



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 17TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2025.

Board President Kate Tarbert called the meeting to order at 5:02 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.

Also present: Ms. Kate Donegan, Superintendent; Dr. Stephanie Helfand, Principal; Ms. Rachel White, Board Recording Secretary; and Ms. Caroline Roselli, Robbins-Schwartz.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to adjourn to Closed Session for consideration of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees; Security procedures and school building safety and security, student disciplinary cases; and matters relating to individual students.

A motion was made by Ms. Graham, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to go into Closed Session at 5:03 p.m. The motion carried with a voice vote of 7 to 0.

RECONVENE OPEN SESSION

The Board returned to open session at 7:07 p.m.

President Tarbert called the meeting to order at 7:07 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 2025 Tax Levy



Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to open a public hearing for consideration of the 2025 Tax Levy. A motion was made by Ms. Graham, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to go into a public hearing regarding the 2025 Tax Levy.

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

Ms. Tarbert invited any public comments related to the consideration of the 2025 Tax Levy. There was none.

Mr. McBride presented the estimate of the 2025 Tax Levy. He outlined the process and recommended that the District request an extension of 4.47% for All Funds and 4.99% for Operating Funds for the 2025 Fiscal Year, which is consistent with the rates previously levied by the District. He explained that the estimated levy is based upon several variables, including the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the value of new construction in the District, the county multiplier, the Limiting Rate calculation, and the Board of Education's desire to manage District resources responsibly.

Ms. Tarbert invited any public comments related to the consideration of the 2025 Tax Levy. There being no public comment, Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to close the public hearing. A motion was made by Ms. Graham, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to close the public hearing regarding the 2025 Tax Levy.

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

Approval of the 2025 Tax Levy

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve the 2025 Tax Levy as presented. A motion was made by Ms. Graham, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to approve the 2025 Tax Levy as presented.

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

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Donegan reported that three Freedom of Information Act requests had been received and responded to since the last regular meeting and were included in the Board packet for review.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Enrollment Report

Ms. Donegan shared the third and final 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. The Board will continually review enrollment numbers and additional data to determine any necessary adjustments to staffing.

Business Office Update

Mr. McBride reported that Mr. Joseph Troyer of GW & Associates met with the Building and Finance Committee to present the FY25 annual financial audit of District 38. The audit reviewed the District's governmental activities, major funds, internal controls, and compliance with applicable accounting and reporting standards, and identified no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Financial highlights and fund balances were presented, reaffirming the District's strong fiscal management and internal controls.

Mr. McBride also provided an update on the ongoing evaluation of lunch program options, including the potential implementation of an in-house food service model. He explained that visits to observe similar programs and on-site assessments by Organic Life and Quest Food Management Services have been conducted, with preliminary findings shared with the Building and Finance Committee and the JSSPVA Board. He added that a family survey would be distributed after Thanksgiving to gather community input, and that he would report back to the Board with the results.

Building Report

Dr. Helfand shared highlights since the last meeting, including Walk, Bike & Roll to School Week, which saw 87% participation, as well as celebrations for Custodian Appreciation Day, Diwali, National School Psychologist Week, Spirit Week, and Veterans Day. Several academic and enrichment opportunities were reviewed, such as the third-grade global connections presentation by alumna Emily Groden, the eighth-grade trips to Pilsen and Washington, D.C., and student participation in the New Trier Township Band and Orchestra Festivals. The District also celebrated the successful Fall Open House, which marked the completion of the Master Facilities Plan and the opening of the newly reimagined school spaces. Additionally, Dr. Helfand stated that the District received an Exemplary designation on the Illinois School Report Card, recognizing strong student achievement and growth.

TrueNorth Update

Ms. Donegan reported that the TrueNorth Leadership Council had not yet met this month. She noted that the Board would take action later in the meeting on the Rescission of Intent to Withdraw from TrueNorth Cooperative 804.

ED-Red Update

Mr. Hayes reported that there was no update at this time.



JSSPVA Update

Ms. Katz reported that the JSSPVA continues to deepen parent engagement and enhance student experiences. She shared that the organization is working to recruit new parent volunteers and recently hosted a Volunteer Fair, which provided an opportunity for new families to learn about the various ways they can get involved. Ms. Katz also stated that the JSSPVA is seeking to expand its philanthropic efforts and is exploring a collaboration with the Volunteer Center of the North Shore to offer one to two meaningful service opportunities during the winter and spring.

School Report Card and Benchmark Data Presentation

Dr. Helfand presented the Board with information related to the Fall 2025 Universal Assessment Benchmark Data and the 2025 Illinois School Report Card, an annual report released by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The Illinois Report Card shows how the state, as well as each school and district, is progressing on a wide range of educational goals and provides a summative designation based on ISBE's indicators of student success. District 38 earned the Exemplary designation, which is the highest designation awarded and places the District among the top 10% of schools in the state. The Board expressed its gratitude to the administrative team and Sears staff for all the hard work that went into earning this designation, including many years of new curriculum assessment and implementation.

Safety and Security Presentation

Mr. McBride and Ms. Donegan provided an update on the District's safety and security initiatives. The presentation emphasized the Board's ongoing commitment to maintaining a secure learning environment through continued evaluation and collaboration with key partners, including the Kenilworth Police Department and other community stakeholders.

The update reviewed progress following two comprehensive safety and security audits—one in 2021 by Facility Engineering Associates and another in 2024 by McCarthy Byrnes Security Solutions. Completed improvements include extensive upgrades to physical security systems such as cameras, access control, lighting, and communication systems, as well as updates to emergency procedures and staff training. Multi-year safety metrics from both the 5Essentials and CSCI surveys consistently reflect strong perceptions of physical security and the school environment among students, staff, and families.

Mr. McBride stated that possible future projects include walkway bollards, enhanced intercom and digital signage systems, improved parking lot security, and ongoing discussions regarding the Green Bay Trail.

The presentation also addressed community questions related to ballistic glass and the potential role of a School Resource Officer (SRO). Security consultants and the Kenilworth Police



Department do not recommend ballistic glass due to emergency-response limitations, and architectural constraints would prevent retrofitting the building's windows to install true ballistic glass. The security consultants likewise did not recommend the District engage the services of an SRO, as SROs are typically assigned to K–8 schools with significant behavioral or safety concerns—such as frequent fights, gang activity, drug issues, or high staff turnover—that are not current concerns in the District. Additionally, the proximity of the Kenilworth Police Department and the regular presence of its officers at the school are significant factors in the overall safety of the Sears campus. None of the elementary or junior high schools in New Trier Township currently employs an SRO, and when surveyed, a majority of Sears staff did not feel the use of an SRO was necessary at the school.

Administration closed by sharing ways parents and guardians can support school safety through communication with children, monitoring digital activity, following arrival and dismissal procedures, and continuing to follow “See Something, Say Something” expectations.

BOARD COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

Building and Finance Committee Report

Ms. Zunjic reported that the Committee met on November 6, during which they received an overview of the District's audit from GW & Associates. She noted that the District received an unmodified opinion, representing the highest level of assurance. She also stated that the Committee reviewed the Tax Levy presentation.

Board Policy Committee

Mr. Hayes reported that the Policy Committee recently met to review the latest recommended school board policy updates from the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB). He highlighted several of the updates and noted that they would be brought back to the Board for a second and final reading at the December regular meeting.

First Reading of School Board Policy Updates - IASB Issue 120

Draft Updates

Section 2 - Board of Education

2:120 - Board Member Development

2:150 - Committees

2:270 - Discrimination and Harassment on the Basis of Race, Color, and National Origin Prohibited

Section 4 - Operational Services

4:10 - Fiscal and Business Management

4:30 - Revenue and Investments



- 4:80 - Accounting and Audits
- 4:140 - Waiver of Student Fees
- 4:190 - Targeted School Violence Prevention Program

Section 5 - General Personnel

- 5:10 - Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment
- 5:90 - Abused and Neglected Child Reporting
- 5:100 - Staff Development Program
- 5:190 - Teacher Qualifications
- 5:200 - Terms and Conditions of Employment and Dismissal
- 5:220 Substitute Teachers
- 5:280 - Duties and Qualifications
- 5:300 - Schedules and Employment Year

Section 6 - Instruction

- 6:20 - School Year Calendar and Day
- 6:40 - Curriculum Development
- 6:60 - Curriculum Content
- 6:130 - Program for the Gifted
- 6:160 - English Learners
- 6:260 - Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs

Section 7 - Students

- 7:10 - Equal Educational Opportunities
- 7:70 - Attendance and Truancy
- 7:180 - Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment
- 7:190 - Student Behavior
- 7:290 - Suicide and Depression Awareness and Prevention
- 7:130 - Restrictions on Publications
- 7:340 - Student Records

Section 8 - Community Relations

- 8:30 - Visitors to and Conduct on School Property

Rewritten

Section 7 - Students

- 7:150 - Agency and Law Enforcement Requests

Review and Monitoring

Section 6 - Instruction

- 6:280 - Grading and Promotion

NEW BUSINESS



Approval of 2024-2025 Certified Staff Tuition Reimbursement Requests

Ms. Donegan reported that per the contract between the Kenilworth Education Association (KEA) and the District, teachers will be reimbursed for graduate course tuition up to \$2,000 each year for non-priority area courses and up to \$2,500 for priority area courses. Requests for such reimbursements are submitted to the Board for approval in November of the following school year. Ms. Donegan presented the 2024-2025 school year certified staff tuition reimbursement requests and recommended their approval.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve 2024-2025 certified staff tuition reimbursement requests. A motion was made by Ms. Zunjic, seconded by Ms. Graham, to approve the 2024-2025 certified staff tuition reimbursement requests as presented.

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

Approval of 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 School Year Calendars

Ms. Donegan presented her recommendation for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school year calendars. She stated that the calendars were developed with the goal of aligning, where possible, with New Trier's 2026–2027 and 2027–2028 school year calendars. Because of this alignment, and because the District is no longer constrained by an extensive summer construction schedule, families may notice some differences in these calendars from years past, including additional days off around Thanksgiving.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve the calendars for the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years. A motion was made by Mr. VanKlompberg, seconded by Ms. Zunjic, to approve the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school year calendars as presented.

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

Approval of Rescission of Intent to Withdraw from TrueNorth Cooperative 804

Ms. Donegan reported that in response to the pending reorganization of TrueNorth Cooperative 804, she is recommending that the Board approve a resolution to rescind its Intent to Withdraw the Cooperative, which was previously approved at the June 23, 2025, meeting. Under the new plan, the Cooperative will maintain its valued programs but adopt a fee-for-service model, shifting its emphasis to classroom instruction, student outcomes, and updated leadership, governance, and funding models.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve the resolution to rescind the intent to withdraw from TrueNorth Cooperative 804.



A motion was made by Ms. Katz, seconded by Ms. Graham, to approve the resolution to rescind as presented.

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 September 22, 2025
- Closed Session Minutes of the Regular Meeting on September 22, 2025
- Open Session Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting on October 20, 2025
- Closed Session Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting on October 20, 2025
- Monthly Financial Reports from September and October 2025
- Monthly Investment Reports from September and October 2025
- Accounts Payable from September 23, 2025, through November 17, 2025
- Personnel Report from November 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