
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, NAPERVILLE COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 203, DUPAGE AND WILL COUNTIES, ILLINOIS, HELD AT DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION CENTER, 203 WEST HILLSIDE ROAD, NAPERVILLE, IL.
February 2, 2026, AT 7:07 P.M., CLOSED SESSION 6:01 p.m.

Call to order

Vice President Kristine Gericke called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Board members present: Charles Cush, Holly Blastic, Joe Kozminski, and Marc Willensky, Kristine Gericke, and Amanda McMillen. Absent: Melissa Kelley Black.

Administrators present were:

Dan Bridges, Superintendent,
Dr. Mark Cohen, Deputy Superintendent High Schools,
Dr. Meredith Haugens, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Michael France, Chief Finance Officer/CSBO,
Allison Boutet, Assistant Superintendent for Middle Schools

Closed Session

Kristine Gericke moved, seconded by Joe Kozminski, to go into Closed Session at 6:01 p.m. for consideration of:

1. Pursuant to 5 ILCS120/2(c)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees or legal counsel, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or legal counsel to determine its validity.
2. Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the school board, including meetings held for the purpose of discussing whether a particular parcel should be acquired.
3. Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(2) Collective negotiating matters between the school board and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees.

A roll call vote was taken, those voting yes: Cush, Blastic, Gericke, Kozminski, McMillen, and Willensky. Those voting no: None. Absent: Kelley Black. The motion carried.

The Board of Education entered closed session at 6:01 p.m.

Meeting Opening

Amanda McMillen made a motion, seconded by Joe Kozminski to return to Open Session at 7:07 pm. A roll call vote was taken. Those voting yes: Cush, Blastic, Willensky, Kozminski, McMillen, and Gericke. No: None. Absent: Kelley Black. The motion carried.

Welcome and Mission

Charles Cush welcomed all and read Naperville Community Unit School District 203's Mission Statement.

Roll Call

Board members present: Charles Cush, Kristine Gericke, Amanda McMillen, Joe Kozminski, Holly Blastic, and Marc Willensky.

Pledge of Allegiance

Led by the Board of Education

Administrators present: Dan Bridges, Superintendent, Mark Cohen, Deputy Superintendent/High Schools, Dr. Meredith Haugens, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Dr. Mark Cohen, Deputy Superintendent, High Schools, Dr. Patrick Nolten, Assistant Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability, and Michael Frances, Chief Financial Officer.

Recognition:

Good News:

Naperville North High School's Black Student Leadership Associated hosted their annual Martin Luther King Day celebration on Thursday, January 15th, 6pm.

This year's theme was "Dare to DREAM" featuring guest speaker, Mikel L. Mays, CEO & Founder of Mays Music Centre of Excellence, who discussed his realized dream to become an entrepreneur.

Naperville Central and Naperville North High Schools have been officially recognized on the 2024-25 AP School Honor Roll. This distinction is awarded by College Board to schools that demonstrate a commitment to increasing student access to Advanced Placement courses and supporting them on the path to college success.

The award highlights the significant schoolwide effort—dedication from teachers, counselors, administrators, students, and parents—to make AP access a priority. Both schools received the Silver distinction.

161 NCHS Seniors and 164 NNHS Seniors were named 2026 Illinois State Scholars.

The State Scholar Program recognizes high school students for outstanding academic achievement. Great job!

We are excited to share that starting next year, the District is shifting the Dual Language program to balance enrollment, improve equity, and strengthen student connections to their home communities.

As continuation of our Multilingual Expansion commitment, a Southside site will launch at Lincoln Junior High.

This ensures students remain on their home high school trajectory, attending with neighbors and classmates to foster a sense of community and belonging. We look forward to this student centered shift and will work with staff, students and families to ensure a smooth and successful welcome and transition.

Public Comment:

President Cush gave the parameters for public comment.

None.

Action by Consent:

President Cush reminded the Board and Community of the board agreements. He noted that it is each Board member's responsibility to prepare for each meeting and to effectively express our concerns either to the Superintendent or the Board President in a timely manner. Board members have also agreed that avoiding surprises is paramount in displaying respect to all

District Administration. The Board has tasked itself to send questions in advance of each meeting to the Superintendent to allow the provision of the best possible response for the community. It also allows for efficiency during the community's meeting. Those same questions as well as new ones may be asked in Open Session. For transparency, please note if any questions were asked earlier. Mr. Bridges, did you receive questions from Board members? Superintendent Bridges responded that he received questions from six Board members.

1. Adoption of Personnel Report

	Effective Date	Location	Position
APPOINTMENT-CERTIFIED FULL-TIME			
Jaime Mapel	2/9/2026	JJHS/ Mill Street	Speech Language Pathologist
LEAVE OF ABSENCE-CERTIFIED			
Olivia Jaime	11/2/26 - 5/24/27	NCHS	World Language - Spanish
Courtney Stuart	10/27/26 - 5/24/27	Maplebrook	3rd grade
EXTEND LEAVE OF ABSENCE-CERTIFIED			
Amy Wynne	SY 2026/2027	JJHS	Mathematics
RESIGNATION-CLASSIFIED			
Sierra DeBolt	1/14/2026	Kingsley	Special Education Paraprofessional
Marta Dobrowolski	1/21/2026	Ann Reid	Special Education Paraprofessional
Melissa Lee	2/20/2026	Kingsley	Special Education Paraprofessional
Julie DeSantis	1/26/2026	Transportation	Bus Driver
EMPLOYMENT-CLASSIFIED FULL-TIME			
Andrew Calhoon	1/26/2026	Connections	Special Education Paraprofessional
Nelli Kurbangaleeva	1/26/2026	Mill Street	Instructional Paraprofessional
Margaret Bultman	1/27/2026	NNHS	Technology Support Associate
LEAVE OF ABSENCE-CLASSIFIED			
Elizabeth Rodgers	1/22/26-1/21/27	Maplebrook	Special Education Assistant

Amanda McMillen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented, seconded by Joe Kozminski. Those voting yes: Blastic, Kozminski, Gericke, Cush, McMillen, and Willensky. Those voting no: None. Absent: Kelley Black. The motion carried.

Board of Education Reports:

Board Member McMillen had a chance to visit Kennedy. Sat in on classes. Science class and a language class. Great to see teachers in action. Great engagement.

Board Member Kozminski reported that he and Board Member Willensky attended the most recent CAP meeting. Engaging. Learned about recycling committee and their initiatives. Presentation from the engineers from Transportation Center project. Geothermal, solar capacity. Great meeting good discussion.

President's Report

We recently had the privilege of BOE self-evaluation process. As always, thanks to our ISBE reps for facilitating. We did some serious self-reflections. Proud of us as a group, applaud the fact that we are able to take a critical look at ourselves.

We will receive the Governance Award at the upcoming ISB dinner.

Action Related to Board Self Evaluation

Superintendent Bridges noted that the Board of Education had discussed ways to improve efficiency at Board meetings.

Board member Kozminski introduced an idea of time limits: each Board member would get 3 minutes per agenda item for comments/questions.

Joe Kozminski made a motion seconded by Amanda McMillen to approve a pilot until the next Board self-evaluation whereby each board member is limited to 3 minutes to speak on each agenda item before moving on to a vote or the next agenda item unless a majority of the board desires additional rounds of discussion and questioning in which each board member would still be limited to 3 minutes per round. Those voting yes: Kozminski, Cush, Willensky, McMillen, Blastic, and Gericke. Those voting no: None. Absent: Kelley Black. The motion carried.

Board President Cush noted that a Board member would volunteer at each meeting to run a timer to keep comments/questions to 3 minutes. Board member Kozminski volunteered for this meeting.

Superintendent/Staff/School Reports:

Superintendent Bridges introduced Mike Frances. Mr. Frances noted he will give an update to the forecast presented on November 17, 2025. Admin seeking guidance from Board about timing for closing the budget gap.

Updated Five Year Financial Forecast

Superintendent Bridges noted that Departments are preparing detailed budgets. Cabinet is working on staffing projects, with a goal of streamlining staffing. March 2 staffing projections will be brought to Board. We need to close the 12.5 million dollar budget deficit. We want to understand the Board's wishes on the timeline to make this happen.

Chief Financial Officer Mike Francis presented an update to the district's Five-Year Financial Forecast, which now incorporates the finalized 2025 Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 2.7%. This final figure is slightly lower than the 3% estimate used in the November 2025 projection, resulting in a negative impact on future revenue, specifically affecting the December 2026 tax levy that funds the FY28 budget. Consequently, the district faces a projected deficit for the upcoming year exceeding \$12 million, as annual expenditures continue to outpace expected revenue growth. This trend is illustrated by a downward slope in the fund balance, which Board Policy 420 requires the district to maintain between 10% and 20% of total expenditures.

To address this financial gap, the administration is pursuing a multi-pronged strategy focused on both revenue maximization and expenditure reduction. Revenue efforts include increased advocacy for state funding through organizations like the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) and the Large Unit

District Association (LUDA), specifically pushing for the full funding of mandated categoricals such as transportation. Currently, the state's failure to fully fund transportation creates an annual \$2.3 million shortfall for the district. While the board is also reviewing general and optional fees to ensure they align with rising costs, these fees only comprise approximately 1% of the total budget and are not viewed as a primary solution for balancing the budget.

On the expenditure side, the district is being intentional about reducing discretionary spending by scaling back non-essential professional services, professional learning, and travel, including utilizing remote options like Zoom to avoid costs for flights and hotels. The forecast also includes plans to consolidate duplicative resources and streamline staffing levels to align with current enrollment, with a goal of returning to pre-pandemic staffing where appropriate. Board members expressed a strong preference for prioritizing cuts to administrative and material expenses over student-facing educators to maintain the district's standard of excellence. Ultimately, the administration has been directed to work toward closing the \$12.5 million projected deficit as much as possible to ensure long-term stability and prevent the compounding effects of multi-year shortfalls.

Board Questions/Comments:

Additional state funding. What does it mean to advocate for more state funding?

Mr. Frances stated we have already started this. Local meeting recently. Tier 4 districts are falling behind because we are not receiving our full allocations...this is not helping us.

Superintendent Bridges added that IASB will be having a lobby day in the Spring.

It is not clear how effective this advocacy will be.

Mr. Frances stated we need to close the gap. We will not know information from the state level in a timely fashion. State passes budget at the end of May/June. State probably will not fund more.

Superintendent Bridges added that we still project deficits in our 5 year plan. Projections assume no changes to the factors.

March 24th opportunity to go down to Springfield for IASB. Good idea to listen to Podcast. She recommends we should get some board members to go down for this.

On the slide that talked about increasing the fees. What is your thinking about what we should be expecting to see over the years? We do not expect to see the increases to solve the deficit?

Mr. Frances stated that fees are about 1% of the budget. Even if we tripled them we will not balance the budget.

Thank you for presentation. Love the idea of advocacy. It's not likely we will get more money from the state. My priority is to look at expenses. Not a fan of adding to fees. Cutting travel sounds like a good idea. Less student facing cuts. More expenses like travel. Fees aren't going to make the difference, Springfield won't make the difference. It's compounding. Difficult topic, focus on discretionary things, supplies, etc.

Thanks for update. On board with finding consensus. Cut as few student facing things as possible. Tough decisions ahead. It's the right thing to do in the long run. Need to be financially healthy.

Is transportation to Springfield being provided by IASB?

Superintendent Bridges responded no.

It was not provided when I went in 2018. I will double check on this and report back at the next meeting.

Excellent job in laying out the priorities to balance the budget. We are so underfunded. How much of a hole is created by the state underfunding us. Transportation example. Trust the administration will do everything they can to maintain level of excellence we as a district provide.

Discussion without Action:

General and Optional Fees:

Superintendent Bridges introduced Michael Frances.

Mr. Frances noted the three attachments. Yellow highlights are changes. This year we removed the Junior High yearbook fee.

General fees are common to all districts. But the comparison is not all apples to apples. Barrington doesn't have course fees. These are rolled into general fees. Our fees are still on the low end of all surveyed.

Board Questions/Comments:

Thanks for the comments on apples to apples. Shocked by comparison fees. She would like to see more of the Barrington model. One large fee instead of multiple fees. Great how we are in line with other ECCs.

That is a good point in trying to consolidate fees. Why do we break ours down like we do? Ours were never consolidated. Pros and cons to both systems.

Superintendent Bridges commented that this is basically a pay for what you are using mentality. Optional fees only cover cost of materials and those costs fluctuate. Intent is to keep the fees as low as possible and only for what the student is using

Still thinks some consolidation would be good.

Tuition increase for ARECC. What percentage of the students will be affected?

Mr. Frances stated that he doesn't know the percentage. We have a general sense. Will get the numbers for the next meeting.

High School Course Fees:

Superintendent Bridges introduced Dr. Mark Cohen. Reminded the Board that there is no action to be taken today.

Dr. Cohen stated that 90 % of the fees are staying the same with a few decreasing.

Board Questions/Comments:

None.

Establish Hourly Rates of Pay

Superintendent Bridges introduced Dr. Meredith Haugens.

Dr. Haugens noted the report that includes the study with 22 schools in DuPage, hopefully that is helpful. Trying to stay competitive with other districts.

Board Questions/Comments:

How effective is the incentive program?

Dr. Haugens stated we paid the bonus 938 times last year. So far this year over 400 times the incentive bonus has been paid out to subs. Above 90% fill rate for sub jobs.

Do bilingual subs receive additional pay?

Dr. Haugens responded we don't differentiate for this position.

Draft SY28 Calendar

Superintendent Bridges introduced Dr. Patrick Nolten.

Dr. Nolten noted that this calendar is the recommendation of the calendar committee.

He reminded the Board of their criteria: balance of attendance days in 1st and 2nd semester, later start in August, finals before winter break.

Superintendent Bridges added that historically, board provided these parameters. Maybe we need to relook at the weight given to priorities. In the past we have talked to high school students about finals

after break. Their feedback has been strong. Finish finals before break. Every year we have questions about how we construct calendar.

Board Questions/Comments:

When is the best time to revisit?

Superintendent Bridges noted that the Summer would be good time to revisit

March 17th is green. Is this because it is St Patrick's day?

Dr. Nolten responded yes.

Thanks for explanation of criteria... The 8 days is a parameter that the Board established...

Superintendent Bridges remarked that the differential between semesters can be no more than 8 days. Maybe we can look at this and see if it is still relevant.

I do not like this calendar. Why do we have 4 days off before Christmas? Start the school year on 8/18 instead. Give families more time together in August. We still finish finals before Winter Break. Why is this not being considered. End of the school year is in May. The park district programs don't start until June. No childcare options for families. Don't see why we can't push back the start just 4 days. This calendar doesn't reflect what families need.

Discussion with Action:

PRESS 120 Update

Superintendent Bridges reminded the Board that this was discussed at the last several Board meetings. No new information has been received. He recommended approval as presented.

Board Questions/Comments:

None.

Joe Kozminski made a motion to approve the PRESS Policy 120 Updates as presented, seconded by Kristine Gericke. Those voting yes: Willensky, McMillen, Blastic, Kozminski, Gericke, and Cush. Those voting no: None. Absent: Kelley Black. The motion carried.

New Business

None

Old Business

None

Upcoming Events

2/16 Presidents Day. Next BOE meeting is Tuesday, 2/17/26

Adjournment

Kristine Gericke moved and seconded, by Joe Kozminski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m. Those voting yes: Willensky, Gericke, Blastic, McMillen, Cush, and Kozminski. Those voting no: None. Absent: Kelley Black. The motion carried.

Approved: February 17, 2026

Charles Cush, President
Board of Education

Susan S. Patton, Secretary
Board of Education