

**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 16th day of October 2025**

CALL TO ORDER

Board Vice President George Fievet 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, Michael Engle, Joel Finfer, Stephanie Peters, Karl Borchers, 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. President Robin Cleek was not in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jenna Garcia, PTO President, expressed appreciation to the Board and community for their support of the recent HoptoberFest event, held in partnership with Melody Farm. She noted that attendee feedback is being reviewed to inform improvements for next year's event and presented a small token of appreciation to the Board members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements at this time.

RECOGNITION

Board Members Karl Borchers and George Fievet spoke on behalf of the Recognition Committee to formally acknowledge three exceptional members of the Hawthorn community.

Congratulations were extended to Ms. Katelyn Tseitlin, teacher at the Hawthorn School of Young Learners, who was recognized for her dedication, creativity, and commitment to student success. She was praised for her individualized approach to instruction, strong relationships with students, and reflective professional growth. Ms. Tseitlin was presented with a certificate of recognition.

Ms. Gabrielle Koziol, teacher at Middle School North, was recognized for her leadership, advocacy, and collaboration in supporting multilingual learners. She was commended for her innovative instructional strategies, mentorship, and deep commitment to inclusion and student achievement. Ms. Koziol was presented with a certificate of recognition.

Mr. Dave Anderson, Hawthorn Helpers volunteer at the School of Dual Language, was recognized for his outstanding service and positive impact on students and staff. His weekly classroom support, flexibility, and enthusiasm has made him a valued and appreciated member of the school community. Mr. Anderson was not in attendance that evening but was presented with a certificate of recognition at a later date.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Board Vice President George Fievet shared the President's Report on behalf of President Cleek. Mr. Fievet noted that Board members should have received the 2025 Resolutions Report and asked them to review it in advance of a discussion at the upcoming November Board meeting. He also shared that he will serve as the delegate assembly representative for Hawthorn at the Joint Annual Conference in Chicago.

ED-RED REPORT

Mr. Joel Finfer reported that today marks the end of the first half of the veto session. He explained that the veto session provides the legislature an opportunity to revisit items that were previously missed or not brought to a vote. Mr. Finfer also noted that the ED-RED Kickoff Luncheon will be held on November 20, which has sold out and will be attended by 15 legislators, offering an opportunity to engage their attention.

SEDOL REPORT

Mr. Michael Engle reported that the last SEDOL Executive Board meeting was held on September 18, and the last Governing Board meeting on August 6. He provided an update on the tuition reset for SEDOL. Beginning in summer 2024, SEDOL developed a plan to address stakeholder concerns about tuition clarity and equity. A Tuition Restructuring Advisory Committee, composed of district special education administrators and business officials, and a Steering Committee of district superintendents, reviewed options and recommended a new tuition structure. The proposed formula allocates administrative costs as follows: 25% based on district Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV), 25% on district enrollment, and 50% on average daily attendance (ADA).

Both committees and the Executive Board supported this recommendation. The proposal will be presented to the Executive Board on October 23 and, if approved, to the Governing Board on December 3, with implementation planned for the 2026–2027 school year. Mr. Engle noted that the model benefits District 73 given its low enrollment in SEDOL programs and will seek board consensus at the November 13 meeting to vote in favor of the model.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Board Vice President George Fievet reported that the Site & Facilities Committee last met on October 6. Discussions included the upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) for custodial vendor selection. Moving to an RFP process will provide greater input in vendor selection, with review and selection expected in early 2026. The committee also discussed activity and registration fees for the 2026–2027 school year, which will be presented at an upcoming Board meeting. Mr. Fievet noted that the committee received a transportation update, highlighting continued collaboration with Lakeside to improve traffic flow on Aspen Drive for both Middle South and Townline Schools during morning drop-off. Additional attention is being given to supporting Lakeside with student behavior and bus protocol compliance. He also provided a food service update. Families from the South Campus were invited to an informational session with Quest Food Management Services on October 9. Approximately a dozen parents attended and learned about the National School Lunch Program, daily meal offerings, and nutrition initiatives. Parents sampled menu items, and Quest representatives highlighted features such as the daily fresh fruit and vegetable bar, the share table, and “Tasty Tuesdays,” which allow students to try new foods. The committee will meet again prior to the November Board meeting.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Julie Clifford reported that the Wellness Committee met on October 14. The committee reviewed the five pillars of the Whole Child framework: healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, and discussed ongoing efforts to align school initiatives with these areas. The committee also reviewed the district’s wellness policies and confirmed that no major updates are needed at this time. In addition, members examined student behavior data and noted that incidents of disorderly or disruptive behavior have decreased compared to the previous year. With those metrics stabilizing at lower levels, the committee will begin monitoring additional categories this year, including unsafe, threatening, and disrespectful behavior. The goal is to identify strategies in partnership with staff and students to further reduce these behaviors.

KEY TO 73 FOUNDATION REPORT

Ms. Julie Clifford also reported that the annual Key to 73 Foundation Golf Outing is scheduled for June 5. The Foundation is seeking sponsors and donations for the event, with a variety of sponsorship opportunities available. Ms. Clifford noted that community members and families are invited to contribute items for the online auction, such as event tickets, vacation stays, local business services, or gift cards. She also recognized the success of the recent HoptoberFest event and expressed appreciation for the volunteers, particularly members of the PTO, whose support made the event possible. Attendees are encouraged to complete the event survey to help guide future improvements.

PRESENTATION

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations, Jennifer Akin, and Kevin Smith of Eccezion Auditing presented the FY2025 Audit. They reported that fieldwork went smoothly, all requests were met on time, and there were no significant journal entries. The District received the best opinion available for cash basis statements, qualified only due to the reporting method. No new accounting standards affected the District this year. Total governmental fund balance decreased by approximately \$3.9 million to about \$53 million, primarily due to planned capital projects. The General Fund reflects roughly nine months of expenditures. Operations and Maintenance decreased due to a \$2.5 million transfer to Capital Projects. Debt Service remains at about eight months, and the Transportation Fund improved to a little over five months, up from about two months last year. On a government-wide basis, net position increased by about \$4.4 million, reflecting capital asset activity and debt changes. All reports are complete in draft form and awaiting the federal compliance supplement for the single audit before final issuance. The Illinois State Board of Education has been notified, filings are current in the online portal, and no penalties are expected.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Adam Palmer, and Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations, Jennifer Akin, presented information on substitute compensation. Mr. Palmer reviewed current data, peer district comparisons, and fill rate trends. Hawthorn’s current daily substitute rate is \$120, compared to an area average of \$137. The long-term substitute rate is \$227.98, below the regional average of \$245. The district’s average fill rate remains around 65 percent, reflecting challenges in recruitment and retention. The district recommends increasing the daily rate to \$135 and the long-term rate to \$249.39, aligning with the BA Step 1 rate in the current teacher contract. The proposed increase would be retroactive to the start of the 2025–2026 school year, with substitutes receiving back pay for the difference. The proposed adjustments aim to maintain competitiveness with surrounding districts and support the district’s ability to attract and retain qualified substitutes. The district will bring this item back to the Board for approval at the November meeting.

Mrs. Akin then discussed an addendum with Impact Networking following their initial assessment of the district’s network. Impact identified four areas for added support: Jamf administration to improve software deployment and patch management, IT Glue documentation to centralize technology records for shared access, onsite engineering support two days per week, and remote

monitoring and management of approximately 750 Mac workstations. These services are intended to improve efficiency, security, and reliability of the technology environment.

Mrs. Akin also discussed the 2025 Tentative Tax Levy. She reviewed the purpose and process of the annual levy, noting that property taxes are the district's largest local revenue source. She noted 2024 as an example and outlined the annual timeline from tentative levy to filing and final extension. Key factors include the tax cap limit tied to December 2024 CPI at 2.9 percent, estimated new growth safeguarded at 15 million, the Miller ratio of 0.52 for the three operating funds compared with ISBE's guidance of one year in reserves, and debt service needs of about 7 million annually through 2038. For fiscal year 2026, local revenue is budgeted at 61 million, of which the levy provides about 56.7 million, nearly 93 percent of local revenue and about 80 percent of total revenue, with approximately 84.45 percent supporting salaries and benefits. The business office recommends a 2025 levy ask of 57.63 million, which incorporates estimated new property and ensures the district can capture available revenue.

Lastly, Mrs. Jennifer Akin, joined by V.P. Trin of ARCON Architects and design consultant Annie Engler, discussed the 2026 summer projects. They will seek Board approval at the next meeting to proceed with work at Middle School South. The Site and Facilities Committee recommends refreshing the library and front office to enhance functionality, safety, and the learning environment. Planned concepts include a security pass-through window, improved front office flow, relocation of the nurse's office for better access, and library updates with team rooms, flexible furniture, new finishes, and improved sight lines. The District budgets \$2.5 million annually for building improvements. Preliminary concepts were shared, with the intent to seek approval to bid at the next meeting, release bid documents in December, and bring bids for approval in January for summer construction.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

No report at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes: September 18, 2025
- 7.2 Closed Session Minutes: September 18, 2025
- 7.3 Expenditure Report: October 16, 2025
- 7.4 Amazon Expense Report: October 16, 2025
- 7.5 Mastercard Report: August 21, 2025
- 7.6 Treasurer's Report: August 2025
- 7.7 Personnel Report

New Hires: 8

Leaves of Absence: 4

Resignations: 5

Change of Status: 2

8 New Hires: Meghan Russo, 2nd Grade Teacher, DL, 10/06/2025; Miki Son, LBS1 Teacher, AS, 11/03/2025; Ritu Aggarwal, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 10/08/2025; Umamaheswari Dharmalingam, Instructional Assistant, TL, 10/09/2025; Young Eum, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, AS, 09/16/2025; Kathleen Ollinger, Nurse, EN, 10/06/2025; Stacy Wipperfurth, Instructional Assistant, MS, 09/22/2025; Maggie Wittman, Instructional Assistant, MN, 10/06/2025.

4 Leaves of Absence: John Hope, Science Teacher, MS, 10/06/2025; Pamela Matkovich, Math Teacher, MN, 01/05/2026; Shelby Soto, K Teacher, DL, 01/15/2026; Vineetha Kattookaran, Instructional Assistant, EN, 12/01/2025.

2 Change of Status: Priyanka Shinde, Instructional Assistant, AS, 09/22/2025; Saravanadevi Thambidurai, Instructional Assistant, DL, 09/15/2025.

5 Resignations: Jenna Prescott, LBS1 Teacher, TL, 10/10/2025; Alejandra Castro, Office Clerk, Aspen, 09/30/2025; Subashini Krishanmoorthy, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 10/10/2025; Akila Prakash, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 10/09/2025; Kathryn Tooley, Instructional Assistant, Lincoln, 10/01/2025.

Stephanie Peters requested to remove section 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from September 18, 2025** and 7.2 **Closed Session Minutes from September 18, 2025** from the consent agenda.

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that the Board of Education approve 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from September 18, 2025** and 7.2 **Closed Session Minutes from September 18, 2025** as presented; seconded by Karl Borchers.

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

Motion carried: 5 ayes; 1 abstain

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

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan reviewed Policy PRESS Issue 118/119. He reminded the Board that the Policy Sub-Committee met on September 5 to review updates across multiple departments included in PRESS Issues 118 and 119. A total of 34 policies were reviewed, with department heads presenting their updates at the previous Board meeting. The administration is seeking Board approval to adopt the recommended updates included in the IASB PRESS 118/119 policy packet.

Mrs. Jennifer Akin reviewed several action items related to the Business Department. First, she requested approval for the District to participate in the Illinois Together Purchasing Cooperative, a newly established consortium that allows member districts to access competitively awarded contracts developed by other participating districts. Participation is free, voluntary, and may be terminated with 30 days' notice. Next, Mrs. Akin requested approval to apply for the FY26 School Maintenance Project Grant, a state matching program supporting building maintenance and repairs. The proposed project includes floor replacement at Middle School South as part of the 2026 summer improvements. Lastly, Mrs. Akin requested approval for an addendum to the network services contract with Impact Networking. The addendum provides enhanced technical support and network management services at a cost of approximately \$18,000 per month as presented.

ACTION ITEMS

Policy PRESS Issue 118 and 119

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that the Board of Education approve the Policy PRESS Issue 118 and 119; Joel Finfer seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Purchasing Cooperative Agreement

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved that the Board of Education approve the Purchasing Cooperative Agreement; Stephanie Peters seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Approval to Apply for the FY26 Maintenance Project Grant

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board of Education approve to apply for the FY26 Maintenance Project Grant; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Managed Service Provider Additional Service

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved that the Board of Education approve the Managed Service Provider Additional Service; Stephanie Peters seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 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 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, Joel Finfer *made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by* Karl Borchers. The meeting *adjourned at 7:57 p.m.* **All in favor? Yes.**

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Flores

Robin Cleek, President

Julie Clifford, Secretary

Date Minutes Approved: _____