December 15, 2025

The Board of Education, Community High School District 99, met for its Monthly Business Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, December 15, 2025 at the Administrative Service Center.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, the following Board members answered present: Kara Casten, Vice President/President Pro Tempore; and Members Katie Courtney, April Finan and Michael Riske. Member Christopher Espinoza arrived at 6:32 p.m. Don Renner, President; and Member Ken Dawson were absent.

Also present were Hank Thiele, Superintendent; Gina Ziccardi, Associate Superintendent for Student Learning; Scott Wuggazer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Travis McGuire, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Resources; Jeff Bergholtz, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Jeree Ethridge, Chief School Business Official; Jill Browning, Chief Communications Officer; 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. VICE PRESIDENT/PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE CASTEN STATEMENT

Vice President/President Pro Tempore Casten, on behalf of the Board, recognized CMG staff member Rachael Sutton for her response when she encountered an intruder in North High while working third shift. Vice President/President Pro Tempore Casten also commended Michelle Cannan, North High Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds; North High Principal Courtney DeMent; CMG staff member Erik Blackwell; and the Downers Grove Police Department for ensuring the building was safe to welcome students and staff back in the morning.

2. STUDENT RECOGNITION – FALL SPORTS ATHLETES

Arwen Lyp, on behalf of herself and Courtney DeMent, thanked the Board for organizing the student recognitions. Brian Caldwell, Head South High Cross Country Coach, introduced Conrad Saner, who placed 5th in State. Dave Rose, North High Associate Principal for Athletics, introduced the members of the North High Cross Country Team that placed 2nd in State - Philip Cupial, Stephen Cox, Joshua Farrero, Tyler Lynch-Goff, Matt Novak, Isaak Stein, Will Surratt and Dylan Wood. He also recognized State Champion Phil Cupial and 2nd in State finisher Will Surratt. Head North High Cross Country Coach John Sipple thanked the students for their effort and hard work. Dr. Thiele presented Phil Cupial with Proclamations from the Village of Downers Grove and the Village of Woodridge, both of which declared December 15, 2025 Philip Cupial Day.

Mr. Rose recognized Macy Ermitage, who was unable to attend, on finishing 3rd in State in Girls Cross Country. He then introduced Nicole Liu and Nora Benjamins, who received Honorable Mention All-State in Girls Volleyball. Also recognized by Dave Rose was Kelley Crowley, 1st Team All-State in Volleyball, who was unable to attend.

South High Head Volleyball Coach Madisen Babich introduced Keegan O'Keefe, who received 2nd Team All-State recognition, and Lauren Curran and Jayda Dixon, who received Honorable Mention All-State. She noted all three students served in captain roles and the team was undefeated on their

home court. Abby David, 5th Place in State, and Lily David, All-State, were introduced by South High Girls Tennis Head Coach Josh Forst. Mr. Forst shared the girls did not lose a single match and the team was 10th overall. Lindsay DeGiulio, South High Girls Golf Head Coach introduced Miah Wanserski, who took 2nd Place in State. Ms. DeGiulio stated Ms. Wanserski is the most decorated golfer in Downers Grove. Ms. Wanserski thanked her friends and family for their support.

Dave Rose recognized 1st Team All-State football players Aiden Solecki and Will Vala, who were unable to attend. He noted both students were going to finish early so they can attend spring training at college.

Those in attendance congratulated all the students on their accomplishments.

3. STUDENT PERSPECTIVES – SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

South High AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) students Aubrey Dron, Zach Ssempebwa, Lizbeth Garcia and Diezel Dunaj shared their thoughts about and what benefits they received from AVID. Ms. Dron spoke about the extra support she received to become a high achieving student and the importance of connections. Mr. Ssempebwa shared how much AVID prepared him for college and what a large help the tutorials are. Meeting with a counselor every week and doing in-depth research on careers were positives of the program identified by Ms. Garcia. Mr. Dunaj shared he struggled with organization and had no motivation and AVID assisted with his note-taking skills and helped him see that high school is important.

The Board and the audience thanked the students for their presentation.

4. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Both Student Board members shared that scanning has improved; phones are staying away; there are clear and consistent expectations around phones; the College and Career center is providing great support for seniors; and students are relying on Access for help. Mr. Enright, North High's Student Board member, also mentioned today was Pajama Day. South High student Board member Ms. Papavero-Gonzalez reported there was a clothing drive and a toy drive at South High to spread holiday cheer and support the community.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Riske moved and Member Espinoza seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the November 17, 2025 Monthly Business Meeting and the November 17, 2025 Closed Meeting.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Riske, Espinoza, Finan, Courtney and Casten voted AYE. The Vice President/President Pro Tempore declared the motion carried.

6. RECEPTION OF VISITORS – PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

7. PATH PROGRAM

North High PATH Coordinator Andy Goldberg stated the PATH Program is an alternative to out-of-school suspensions for B code violations such as fighting, possession, and being under the influence. He explained PATH stands for **P**ause, stop and think about what I'm doing; **A**sk, what harm have I caused; **T**hink, how to repair the harm; and **H**eal, take action to repair the harm. Goals of the Program, according to Mr. Goldberg, include reducing repeat offenses, keeping students engaged in the school setting, creating a return to learn plan and assisting students with recognizing supports in the building.

Nicole Walus, South High PATH Coordinator, shared that the Program is in line with the Strategic Plan in providing an equitable and supportive environment for students. She explained there is a focus on restorative practices, ensuring students do not fall behind in classes and helping students identify a support person. Ms. Walus stated both North and South High had a success rate in changing behaviors of over 80%. The Coordinators shared they have also started working with academic integrity violations, such as plagiarism and cheating.

8. 2026-2027 COURSE PROPOSALS

Ms. Ziccardi stated there are three new courses being proposed and one course title change. Tara Basar, South High World Languages Chair, and Beth Lee, North High Chair, presented Spanish for Heritage Speakers 3 Honors. Ms. Basar explained this course is targeted for students who are exposed to Spanish at home daily or are EL students. She noted the course will be taught from a native speaker perspective rather than an English speaker, will help prepare students for the Seal of Biliteracy and AP Spanish test, and provide an honors option to historically underrepresented students.

Gina Ziccardi shared Percussion Band is a revised version of Symphonic Band, with the new title providing a more accurate description of what is taught.

CTE Department Chairs Pat Fardy, North, and Brian Veit, South, presented AP Business with Personal Finance. Mr. Fardy explained the course is designed for students who are taking their first AP course and is similar to Business 101 in college, with the focus on project-based learning, case studies, group work and real-world applications. Personal finance is embedded in the course as well as the opportunity to learn through the lens of a financial advisor, according to Mr. Veit.

South High Math Department Chair Phil Culcasi and North High Chair Jon Heldmann introduced Math 3C, which will replace Math 3S. Mr. Culcasi stated a goal of Math 3C is to help prepare more students to enter college ready to take a credit-bearing math course. Mr. Heldmann shared the Math 3S course was more of a support level course with a focus on calculus and the new Math 3C's focus is on College Algebra. Both Chairs noted the increased flexibility and opportunities for students since Math 3C is a single period class and Math 3S was a 1.5 period class.

Dr. Thiele stated there is a single Action Item to approve the course requests.

9. 2025 TAX LEVY REQUEST

Ms. Ethridge reported, since the Tentative Tax Levy was initially presented to the Board, no additional information was received from the assessor and no changes were made to the Tax Levy. She stated in March the District will receive the actual dollars and in April the Board will vote on the final Levy. Dr. Thiele stated this is an Action Item.

10. INFINITE CAMPUS UPDATE

Phil Howard shared Infinite Campus, the District's Student Information System, has a large base in Illinois and provides a connection to other tools. He stated the new software supports the District's attendance initiative through scanning and providing real time reports of students missing from class each day, reports to teachers on Mondays and Thursdays about their specific students' attendance and monthly department chair reports. Additionally, Alpha Team reports are provided, which were previously prepared in 5Labs, according to Mr. Howard.

11. ENERGY CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Travis McGuire reported Honeywell performed an analysis of the District's infrastructure to determine where the District can conserve energy and realize savings. He stated Honeywell proposed an Energy Savings Performance Contract and tax-exempt lease that would be funded by the realized savings. Representatives from Honeywell, John Rocco and Josh Hounsell, explained an internal survey would be done to determine the feasibility, cost, and projected return on investment of recommended improvements. Dr. McGuire stated the cost of the Investment Grade Audit (IGA) Honeywell performs is 2.5% of the project cost, with no cost to the District initially. Mr. Rocco stated Honeywell guarantees the cost savings will cover the cost of completing the projects. The IGA contract will be brought to the Board on January 26 for approval, according to Dr. McGuire, and in April the Board will decide whether to proceed with the projects detailed in the IGA. He reiterated, if the District goes ahead with the projects, there will be no cost to the District for the Audit, however, if the District decides not to proceed, the District will be responsible for the 2.5%. Mr. Rocco stated the plan keeps the District cost neutral.

12. REPORTS FROM THE IASB/IASA/IASBO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Members commented on how beneficial it was to connect with Board members from around the State and the value of the sessions they attended.

13. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

Dr. Thiele reported the District received and responded to Freedom of Information Act requests and they are posted on the District's website.

14. CONSENT AGENDA

Member Riske moved and Member Espinoza seconded the motion for the Board of Education to approve the Consent Agenda as presented which includes: A. Personnel Report - Appointment-Certified; Appointment-Classified; B. Personnel Report - Resignation-Classified; C. Personnel Report - Termination-Classified; D. November Treasurer's Report and Financial Pages; E. Award of Bid - North High Band Uniforms from DeMoulin Bros. and Co. in the total amount of $130,588.90.; F. Acceptance of Donation - Fritz and Jean Wildermuth; G. Acceptance of Donation - Annmarie's Foursome; and H. Acceptance of Donation - Downers Grove Junior Woman's Club.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Riske, Espinoza, Finan, Courtney and Casten voted AYE. The Vice President/President Pro Tempore declared the motion carried.

Dr. Thiele thanked those who made donations.

15. APPROVAL OF THE 2026-2027 COURSE PROPOSALS

Member Espinoza moved and Member Courtney seconded the motion for the Board of Education to approve the 2026-2027 course proposals, as presented.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Espinoza, Courtney, Finan, Riske and Casten voted AYE. The Vice President/President Pro Tempore declared the motion carried.

16. APPROVAL OF THE 2025 TAX LEVY REQUEST

Member Finan moved and Member Courtney seconded the motion for the Board of Education to approve the 2025 Tax Levy in the amount of $119,202,971, the Certificate of Tax Levy, the Certification of Certificate of Tax Levy, and the Certificate of Compliance with the Truth in Taxation Law as presented.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Finan, Courtney, Espinoza, Riske and Casten voted AYE. The Vice President/President Pro Tempore declared the motion carried.

17. OLD BUSINESS

None.

18. NEW BUSINESS

None.

19. RECEPTION OF VISITORS – PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

20. REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION NETWORK OF DUPAGE (LEND)

Vice President/President Pro Tempore Casten reported there was a breakfast at the Joint Annual Conference.

21. REPORT ON SCHOOL ASSOCIATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION IN DUPAGE COUNTY (SASED)

No report.

22. REPORT ON DISTRICT 99 EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Member Finan reported some of the etched bricks at both schools are in disrepair and the Foundation is considering phasing out the commemorative bricks.

23. REPORT ON ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS (IASB)

No report.

24. UPCOMING BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

Dr. Thiele announced the following meeting dates:

January 12, 2026	Workshop Meeting – 6:30 p.m. - ASC
January 26, 2026	Monthly Business Meeting – 6:30 p.m. – ASC

25. CLOSED SESSION

Member Espinoza moved and Member Courtney seconded the motion that the meeting be adjourned to Closed Session for the purpose of discussing 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). And, 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); 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. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Espinoza, Courtney, Finan, Riske and Casten voted AYE. The Vice President/President Pro Tempore declared the motion carried.

Vice President/President Pro Tempore Casten 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 8:42 p.m.

26. RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION

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

Also present were: Hank Thiele, Superintendent; Scott Wuggazer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Travis McGuire, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Resources; Jeff Bergholtz, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Jeree Ethridge, Chief School Business Official; and Juli Gniadek, Secretary.

27. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion, Member Riske moved and Member Espinoza seconded the motion that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the unanimous voice vote of the five members in attendance, the Vice President/President Pro Tempore declared the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Don Renner, President

Juli Gniadek, Secretary