

## REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

December 9, 2025, at 6:00 PM  
Palos East Elementary School  
7700 W 127<sup>th</sup> Street  
Palos Heights, IL

- 1. Call to Order. Pam Paris, Board President,** called the Regular Meeting of December 9, 2025, to order at 6:00 p.m.
- 2. Roll Call.** Board members present: Pam Paris, Board President, Mike Pizur, Vice President, Susan Szafranski, Secretary; Dr. Tim Baker, Dan Cox, Jennifer Jensen, Kevin Quinn. Others Present: Dr. Anthony Scarsella, Superintendent of Schools; Erin Deval, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Scott Fox, Director of IT; Terri Dodds, Assistant Director of Student Services; Dr. Huwaida Hamed, Director of EL; Rob Szklaneki, Director of Teaching and Learning; Justin Veihman, Chief School Business Official; Allison Grasso, Palos East Principal; Jennifer Peloquin, Palos West Principal; Dr. Stuart Wrzesinski, Palos South Principal; Sara Leahy, Palos South Assistant Principal; Andrea Ramoley, Palos East Assistant Principal; Kristie Tieri, Palos West Assistant Principal; Brock Stein, Director of Communications; Members Absent: None
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance.** The Board the assembled audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 4. Public Hearing.** A motion was made by Mr. Quinn and seconded by Dr. Baker for the board to open a public hearing concerning the 2025 tax levy. The roll call vote was, Aye votes: Mrs. Paris, Mr. Pizur, Mrs. Szafranski, Dr. Baker, Mr. Cox, Mrs. Jensen, Mr. Quinn. Nay votes: None. The motion passed and the public hearing opened at 6:01 p.m. There were no public comments.  
  
A motion was made by Mr. Cox and seconded by Mr. Pizur for the board to close the public hearing concerning the 2025 tax levy. The roll call vote was, Aye votes: Mrs. Paris, Mr. Pizur, Mrs. Szafranski, Dr. Baker, Mr. Cox, Mrs. Jensen, Mr. Quinn. Nay votes: None. The motion passed and the public hearing closed at 6:01 p.m.
- 5. Public Comment - (Agenda Items).** None
- 6. President's Report.** Mrs. Paris asked Mr. Cox to read a section of the Oath of Office/Code of Conduct as a reminder and affirmation of the commitment of each board member to faithfully discharge their duties in pursuit of fulfilling the school district's mission and vision. Mrs. Paris recognized the artwork on display from Ms. Allyson Rein's art classes at Palos South. She reminded those in attendance of the following dates: December 11<sup>th</sup>: Winter Band Concerts at Palos South at 5:30 p.m.; December 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>: Winter Concerts at Palos West & East at 6:00 p.m.; December 19<sup>th</sup>: Early Dismissal: Kindergarten: 11:45 a.m.; South: 1:00 p.m.; East/West (Grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup>): 2:00 p.m.; She e noted that there is no Pre-K attendance on December 19.; December 22<sup>nd</sup> - January 2<sup>nd</sup>: No School (Winter Break); January 18: No School MLK Day; January 31: Foundation Trivia Night
- 7. Administrative Report.** In his report to the Board of Education, Dr. Scarsella thanked Palos 118 area seniors who attended the Senior Holiday Breakfast at Palos South on December 5. He also thanked Palos South Principal Dr. Stuart Wrzesinski, Assistant Principal Sarah Leahy for hosting, Mr. Makropoulos and Ms. Hill for providing the musical entertainment from our eighth-grade band and Performing Arts Ensemble, the Pace Setter Students who provided table service for the seniors in attendance, and the Central Office staff for organizing the event. He congratulated the ALPS students who won awards at the 2025 Young Inventors Challenge. He also thanked ALPS teachers Julie McNamara and Erin Gocke for all their efforts on behalf of the ALPS program. He thanked everyone who participated in the celebration of American Education Week in November and thanked the PFA

for providing funds for the assembly presentation from Cory “Basketball” Jones. He recognized the Palos South SAVE Promise Club for their efforts to create a more inclusive school environment with their 14-day Kindness Challenge in December. He concluded by wishing everyone a relaxing winter break, and a happy New Year and reminded everyone of the early dismissal day on December 19 (Kindergarten: 11:45 a.m. | South: 1:00 p.m. | East/West (Grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup>): 2:00 p.m. | Please note that there is no Pre-K attendance), and that school buildings will be closed December 22 through January 2 with classes resuming on January 5, 2026.

## **8. Committee Reports**

- 8.1 Student Outcomes and Accountability.** Committee chair Jennifer Jensen reported that the Student Outcomes and Accountability Committee met on November 18 and that Mr. Szklanecki, Mrs. Deval, Mrs. Dodds, and Dr. Hamed shared student outcome data for students with disabilities and English language learners. Some of the highlights of their presentation included: Students with disabilities performed in the top 10% of peers statewide on IAR; Students with disabilities ranked first locally in science performance on ISA; Across all grade levels, students with disabilities demonstrated RIT growth in both ELA and Math that surpassed national normative benchmarks; EL students ranked in the top 5% statewide in ELA and the top 25% statewide in math on IAR; EL students ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in science compared to their peers in the D230 feeder elementary districts.
- 8.2 Finance and Facilities Committee.** Mr. Pizur reported that the Finance and Facilities Committee met on December 3, and that Mr. Veihman shared with the Committee the Disclosure of Fund Balances and Disclosure of Annual Average Expenditures Reports; reviewed an agreement with Industrial Appraisals for a one-time inventory appraisal; and gave an update on the delay in property tax disbursements.
- 8.3 Foundation.** Mrs. Jensen reported for the Educational Foundation and reminded everyone in attendance that the Foundation Trivia Night Fundraiser would be held on January 31 and sign up can be completed through the District 118 website.
- 8.4 Parent Faculty Association (PFA).** Mrs. Jensen read a report from the PFA in which they reported on their partnership to bring Corey Basketball Jones to the schools for American Education Week in November. She reported that the Charleston Wrap fundraiser raised over \$4,000 and thanked everyone for their support. She asked that everyone save the date for the spring fundraiser on Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at Signature Barn in Orland Park with a theme of “Forever Young.” Ticket sales will start in January.
- 8.5 MPA.** Mrs. Amy Lewansowski, MPA President, reported that the band would be hosting concerts on December 11 at Palos South, December 15 at Palos West, and December 16 at Palos East. She reported that Harvest Fest raised over \$5,000 with the proceeds going to purchase new flutes and drums for marching band. She reported that the MPA sponsored a field trip to see the Chicago Symphony in November. The next MPA meeting is February 9 at Palos South. Mr. Makropoulos recognized Eleanor Kribs and Madison Prostka who were both selected to participate in the Illinois Music Education Association District 1 Band and Orchestra Festival in November.

**9. New Business.**

- 9.1 Adoption of Resolution Determining the 2025 Tax Levy.** A motion was made by Mr. Quinn and seconded by Dr. Baker for the board to adopt the resolution determining the 2025 Tax Levy. The roll call vote was, Aye votes: Mrs. Paris, Mr. Pizur, Mrs. Szafranski, Dr. Baker, Mr. Cox, Mrs. Jensen, Mr. Quinn. Nay votes: None. The motion passed.
- 9.2 Adoption of the Resolution Allocating Tax Levy to Individual Funds of the District and Apply a Loss Cost Factor.** A motion was made by Dr. Baker and seconded by Mr. Pizur for the board to adopt the resolution allocating tax levy to individual funds of the District and apply a loss cost factor. The roll call vote was, Aye votes: Mrs. Paris, Mr. Pizur, Mrs. Szafranski, Dr. Baker, Mr. Cox, Mrs. Jensen, Mr. Quinn. Nay votes: None. The motion passed.
- 9.3 Disclosure of Fund Balances.** Mr. Veihman reviewed the District's fund balances.
- 9.4 Disclosure of Operational Cash Balances and Annual Average Operating Expenditures.** Mr. Veihman reviewed the District's operational cash balances and operating expenditures.
- 9.5 Resolution authorizing the issuance of not to exceed \$5,000,000 Taxable Tax Anticipation Warrants in anticipation of the collection of taxes levied for the year 2024 by the Board of Education of the District for educational purposes and authorizing the sale of said warrants to the purchaser thereof.** A motion was made by Mr. Pizur and seconded by Mr. Quinn for the board to adopt the resolution authorizing the issuance of not exceeding \$5,000,000 Taxable Tax Anticipation Warrants. The roll call vote was, Aye votes: Mrs. Paris, Mr. Pizur, Mrs. Szafranski, Dr. Baker, Mr. Cox, Mrs. Jensen, Mr. Quinn. Nay votes: None. The motion passed.

**10. Secretary's Report**

- a. **Correspondence Received.** Mrs. Szafranski reported that the District received Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from SmartProcure for purchase order information and that both requests have been completed.
- b. **Correspondence Sent.** None

**11. Recommended For Consent Agenda.** A motion was made by Mrs. Jensen and seconded by Mr. Quinn for the Board to approve the following agenda items 11.1 through 11.4 under a consent agenda.

- 11.1** Approval of Appraisal Agreement with Industrial Appraisal Company
- 11.2** Approval of Personnel Report B-Support Staff: Employment: Haifa Ali, Paraprofessional, West; Haya Alassaf, Paraprofessional, West; Mary Stieber, Paraprofessional, West; Resignation: Citlalli Zavala, Paraprofessional, West; FMLA: Derek McKrieth, Bus Driver, Transportation

**11.3** Approval of Minutes Regular and Special Meetings, Regular; Meeting dated November 11, 2025, and Special Meetings; dated November 18, 2025, and December 3, 2025.

**11.4** Authorize Payment of Bills Payable and Payrolls and Aggregate Total Approval: \$2,986.598.88

**12. Public Comment- (Non-Agenda Items). The following people addressed the board on the following topics:**

Student safety, teacher support, administrator accountability, communication, and transparency: Heather Achterberch, Christina Halikas, Caroyln Necas, Erin Nicorata, Ashley Hansel, Stacy Scumaci.

Racist comments posted online about an incident at Palos West that was subsequently covered in a story posted on the Southwest Regional News website and personal Facebook pages. Expressed concern about transparent communication from the school district, religious and cultural divisions in the school community, and called for unity and respect for all: Areej Malley, Nazha Farahid, Lena Hussien

Support of Jennifer Tiernan: Shelley Mulchrone

**13. Closed Session.** A motion was made by Mrs. Szafranski and seconded by Mr. Pizur for the board to go into closed session for 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; The placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students; and Litigation when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting. The roll call vote was, Aye votes: Mrs. Paris, Mr. Pizur, Mrs. Szafranski, Dr. Baker, Mr. Cox, Mrs. Jensen, Mr. Quinn. Nay votes: None. The motion passed and the board went into closed session at 7:02 p.m.

**14. Adjournment.** A motion was made by Mrs. Jensen and seconded by Mr. Quinn that the Board of Education to adjourn the meeting. The roll call vote was, Aye votes: Mrs. Paris, Mr. Pizur, Mrs. Szafranski, Dr. Baker, Mr. Cox, Mrs. Jensen, Mr. Quinn. Nay votes: None. The motion passed and the Board adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

-----  
President, Board of Education

-----  
Secretary, Board of Education