheon on October 20, or the Triple I Conference, including the Friday dinner. President Cleek noted she will be unable to attend the delegate assembly and asked if another Board member would be willing to attend in her place.

ED-RED REPORT

No report at this time.

SEDOL REPORT

Mr. Michael Engle reported that the last Executive Board met earlier that day. The 2025–2026 Continuous Improvement Plan was presented for approval, outlining four goal areas and related objectives. Summer facility projects included a new roof, window replacements, and a sensory area at Fairhaven, funded by the SEDOL Foundation. The John Powers Center received new kitchen cabinets to support Transitions program instruction. Gages Lake completed canopy repairs, and the SEDOL campus received landscaping updates with help from students. Laremont School received new functional and safe furniture. Dr. Thomas presented the proposed tuition restructuring model, previously approved by advisory and steering committees in July. The model was shared with district administrators that morning. The Executive Board will consider approval on October 23, with Governing Board consideration on December 3. The next Executive Board meeting is September 18 and the next Governing Board meeting is December 3.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. George Fievet reported that the last Site & Facilities Committee meeting was held on September 9, 2025, and discussed several key items, including an update on the completed renovations at Middle North. Planning has begun for the 2026 summer project at Middle South, which will include similar updates to the library and main office. Design plans will be presented at upcoming meetings, with bids expected to go out this winter to align with the summer construction timeline. The committee also received the annual transportation update. Over 1,300 families are using the My Ride app, and all bus routes are currently under 40 minutes. One route required adjustment, but overall transportation has started the year smoothly despite substitute drivers and typical fall traffic. Regarding the food service update, Quest continues to work on consistency across buildings and the introduction of new menu items. In collaboration with PTO, a new parent advisory committee is being formed to support family engagement and provide input on food options.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

No report at this time.

KEY TO 73 FOUNDATION REPORT

Board Member Julie Clifford reminded the Hawthorn community about the upcoming HoptoberFest in collaboration with the PTO and the D73 Foundation. The event will be held at Melody Farm on October 11, 2025.

PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Adam Palmer, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, presented the 10 Day Enrollment/Staffing Update. He reported that 46 new licensed staff members joined the district this year, with 31 at the elementary level and 15 at the middle school level. To support new hires, the district hosted three onboarding events and offered five days of induction training through the Hawthorn Educator Induction Program, led by Dr. Stein and Mrs. Corrigan. Mr. Palmer shared that the 10th day of school serves as the district's benchmark for enrollment, offering the most consistent data. This year's projections were within two students of the actual total. Current class size averages are 21.3 students at the elementary level and 23.2 at the middle school level in core subjects. Staffing plans for the 2026–27 school year are already underway, guided by enrollment trends and district needs.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Superintendent Dr. Pete Hannigan and the team discussed Policy PRESS Issue 118 and 119. The Policy Sub-Committee met on September 5 to review a total of 34 updated policies. Each department reviewed the policies relevant to their area. The updates will be brought back to the Board for approval at the October 16 meeting.

Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance Operations, Mrs. Jennifer Akin, discussed the Teacher Administrator Compensation, the Purchasing Cooperative Agreement, and the Approval to Apply for the FY26 Maintenance Project Grant. First, she reviewed the annual Teacher and Administrator Compensation Report, which outlines salary data from the previous school year as required by Illinois Public Act 96-0266. This report will be posted on the district website to ensure public transparency.

Next, Mrs. Akin discussed the district's potential participation in the Illinois Together Purchasing Cooperative. This program, managed by Bespoke Community Cooperatives in partnership with the Illinois Association of School Business Officials, allows member districts to access competitively awarded contracts without going out to bid. Participation is free and may result in cost savings. Mrs. Akin confirmed that there is no obligation to use the cooperative contracts, and the district retains full control to decide when to use the cooperative and when to seek bids independently.

Finally, Mrs. Akin introduced the FY26 School Maintenance Project Grant. While the application has not yet opened, she anticipates requesting formal board approval in October to apply. If awarded, the matching grant would support planned flooring replacements at Middle School South during summer 2026.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Dr. Pete Hannigan thanked students and staff for their patience during last week's MAP NWEA testing, noting that national service disruptions impacted many districts. He expressed appreciation for the flexibility shown across the district.

Dr. Hannigan officially welcomed Mrs. Sol Cabachuela as the district's new Family Liaison. She is already actively supporting families through the Back-to-School Drive, Food Pantry, and other community resources. Families are encouraged to follow the "Hawthorn D73 Family Liaison" Facebook group for updates and opportunities. He also noted that the district's food pantry is in need of restocking and welcomed donations at Middle School North, the District Office, or the Vernon Hills Park District.

Dr. Hannigan concluded his report by inviting the community to attend the inaugural HoptoberFest event on October 11 at Melody Farm, sponsored by the D73 PTO and Foundation. With support from Melody Farm as the event sponsor, all proceeds will go directly back to benefit students.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 9.1 Board Meeting Minutes: August 14, 2025
- 9.2 Closed Session Minutes: August 14, 2025
- 9.3 Expenditure Report: September 18, 2025
- 9.4 Amazon Expense Report: September 18, 2025
- 9.5 Mastercard Report: July 21, 2025
- 9.6 Treasurer's Report: July 2025
- 9.7 Personnel Report

13 New Hires:

6 Leaves of Absence:

10 Resignations:

13 New Hires: Edward Golman, P.E. Teacher, ES/AS, 08/25/2025; Rachel Spatz, Psychologist, DL/TL, 09/02/2025; Sai Teja Sri Bathina, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, TL, 08/21/2025; Erin Feeney, Health Clerk, MS, 08/25/2025; Zhinolata Khwairakpam,

Instructional Assistant, EN, 08/18/2025; Subashini Krishnamoorthy, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 9/10/2025; Daanyal Mansour, Instructional Assistant, MN, 08/18/2025; Margarita Marban, Office Clerk, MS, 08/25/2025; Cristina Pence, Instructional Assistant, MN, 09/08/2025; Yuanfang Peng, Instructional Assistant, MN, 08/27/2025; Tiffany Platt, Instructional Assistant, HSYL, 08/18/2025; Kyla Rapplean, Instructional Assistant, ES, 08/27/2025; Luciene Sanches Oliveira, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, HSYL, 09/03/2025.

6 Leaves of Absence: Taylor Gehm, Music Teacher, AS, 02/13/2026; Shailee Patel, 4th Grade Teacher, ES, 12/1/2025; Anna Prah, Language Arts Teacher, MS, 01/26/2026; Deepika Bhardwaj, Instructional Assistant, TL, 08/18/2025; Mayra Lanuza, Human Resources, DO, 08/11/2025; Modesta Rodriguez, Instructional Assistant, MS, 09/05/2025.

10 Resignations: Hillary Boruta, P.E. Teacher, MN, 05/28/2025; Rebecca Himelstein, ELL Teacher, MN, 05/28/2025; Thomas Kleine, LBS1 Teacher, AS, 09/05/2025; Edna Thompson, 2nd Grade Teacher, DL, 09/05/2025; Amy Bennett, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 05/28/2025; Lori DeFrank, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 05/28/2025; Claudia Gurke, Instructional Assistant, TL, 08/20/2025; Sowmya Metpalli, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, HSYL, 05/28/2025; Scott Swisher, Instructional Assistant, MN, 08/18/2025; Sarah Vole, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 05/28/2025.

Karl Borchers requested to remove section 9.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from August 14, 2025** and 9.2 **Closed Session Minutes from August 14, 2025** from the consent agenda.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: George Fievet moved that the Board of Education approve 9.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from August 14, 2025** and 9.2 **Closed Session Minutes from August 14, 2025** as presented; seconded by Michael Engle

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

Motion carried: 5 ayes; 1 abstain

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

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Mrs. Jennifer Akin reviewed several action items related to the Business Department. First, she presented the final 2025–2026 budget in the required ISBE format. Since the last meeting, updates were made based on final fund balances, TIF data, and EAV estimates. Fund 60 revenue was removed, eliminating the need for a spring transfer, and future capital projects were shifted to Fund 20. The final budget projects \$71,239,000 in operating revenue and \$70,939,000 in expenses, leaving \$300,000 in reserve. Next, Mrs. Akin requested approval of the 2026–2027 budget calendar, along with authorization for herself or her designee to begin developing the budget for the upcoming school year. Lastly, she requested approval for the disposal of obsolete, damaged, or nonfunctional technology equipment. A selected vendor will handle the disposal process and provide a nominal return for any items with remaining value.

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan reviewed that the district received a formal grievance complaint on February 28, 2025. A decision was issued on August 30, 2025, and that decision has been appealed to the Board of Education. The next step is for the Board to take formal action on the appeal.

ACTION ITEMS

Final 2025/2026 Budget

MOTION: George Fievet moved that the Board of Education approve the Final 2025/2026 Budget; Karl Borchers seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Approval of the 2026/2027 Budget Calendar and Person to Work on the 2026/2027 Budget

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that the Board of Education approve the Approval of the 2026/2027 Budget Calendar and Person to Work on the 2026/2027 Budget; George Fievet seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Disposal of Surplus Technology Equipment

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that the Board of Education approve the Disposal of Surplus Technology Equipment; Karl Borchers seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

February 28, 2025 Uniform Grievance Complaint

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board of Education approve to affirm the Superintendent's decision regarding the February 28, 2025 Uniform Grievance Complaint; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Enrollment - Uploaded
2. FOIA Log, Dr. Hannigan reported that the District has received seven FOIA requests since the last board meeting and has been responded to as identified in Section 11.2 of the Board agenda.
3. Media Clips

TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

No topics for future meetings at this time.

ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) President Cleek read the motion(s) to adjourn to CLOSED SESSION for the purpose of:

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 Michael Engle. The meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m. **All in favor? Yes.**

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Flores

Robin Cleek, President

Julie Clifford, Secretary

Date Minutes Approved: _____