

**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
7:00 p.m. on the 13th day of November 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

President Robin Cleek called the Board of Education meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The Board Secretary called attendance and the following members attended: George Fievet, Karl Borchers, Michael Engle, Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer, Stephanie Peters 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.

PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2025 TAX LEVY

The Business Department conducted the Public Hearing for the 2025 Truth in Taxation Hearing on the 2025 Tentative Operating Levy. No public comments were made, and the Public Hearing was closed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment at this time.

RECOGNITION

Dr. Hannigan recognized the Board of Education in honor of Illinois' School Board Members Day on November 15, 2025. He expressed appreciation on behalf of administrators, staff, students, and the Hawthorn community, thanking Board members for their ongoing dedication and service. Dr. Hannigan highlighted the Board's commitment, noting that each member serves on multiple committees, volunteers significant time, and consistently contributes value to the organization.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Cleek led a discussion regarding the Proposed Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) Resolutions and Constitutional Amendments for consideration at the 2025 Delegate Assembly. She invited board members to identify any resolutions they wished to pull for individual discussion. No board member requested further discussion. President Cleek noted that several procedural motions were needed to formally appoint the district's delegate and authorize voting parameters for the 2025 Delegate Assembly. She thanked Vice President George Fievet for serving as Hawthorn's delegate, acknowledging the responsibility associated with participation in the Delegate Assembly.

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved to delegate George Fievet the authority to vote at the 2025 IASB Delegate Assembly, solely in accordance with the consensus of the Hawthorn District 73 School Board on November 22, on the proposed IASB constitutional amendments. The motion was seconded by Michael Engle and passed unanimously with 7 ayes; 0 nays.

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved to delegate George Fievet the authority to vote at the 2025 IASB Delegate Assembly with his independent discretion, based on the consensus of the Hawthorn District 73 School Board on November 22, and any discussions held on the proposed IASB constitutional amendments at the 2025 IASB Delegate Assembly. The motion was seconded by Karl Borchers and passed unanimously with 7 ayes; 0 nays.

[Constitutional Amendment Resolutions Motions continued]

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved that George Fievet be appointed the 2025 IASB Delegate to the 2025 IASB Delegate Assembly on behalf of Hawthorn District 73. The motion was seconded by Michael Engle and passed unanimously with 7 ayes; 0 nays.

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that George Fievet be granted the authority to vote on the IASB resolutions at the 2025 IASB Delegate Assembly with his independent discretion, based on the consensus of the Hawthorn District 73 School Board on November 22, and any discussions held on each resolution at the 2025 IASB Delegate Assembly. The motion was seconded by Stephanie Peters and passed unanimously with 7 ayes; 0 nays.

President Cleek provided an update from the recent District 128 Feeder Meeting, which she and Dr. Hannigan attended for the first time in many years. All feeder districts—including Districts 72, 68, Libertyville 70, Hawthorn 73, and District 128—were present. The group discussed strengthening vertical alignment from K–12, enhancing articulation practices, and ensuring consistent

expectations for students entering high school. President Cleek reported that the districts are largely aligned in their goals and shared optimism about future collaboration. She concluded by extending warm Thanksgiving wishes to the community.

ED-RED REPORT

Mr. Joel Finfer reported that the legislative veto session had concluded until the next legislative session begins.

SEDOL REPORT

Mr. Engle reported that the Executive Board met on November 13 and the last Governing Board meeting was on August 6. He reviewed the proposed new tuition model for SEDOL's Cooperative Association (CA) programs, which would take effect in the 2026–2027 school year. Under the proposal, districts would pay direct and indirect costs based on actual student usage, and administrative costs would be allocated according to a formula using district (25%) Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV), (25%) district enrollment, and (50%) Average Daily Enrollment (ADE). He explained that the model was developed in response to financial pressures since 2020, including reduced and inconsistent state funding, rising operating costs, staffing shortages, and districts historically paying below the true program cost. The Executive Board has approved the proposed model and is recommending Governing Board approval on December 3. The change is expected to benefit District 73 due to its low enrollment in CA programs. Mr. Engle requested Board consensus to support the recommendation, which was given. The next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for December 18.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Board Member Ms. Stephanie Peters reported that the Site & Facilities Committee met on November 5. The committee discussed upcoming summer projects at Middle School South, including planned improvements to the front entry and library spaces. The committee also reviewed student fees with the Business Office. Ms. Peters noted that the fee structure has been streamlined and is in a good place moving forward. She also shared that the Executive Director of Technology position has been posted, and Dr. Jean Sophie continues to support the district during the search process. In regards to food service updates, new breakfast carts are now in use at the middle schools and have been well received. USDA approval of a new soy burger has allowed the district to begin introducing it to students, who have responded positively. Ms. Akin also reported no changes to grant funding as a result of the federal government shutdown. The committee received preliminary information regarding the local retail tax, with more details expected next month. In transportation, Ms. Peters noted that student behavior on buses continues to be a challenge. The district is working with Lakeside Transportation and school staff to address concerns. She also reminded families that bus expectations are included in the student handbook and are part of the district's overall SOAR expectations.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

No report at this time.

KEY TO 73 FOUNDATION REPORT

Ms. Clifford reported that the Key to 73 Foundation has been very active. Current initiatives include the upcoming coat drive and Thanksgiving food drive, with Ms. Sol Cabachuela leading the coordination and collection of food donations. Planning is also underway for the Foundation's annual golf outing on June 5, and Ms. Clifford encouraged community members to consider sponsoring the event or donating services or gift cards for the silent auction. She noted that such contributions are greatly appreciated and support the Foundation's work on behalf of District 73 students and families.

PRESENTATION

Dr. Hannigan presented the 2025 State of the District, reviewing the district's mission, vision, collective commitments, and the four Board of Education goals focused on academic excellence, closing achievement gaps, high district performance, and supporting the whole child. He provided an overview of district, state, and national assessment data, noting continued academic growth and recovery. FastBridge, MAP, IAR, and ACCESS results showed upward proficiency trends in reading and math from 2023–24 to 2024–25. Dr. Hannigan also noted that updated 2025 national MAP norms resulted in higher benchmark expectations, yet District 73 students continued to perform well. He highlighted that all District 73 schools received Exemplary or Commendable designations on the 2025 Illinois School Report Card, with Townline Elementary joining Elementary North in achieving Exemplary status. District percentile rankings in achievement and growth were also shared, reflecting strong overall performance and ongoing work to strengthen growth outcomes across all student groups. Director of Social Emotional Learning, Megan Goldman, presented on Board Goal 4, summarizing the district's first full year of baseline data using the ASCD Whole Child Framework across the Healthy, Safe, Engaged, Supported, and Challenged tenets. Highlights included positive results in student wellness, school safety indicators, extracurricular engagement, and supportive learning environments. Dr. Hannigan concluded by sharing results from the INSIGHTeX Culture Survey, which indicated increased staff engagement and satisfaction from fall 2024 to fall 2025. He emphasized the district's continued alignment with Board Goals and its commitment to ensuring that all students experience academic and whole-child success.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Dr. Hannigan reviewed the draft 2026–2027 school calendar developed by the Calendar Committee, which met on October 15. The proposed calendar includes 174 student attendance days, 2 parent-teacher conference days, and 4 teacher institute days. Staff

would return on August 17, and students would begin on August 20, 2026, with a tentative last day of May 28, excluding emergency days. The committee recommends early release schedules on parent-teacher conference days to support preparation time. Dr. Hannigan noted that Election Day is not currently a required school holiday; however, if the State designates November 3 as a non-attendance day, it will be swapped with Casimir Pulaski Day. The committee also recommends making the day before Spring Break a non-attendance day to provide families additional flexibility. The Lincoln program calendar, which must include 165 attendance days, is still being finalized with Mundelein and Fremont and will be shared once complete. The final 2026–2027 calendar will return for Board approval next month.

Assistant Superintendent of Business & Finance Operations, Mrs. Jennifer Akin discussed the 2026–2027 school year and summer school fees. The district proposes adjustments to registration, meal, and technology fees, which help offset program expenses not covered by the general operating budget while supporting equitable student access. The proposed changes include adding a \$15 yearbook fee for preschool students and a \$15 field trip fee for all students to eliminate midyear collections and streamline permissions through PowerSchool. At the middle school level, a PE supply fee is recommended to include a new T-shirt, lock, and heart-rate strap each year, with PE shorts no longer required. Optional course fees would increase from \$51 to \$77, and the band/orchestra fee would increase from \$77 to \$99 to help support supplies, equipment, and instructional software. Athletic fees were reviewed in partnership with the Athletic Director, resulting in recommended increases for most group sports from \$77 to \$99, and for select individual sports from \$77 to \$129, due to rising transportation and participation costs. Even with these adjustments, the district will continue to fund approximately two-thirds of athletic and activity program expenses. The transportation fee would increase by 6% to reflect higher operational costs from Lakeside. Meal fees would also be adjusted, increasing the paid lunch rate from \$3.60 to \$3.75 to remain in compliance with federal pricing requirements. Technology fees are recommended to remain unchanged for the 2026–2027 school year. These proposed adjustments aim to maintain an equitable, transparent, and sustainable fee structure while ensuring effective management of district resources and continued support for high-quality programs and services.

The Business Office also presented proposed changes to 2026 summer school fees. Hawthorn’s summer programs support student growth, prevent learning loss, and offer enrichment in literacy, math, STEM, and the arts. Programs include Extended School Year, Summer Scholars, Early Start Kindergarten, Hawthorn Enrichment Institute, and Band Camp. Extended School Year and Summer Scholars remain invitation-only programs at no cost to families, with transportation provided. Early Start Kindergarten helps incoming students acclimate to school, and the Enrichment Institute and Band Camp are open to all students seeking elective learning opportunities. For 2026, the district proposes replacing the current two sessions over four weeks with one session over three weeks, with classes held Monday through Friday (no session on June 19). The participation fee would be a flat \$299, and all programs would be held on the North Campus. A full breakfast will be provided daily. Early Start Kindergarten is no longer grant-funded and will transition to a paid program with a participation fee of \$199. The Business Office noted that the goal of these adjustments is to maintain an equitable and sustainable fee structure while supporting high-quality programming and responsible stewardship of district resources.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

No report at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes: October 16, 2025
- 7.2 Expenditure Report: November 13, 2025
- 7.3 Amazon Expense Report: November 13, 2025
- 7.4 Mastercard Report: September 22, 2025
- 7.5 Treasurer’s Report: September 2025
- 7.6 Personnel Report

New Hires: 7

Leaves of Absence: 7

Resignations: 4

Change of Status: 1

Retirement: 1

7 New Hires: Sara Noli, World Language Teacher, MN, 10/22/2025; Nagapriya Alagarsamy, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 10/27/2025; Lisa Czitkovits, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, AS; Aarti Rana, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, HSYL; Deepa Samiappan, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, Deepika Sathish Kumar, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 10/20/2025; Nilam Shinde, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 12/01/2025.

7 Leaves of Absence: Haley Nelson, Speech/Language Pathologist, AS, 04/20/2026; Daisy Ramirez, Pre-K Teacher, Lincoln, 03/30/2026; Paige Wagner, Psychologist, MN, 04/20/2026; Beth Marriela, Instructional Assistant, HSYL, 10/21/2025; Nicole Mohrdieck, Instructional Assistant, MN, 11/3/2025; Sangita Parande, Instructional Assistant, MS, 11/17/2025; Elaine Wessels, Instructional Assistant, Lincoln, 10/14/2025.

1 Change of Status: Ami Raval, Office Clerk, AS, 10/20/2025.

4 Resignations: Irma Almanza, Principal Secretary, TL, 10/23/2025; Sara Khan, Instructional Assistant, MS, 10/24/2025; Mikayla Prosi, Instructional Assistant, AS, 01/12/2026; Alexandra Schawel, Instructional Assistant, TL, 11/06/2025.

1 Retirement: Cynthia Ives, Art Teacher, EN, 06/01/2027.

Robin Cleek requested to remove section 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from October 16, 2025** from the consent agenda.

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved that the Board of Education approve 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from October 16, 2025**; seconded by Michael Engle.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 1 abstain

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

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Mrs. Jennifer Akin presented two action items related to the Business Department for Board approval. First, she requested authorization to proceed with design, development, and bidding for the Summer 2026 Middle School South front office and library renovation projects, noting a \$2.5 million placeholder in the 2025–2026 budget. She was accompanied by VP Trinh and Tom McGrath, who reviewed the proposed plans and outlined the bid timeline and anticipated summer 2026 construction window in coordination with Arcon Associates and Lamp Incorporated. Second, Mrs. Akin requested approval of the 2025 estimated operating tax levy in the amount of \$57,630,000, excluding bond and interest and IMRF, representing a 4.55% increase over the 2024 final tax extension.

Mr. Adam Palmer, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, presented an action item recommending adjustments to the district's substitute teacher compensation structure. The district is proposing increasing the daily substitute rate from \$120 to \$135 and increasing the long-term substitute rate from \$227.98 to \$249.39, aligning it with the Step 1 teacher rate. If approved, these changes would be applied retroactively to the start of the 2025–2026 school year. Mr. Palmer noted that these adjustments are intended to keep Hawthorn competitive and support a more stable substitute pool.

ACTION ITEMS

Summer 2026/2027 Design and Development Projects

MOTION: George Fievet moved that the Board of Education approve the Summer 2026/2027 Design and Development Projects; Joel Finfer seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Approval of 2025 Tax Levy

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that the Board of Education approve the 2025 Tax Levy; George Fievet seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Substitute Compensation

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board of Education approve to apply for the Substitute Compensation; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

INFORMATION

1. Enrollment - Uploaded
 2. FOIA Log, Dr. Hannigan reported that the District has received one FOIA request since the last board meeting and has been responded to as identified in Section 9.2 of the Board agenda.
 3. Media Clips
-

TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

No topics for future discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Karl Borchers *made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by* Joel Finfer. The meeting *adjourned at 8:12 p.m.* **All in favor? Yes.**

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Flores

Robin Cleek, President

Julie Clifford, Secretary

Date Minutes Approved: _____