January 12, 2026

The Board of Education, Community High School District 99, met in Workshop Session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, January 12, 2026 at the Administrative Service Center.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, the following Board members answered present: Don Renner, President; Kara Casten, Vice President; and Members Katie Courtney, Ken Dawson, Christopher Espinoza, April Finan and Michael Riske. Member Ken Dawson arrived at 7:02 p.m.

Also present were Hank Thiele, Superintendent; Gina Ziccardi, Associate Superintendent for Student Learning; Scott Wuggazer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Jeff Bergholtz, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Travis McGuire, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Resources; Jeree Ethridge, CSBO; Phil Howard, Chief Technology Officer; Courtney DeMent, North High Principal; Arwen Lyp, South High Principal; Student Board Members Ryan Enright and Romina Papavero-Gonzalez; and Juli Gniadek, Secretary.

There were no visitors.

1. COMMUNITY RECOGNITION OF STAFF

Dr. Thiele displayed a list of staff members recognized by Castle Cars in Downers Grove as Educators of Distinction. He shared Marty Voelker was runner up for Castle's Educator of the Year award and that Mr. Voelker received a gift card for classroom supplies.

2. STUDENT PERSPECTIVES – T99

Carolina Schoenbeck, T99 Department Chair, explained T99 is for 18-22 year old North and South High students with disabilities, where the focus is on life after high school and helping the students become as independent as possible. Ms. Schoenbeck shared much of the instruction at T99 is community based and the students have classes in the community three times a week.

T99 students Max Foster, Samantha Labriola, and David Lopez shared why they like going to the Oak Brook Fitness Center for recreation. Mr. Lopez spoke of the equipment used at the Center and the life skills learned there, including using the equipment safely, following instructions, taking care of their belongings and cleaning up. Ms. Labriola shared one of her favorite things was using the hot tub after swimming laps and that she is also a Peer Leader. Mr. Foster shared the students swim three times a week and are learning to keep their hands to themselves.

Mr. Balderas, T99 teacher, noted activities like these help the students bond with the community and show the community what our students are capable of.

The Board showed their appreciation to the students for coming and sharing information about their recreation activities.

3. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Student Board Members Ryan Enright and Romina Papavero-Gonzalez both emphasized the clear and consistent expectations around cell phone use and attendance. Ms. Papavero-Gonzalez spoke about the emphasis at South High on the fact that every day matters. Students being responsible for themselves is a focus at North High, according to Mr. Enright.

4. FACILITY AND CAPITAL PLANNING 2026-2027

Travis McGuire presented a list of possible capital projects totaling $3M for the 2026-2027 school year, noting that it needs to be determined if the projects are in line with the budget and that each project will be brought to the Board for approval. Projects include two new driver education vehicles for the District, and, at both buildings, funds for large repair and maintenance, annual bleacher repairs, FFE, and grounds repairs. Dr. McGuire shared North High projects also include work on the auditorium, the pool and the HVAC systems. South High's projects include repairing tennis court drainage, a softball scoreboard and basement work, according to Dr. McGuire. He noted, additionally, Health Life Safety Work and replacement of fieldhouse flooring and tracks are already scheduled; both projects having been previously approved by the Board.

5. SECURITY CAMERA SOFTWARE

Dr. McGuire stated the District has been evaluating solutions for its aging camera security system since fall of 2024 and has found a viable solution that will allow conversion of the existing on site camera video management system to a cloud-based system. He reported the new system will allow the District to be proactive in situations where a door is breached or left accidentally unlocked in addition to other security enhancements. Travis McGuire stated the cost of the new system is $281,477.76 for five years, with all fees paid up front, and that he has confirmed with Jeree Ethridge that the funds are available. He provided the following proposed timeline: bring to the Board for Action at the January Business meeting, installation in February, and training for security staff and administration during the February 27 Institute Day.

6. RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS AND STAFF

Hank Thiele stated the upcoming report was requested by the Board. Jeff Bergholtz shared data on the number of positions posted last year, 79 in total, with 30 of those for certified staff, and the average number of applications per posting, 10.2 for all postings, and 14.6 for certified positions. He noted the District's retention rate is 94.5% for certified teachers and the State's rate is 89.5%. Mr. Bergholtz provided an overview of the District's hiring procedures, beginning with how and where District 99 recruits potential candidates, through the application and interview process, and the training of interviewers to mitigate bias and stereotyping. He stated District 99 is seen as a destination district because of the competitive compensation and benefits package offered, the three-day New Teacher Academy, the modern facilities, the Board leadership, and the community that District 99 is a part of.

7. CLOSED MEETINGS

Dr. Thiele displayed an abbreviated description of school-related Open Meetings Act exceptions. He stated, going forward, with the Board's approval, the Board President would read only the abbreviated description of the OMA citation when the Board is moving to Closed Session. Hank Thiele noted the

full citation will continue to appear in the agenda. The Board had no objections to using the abbreviated description.

8. RECEPTION OF VISITORS – PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

9. CLOSED SESSION

Member Espinoza moved and Member Dawson seconded the motion that the meeting be adjourned to Closed Session for the purpose of discussing:

A. 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).

B. Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2).

C. 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. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Espinoza, Dawson, Finan, Riske, Casten, Courtney and Renner voted AYE. The President declared the motion carried.

President Renner stated the only Action the Board will be taking when it comes out of Closed Session is to Adjourn.

The meeting adjourned to Closed Session at 7:37 p.m.

10. RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION

The meeting was reconvened in Open Session with the following members of the Board of Education in attendance: Don Renner, President; Kara Casten, Vice President; and Members Katie Courtney, Ken Dawson, Christopher Espinoza, April Finan and Michael Riske.

Also present were Hank Thiele, Superintendent, and Juli Gniadek, Secretary.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion, Member Espinoza moved and Member Dawson seconded the motion that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the unanimous voice vote of the seven members in attendance, the President declared the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Don Renner, President

Juli Gniadek, Secretary