

February 9, 2026

The Board of Education, Community High School District 99, met in Workshop Session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, February 9, 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.

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, 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 was one visitor. A copy of the Visitors Roster is attached.

1. **RECOGNITION - DUPAGE REGION IPA HERMAN GRAVES AWARD RECIPIENT - DR. COURTNEY DEMENT**

Illinois Principals Association (IPA) DuPage Region Chair Gerrie Aulisa and IPA Past President Dan Krause recognized Dr. DeMent for her outstanding contributions to the IPA and presented her with the DuPage Region Human Graves Award. Those in attendance congratulated Dr. DeMent.

2. **RECOGNITION - DUPAGE REGION HORACE MANN/IPA REACHING OUT & BUILDING BRIDGES AWARD WINNER - GROVE EXPRESS FOUNDATION**

Dr. Aulisa and Dr. Krause presented the Horace Mann/IPA Reaching Out & Building Bridges Award to Junior Board members of the Grove Express Foundation and noted the Foundation has donated \$500,000 to support local education. North and South High Junior Board members Lily Eddington, Owen Wills, Finley Werner, Gianna Modica, Brielle Reilly, Jaina Kolavennu and Ingrid Baker introduced themselves and shared a little bit about themselves and/or their experience on the Junior Board. Nicole Walus, South High PATH Coordinator and Chair of the Grove Express Junior Board, shared there were ten Junior Board members this year and there have been Junior Board members since 2022.

Those in attendance applauded the award recipients.

Dr. Thiele thanked the IPA for attending the Board meeting to present the awards.

3. **RECOGNITION - SOUTH HIGH STUDENT AND STAFF**

Ms. Lyp introduced Hunter Evans, South High Performing Arts Center Coordinator and Technical Director, who was chosen to serve as the technical director for the Illinois High School All State Theatre Production for "Newsies." Mo Harris, South High student, was chosen for the crew of the production. Ms. Harris shared it was fun and she was glad she was encouraged to apply and accept.

Those in attendance congratulated Mr. Evans and Ms. Harris.

4. STUDENT PERSPECTIVES – NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Ethan Dusek, Michael Jones and Alan Boucher, members of North High’s first Boys Bowling Team, shared season highlights, which included a crossover with the Girls Bowling Team against Marian Catholic, an overall record of 13 and 3, two members of the team becoming sectional qualifiers, and winning the Pierce Crosstown Pin against South High.

The Board thanked the Team for sharing their experiences and accomplishments in their first year as a Team.

5. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Romina Papavero-Gonzalez, South High Student Board member, shared there are no issues with phones and scanning and the “Every Day Matters” messaging is prominent. She stated the Future Mustang Night was exciting, and she was honored to be able to address the group. Additional items of note Ms. Papavero-Gonzalez mentioned included Spirit Week, the Black History presentation, the Polar Plunge, and relationship mapping during Access.

North High Student Board member Ryan Enright congratulated Dr. DeMent on the honor she received. He shared the focus on student ownership and the consistency of the “Every Day” branding has been successful and noted Student Advisory is looking at ways to recognize students who have 90% or greater attendance.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN INDICATORS: GRADES AND INTERVENTIONS

Ms. Ziccardi presented the last five years of data showing the percent of Semester 1 course grades that were “C” or better; for both North and South High, with 2026 having the highest percent. Additionally, she presented data showing in the last five years, at both North and South High, 2026 had the smallest percent of unique students with a “D” or “F.” Interventions by staff at both schools for students who received D and F grades increased from last year to this year, with 100% of students who received an “F” having a parent contact intervention, according to Gina Ziccardi. Dr. Thiele noted, even though the focus is on attendance this year, other improvements can also be seen as a result of this focus.

Mr. Wuggazer shared 98% of North High students and 97.9% of South High students, during Semester 1, were provided an intervention through CSSS. He provided data demonstrating the number of students who triggered the Alpha Threshold is the lowest in four years.

7. PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING OF TEACHER CONFERENCES

Dr. Thiele proposed a restructuring of Teacher Conferences based on input from staff and families and student need. Key points of the new plan include a “Meet the Teacher” night in August, which would replace Curriculum Night; parent-initiated conferences occurring in November; teacher-initiated conferences occurring in both semesters after Progress Reports; and no student attendance during Thanksgiving week. He stated feedback from the staff is being gathered currently and feedback from families will also be solicited.

The next steps in the process, according to Dr. Thiele, include asking the Board for approval of the plan at the end of this month; the Calendar Committee meeting to revise the calendar; followed by seeking Board approval of the new calendar. Dr. Thiele requested, if the Board approves the plan, it be for a minimum of two years, with evaluation after each year. The Board did not express any strenuous objections to the plan and directed Dr. Thiele to continue exploring the restructuring of Teacher Conferences.

8. BOARD MEMBER QUESTION

Member Espinoza inquired about a possible student walkout. Dr. Thiele advised the Board there is rumor of a student walkout related to immigration enforcement. He shared communication has been sent to students and families stating it is expected that students will be at school and if they leave the classroom or the building, no matter what the reason, they will be disciplined. Dr. Thiele stressed the District's number one priority is for students to be in the classroom, the District is cooperating with the Downers Grove Police Department, and District staff will not leave campus to keep students safe.

9. RECEPTION OF VISITORS – PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

10. CLOSED SESSION

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

- A. **OMA Exception (2) Collective negotiating matters:** 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).

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Casten, Riske, Courtney, Dawson, Espinoza, Finan 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 8:27 p.m.

11. RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION


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.

Also present were Hank Thiele, Superintendent; Scott Wuggazer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Jeff Bergholtz, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Travis McGuire, Assistant

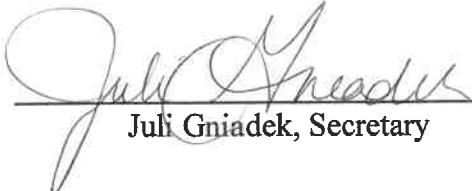
Superintendent for Learning Resources; Jeree Ethridge, Chief School Business Official; and Juli Gniadek, Secretary

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion, Member Riske 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 9:39 p.m.



Don Renner, President



Juli Gniadek, Secretary

