



MINUTES OF AN OPEN SESSION REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, KENILWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 38, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS; HELD IN THE CAFENASIUM AT THE JOSEPH SEARS SCHOOL, 542 ABBOTSFORD ROAD, KENILWORTH, ILLINOIS, AT 5:00 P.M. ON THE 22ND DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2025.

Board President Kate Tarbert called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Upon Roll Call, the following Board members answered as present: Ms. Adrienne Eynon, Ms. Lisa Graham, Mr. Eric Hayes, Ms. Jessica Katz, Ms. Kate Tarbert, Mr. Brian VanKlompberg, and Ms. Mileva Zunjic.

Administrators and staff present: Ms. Kate Donegan, Superintendent; Dr. Carrie De La Cruz, Director of Student Services; Dr. Stephanie Helfand, Principal; Mr. Nate McBride, Chief Operating Officer; and Ms. Rachel White, Board Recording Secretary.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to adjourn to Closed Session for consideration of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees; the purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body; student disciplinary cases; individual student matters; student disciplinary cases; and semi-annual review of minutes of meetings lawfully closed.

A motion was made by Ms. Graham, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to go into Closed Session at 5:05 p.m. The motion carried with a voice vote of 7 to 0.

RECONVENE OPEN SESSION

The Board returned to open session at 7:04 p.m.

President Tarbert called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Upon Roll Call, the following Board members answered as present: Ms. Adrienne Eynon, Ms. Lisa Graham, Mr. Eric Hayes, Ms. Jessican Katz, Ms. Kate Tarbert, Mr. Brian VanKlompberg, and Ms. Mileva Zunjic.

Administrators and staff present: Ms. Kate Donegan, Superintendent; Dr. Carrie De La Cruz, Director of Student Services; Dr. Stephanie Helfand, Principal; Mr. Nate McBride, Chief Operating Officer; Mr. Jeff Rosen, Assistant Principal; and Ms. Rachel White, Board Recording Secretary.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Tarbert invited public comment.

There was no public comment.



FINANCIAL

Public Hearing for Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to open a public hearing for consideration of the proposed 2025-2026 budget. A motion was made by Ms. Graham, seconded by Ms. Zunjic, to go into a public hearing regarding the proposed 2025-2026 budget.

The motion carried with a roll call vote of members present, voting 7-0.

Mr. McBride reviewed critical aspects of the budget presented in prior sessions, including the staffing plan, strategic alignment with the *Portrait of a Sears Graduate*, the Master Facilities Plan, technology and building security, student services, and professional development.

Ms. Tarbert invited any public comments related to the consideration of the fiscal year 2026 budget.

There being no public comment, Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to close the public hearing. A motion was made by Ms. Zunjic, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to close the public hearing regarding the proposed 2025-2026 budget. The motion carried with a roll call vote of members present voting 7-0.

Adoption of the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to adopt the 2025-2026 Budget as presented. A motion was made by Mr. Hayes, seconded by Mr. Van Klompenberg, to adopt the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget as presented.

The motion carried with a roll call vote of members present, voting 7-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Donegan reported that one Freedom of Information Act request had been received and responded to since the last regular meeting.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Enrollment Report

Ms. Donegan shared the second of three enrollment/class size reports for the 2025-2026 school year. The report and demographic data will help the District determine which areas are most impacted by projected growth or decline and provide insight into the District's long-term needs.



Business Office Update

Mr. McBride reported that the Phase III Summer 2025 construction project was successfully completed on schedule, marking a major milestone in the District's Master Facilities Plan. He noted that only a small punch list remains, and staff were fully prepared for the start of the school year thanks to the team's hard work, particularly that of Moris Quijada. He stated that the District will host a Fall Open House on October 18 to celebrate the completion of the plan and showcase the newly improved spaces at The Joseph Sears School.

He also shared that the Fiscal Year 2025 audit was completed in August by GW & Associates, P.C., with the process proceeding smoothly. The auditors will present their findings to the Board at an upcoming Building and Finance Committee meeting. Mr. McBride also noted that the District's next building appraisal is scheduled for September 23 to ensure accurate facility valuations for insurance purposes and appropriate coverage levels.

Building Report

Dr. Helfand shared highlights from the start of the school year, noting a smooth and positive opening. Junior High transition events, including the "On to 6th Grade" presentation and 7th and 8th grade locker set-up, helped students and families prepare for the year. The first day of school and accompanying Family Fun Day were well received and made possible through strong community and JSSPVA support. Back-to-School Nights for K-4 and 5-8 families provided a warm welcome and meaningful opportunities for parents to connect with teachers and learn about grade-level programs. She added that the annual third-grade Word Parade, held on September 19, continued a beloved tradition that celebrates vocabulary learning and student creativity.

TrueNorth Update

Ms. Donegan presented the Board with an overview of the presentation shared at TrueNorth's September 17 Leadership Council meeting regarding the Cooperative's proposed reorganization. The vision is to create a more focused and sustainable Cooperative that maintains valued programs while shifting emphasis to classroom instruction, student outcomes, and updated leadership, governance, and funding models.

Under the new plan, beginning in 2026-2027, Arbor Academy and the three North Shore Academy schools would consolidate into a single therapeutic day school on the TrueNorth campus. These programs would continue to provide small class sizes, specialized staff, early childhood programs, and transition services through age 22. Districts in the cooperative would also retain access to specialized contracted services, including assistive technology, therapy, and psychological supports. Governance would shift in January 2026, with an Executive Committee of superintendents assuming decision-making authority, and revisions to the Articles of Agreement reflecting the new funding model and withdrawal obligations.



Several TrueNorth programs would sunset after 2025–2026, including the Supported Learning Environment, adapted PE, LEA staffing, professional development, and stand-alone ESY programming (ending after Summer 2026). Individual districts would be responsible for these services. The Transition program would conclude after 2026–2027.

In the new system, a usage-based funding model would replace annual membership fees, with districts billed by actual service use. Evidence-Based Funding that the Cooperative receives annually from the State of Illinois would help offset costs, while administrative expenses would be built into tuition and service rates for greater transparency and sustainability.

ED-Red Update

Mr. Hayes reported that there were no significant updates at this time, but noted that Ed-RED has identified Cook County tax payments as one of its upcoming discussion topics.

JSSPVA Update

Ms. Katz reported that the JSSPVA held its first meeting on September 5, which went well. The group hosted hospitality tables and greeted parents during Back-to-School Night, welcomed new families at the Newcomers Party, and is preparing to host the Junior High Formal and the Sip and Sign Parent Social.

Science Curriculum Presentation

Dr. Helfand presented on the upcoming Science Curriculum Evaluation for the 2025–2026 school year. Guided by Loyola University, the District is following its five-year research, development, implementation, and evaluation cycle to select a new science curriculum. This cycle of review ensures that the school's curriculum promotes academic achievement for all students. This summer, a team of teachers and administrators met over five days to discuss the current science curriculum and goals for future learning. The team will continue to meet monthly during the school year to plan and review the selected pilot programs.

The District will implement two pilot phases this school year: from October to December 2025, K–5 will explore a unit from Smithsonian Science, and 6th grade will pilot SEPUP Lab-Aids. From January to April 2026, K–5 will shift to SEPUP Lab-Aids, and 6th grade will pilot OpenSciEd. The curriculum review team will then present final recommendations to the Board on May 18, 2026, with full implementation planned for the 2026–2027 school year. This work is part of the district's broader Integrated System of Teaching and Learning roadmap, which aims to fully align curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices by 2029–2030.

BOARD COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

Building and Finance Committee Report

RESPONSIBILITY, KINDNESS, HONESTY, RESPECT



Ms. Zunjic recognized Mr. McBride for his efforts in managing the Cook County tax delays, noting that while the delays were unexpected, his collaboration with the District's financial advisors and the plan to bridge the revenue gap are progressing nicely.

Board Policy Committee

Mr. Hayes stated that while there was no formal report at this time, the Board would be taking action on several policy updates that were previously reviewed by the Committee.

ONGOING BUSINESS

Final Reading and Adoption of School Board Policy Updates - IASB Issue 120

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve the recommended school board policy updates.

A motion was made by Mr. Hayes, seconded by Ms. Katz, to approve the recommended school board policy updates as presented.

The motion carried by a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

Draft Updates

Section 2 - Board of Education

2:80 - Board Member Oath and Conduct

2:130 - Board-Superintendent Relationship

Section 7 - Students

7:140 - Search and Seizure

7:300 - Extracurricular Athletics

7:255 - Students Who are Parents, Expectant Parents, or Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence

Section 8 - Community Relations

8:80 - Gifts to the District

Review and Monitoring

Section 1 - School District Organization

1:10 - School District Legal Status

1:20 - District Organization, Operations, and Cooperative Agreements

1:30 - School District Philosophy

Section 2 - Board of Education

2:10 - School District Governance

2:240 - Board Policy Development

Section 3 - General School Administration



3:30 - Chain of Command

Section 4 - Operational Services

4:50 - Payment Procedures - Review

4:90 - Student Activity and Fiduciary Funds

4:180 - Pandemic Preparedness; Management; and Recovery

Section 5 - Personnel

5:20-E - Resolution to Prohibit Sexual Harassment

5:270 - Employment At-Will, Compensation, and Assignment

Section 7 - Students

7:90 - Release During School Hours

7:130 - Student Rights and Responsibilities

7:325 - Student Fundraising Activities

Section 8 - Community Relations

8:110 - Public Suggestions and Concerns

NEW BUSINESS

Approval Of A Resolution Authorizing The Issuance Of Not To Exceed \$4,200,000 Taxable Tax Anticipation Warrants In Anticipation Of The Collection Of Taxes Levied For The Year 2024 For Educational And Bond, And Interest Purposes, And Authorizing The Sale Of Said Warrants To The Purchaser Thereof.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve the resolution authorizing the issuance of not to exceed \$4,200,000 Taxable Tax Anticipation Warrants in anticipation of the collection of taxes levied for the year 2024 for educational and bond, and interest purposes and authorizing the sale of said warrants to the purchaser thereof.

A motion was made by Ms. Zunjic, seconded by Ms. Graham, to approve the resolution.

The motion carried by a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Tarbert asked if there were any comments or questions regarding the Consent Agenda items. Without comment, she entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

A motion was made by Mr. Van Klompenberg, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 7 to 0.

Included in the Consent Agenda are the following:

- Open Session Minutes of the Regular Meeting on August 19, 2025
- Closed Session Minutes of the Regular Meeting on August 19, 2025



- Monthly Financial Reports from August 2025
- Monthly Investment Reports from August 2025
- Accounts Payable from August 20, 2025, through September 22, 2025
- Personnel Report from September 2025

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Tarbert invited public comment. There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Graham, seconded by Ms. Katz, to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. The motion passed with a voice vote of all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

All Ayes.

Attest for Distribution: _____
Mr. Eric Hayes, Secretary

Approved: _____
Ms. Kathryn Tarbert, President

ATTEST: _____
Mr. Eric Hayes, Secretary