

**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 15th day of January 2026**

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 COMMENT

The Board heard from Hannah Kim, Key to 73 Foundation Treasurer, who shared that recent fundraising efforts enabled the Foundation to donate more than \$26,000 to the District. The funds were used to support Eagle Net, ensuring reliable internet access for families, and to restock the Hawthorn Food Pantry to assist students and families during the holiday season.

The Board also heard from Hawthorn Education Association President Erin Roche, who thanked Board members in recognition of School Board Recognition Month and expressed appreciation for their service to staff, students, and the community.

RECOGNITION

No recognition at this time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcement(s) at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Robin Cleek shared a brief update from the Green Oaks–Libertyville–Vernon Hills networking committee, which focuses on mental health, and encouraged families to monitor students' use of artificial intelligence tools, noting potential concerns related to inappropriate content and messaging. She also reported that she and Board member Stephanie Peters attended a legislative breakfast hosted by Stevenson High School with Representative Daniel Didech, Representative Nabeela Syed, and Senator Adriane Johnson. The meeting included discussion of upcoming legislative issues relevant to school districts and provided an opportunity to share district priorities. Finally, President Cleek noted that a draft of the 2026–2027 Board of Education meeting dates had been distributed to Board members, and the Board indicated consensus with the proposed dates.

ED-RED REPORT

Mr. Joel Finfer reminded the Board that the ED-RED Legislative Dinner will be held on January 26, with Congressman Brad Schneider serving as the keynote speaker.

SEDOL REPORT

Mr. Engle reported updates on upcoming SEDOL summer construction projects planned for 2026. Projects at Gages Lake School, the Pre-Vocational Program, and the John Powers Center will focus on modernizing infrastructure to improve efficiency and reduce long-term costs and will be funded through a geothermal rebate initiative. Upcoming SEDOL Board meeting dates were also shared. The next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for January 22 and the next Governing Board meeting is scheduled for March 4.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Board Member Stephanie Peters reported that the Site & Facilities Committee met on January 6. The committee met with the District's transportation partner, Lakeside, to discuss scheduling challenges, bus operations, and student behavior incidents on school buses, including the role of bus monitors. Ms. Peters noted appreciation for a recent communication sent to families reinforcing SOAR behavior expectations on school buses and expressed hope for continued improvement. The committee also reviewed the financial summary related to the copier request for proposals, which is nearing finalization. Ms. Peters reported that summer projects are on track, with bid results included in discussion items. She noted that the District's five-year facility plan is currently in development and that additional information regarding the 1% facility sales tax will be forthcoming. Upcoming custodial bids were also discussed, with clarification that the District is required to bid these services under Illinois law and is not conducting a custodial RFP.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

No report at this time.

KEY TO 73 FOUNDATION REPORT

Board Member Julie Clifford reported on recent Key to 73 Foundation fundraising efforts, which resulted in a donation to the District for EagleNet and other initiatives. She also noted plans for the Foundation to host future community gatherings for parents to provide opportunities to connect and explore local venues in Vernon Hills.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations, Mrs. Jennifer Akin, along with V.P. Trinh and Tom McGrath discussed Bid Results for Summer 2026-2027 Projects. The team reviewed the bid results for the interior renovation project at Middle School South. They reported that the bid opening included three trade packages with four to five bidders per package, resulting in a competitive and favorable response. The total project cost is approximately \$2.4 million, including contingencies and allowances to address unforeseen conditions during construction. Mrs. Akin shared that bids were received largely in line with projected estimates. The team will conduct scope reviews with the lowest responsible bidders and plans to return to the Board at the next meeting with a formal recommendation. Construction is anticipated to begin in June following the conclusion of the school year.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan shared that during the December Board meeting, two future discussion topics were identified. Elementary extracurricular activities will be discussed at the February 19 meeting, and Artificial Intelligence will be discussed at the March 18 meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 6.1 Board Meeting Minutes: December 17, 2025
- 6.2 Expenditure Report: January 15, 2026
- 6.3 Amazon Expense Report: January 15, 2026
- 6.4 Mastercard Report: November 21, 2026
- 6.5 Treasurer's Report: November 2025
- 6.6 Board Expenses for 2025 Illinois Association of School Board Conference
- 6.7 Personnel Report

New Hires: 1

Leaves of Absence: 1

Resignations: 4

1 New Hires: Kevin Kolcz, Executive Director of Technology, District, 02/02/2026.

1 Leave of Absence: Joanne Schorsch, ELL Teacher, HSYL, 01/05/2026.

4 Resignations: Min Choi, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, EN, 01/21/2026; Vijayalakshmi Kannan, Instructional Assistant, EN, 01/23/2026; Nicole Mohrdiek, Instructional Assistant, MN, 12/19/2025; Kathleen Ollinger, Nurse, EN, 01/20/2026.

Dr. Hannigan presented Mr. Kevin Kolcz as the proposed candidate for the newly created Executive Director of Technology position for the 2025–2026 school year. He explained that following a comprehensive review and restructuring of the District's technology department, the District identified the need for a single executive-level position to provide unified leadership, improve operational efficiency, and ensure strategic alignment across all technology functions. Dr. Hannigan also shared that the position was widely posted, resulting in 39 applicants. Following a multi-round interview process that included Cabinet members, district and building administrators, technology staff, and a technology consultant, Mr. Kolcz was identified as the recommended candidate for the position.

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

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Following Board approval, Mr. Kevin Kolcz addressed the Board and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Executive Director of Technology. He thanked the Board of Education, Dr. Hannigan, and the interview team for their support, as well as his colleagues and family. Mr. Kolcz shared his appreciation for the District and community, noted his passion for leveraging technology to expand opportunities for students, and expressed his enthusiasm for joining Hawthorn School District 73 and beginning his work in the role.

Mrs. Jennifer Akin reviewed the proposed copier refresh following a Request for Proposals issued in November 2025. She explained that the District is seeking to move away from a usage-based copier model due to increased and unpredictable costs. After reviewing all proposals, the business office recommended Impact Networking using Kyocera devices as the best overall value based on cost, reliability, and long-term operational efficiency. The proposal includes a three-year equipment lease and a four-year fixed-cost maintenance agreement to provide budget stability.

ACTION ITEMS

Copier Refresh

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that the Board of Education approve the Copier Refresh; 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

INFORMATION

1. Enrollment - Uploaded
 2. FOIA Log, Dr. Hannigan reported that the District has received five FOIA requests since the last board meeting and has been responded to as identified in Section 8.2 of the Board agenda.
 3. Media Clips
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TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

No topics for future discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Stephanie Peters made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Karl Borchers. The meeting adjourned at 7:24 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: _____