



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 6:00 P.M. ON THE 15TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2025.

Board President Kate Tarbert called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Upon Roll Call, the following Board members answered as present: Ms. Lisa Graham, Mr. Eric Hayes, Ms. Jessica Katz, Ms. Kate Tarbert, Mr. Brian Van Klompenberg, and Ms. Mileva Zunjic.

The following members were absent: Ms. Adrienne Eynon.

Also present: Ms. Kate Donegan, Superintendent; Mr. Nathan 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; and pending litigation [5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1, 11)].

A motion was made by Ms. Zunjic, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to go into Closed Session at 6:03 p.m. The motion carried with a voice vote of 6 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. Lisa Graham, Mr. Eric Hayes, Ms. Jessica Katz, Ms. Kate Tarbert, Mr. Brian Van Klompenberg, and Ms. Mileva Zunjic.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve Board Member Adrienne Eynon to attend the meeting by videoconference for reasons permitted by the Open Meetings Act and Board Policy 2:220.

Ms. Graham moved to approve Board Member Adrienne Eynon to attend the meeting by videoconference for reasons permitted by the Open Meetings Act and Board Policy 2:220. Mr. Hayes seconded the motion. The motion carried with a roll call vote of 6 to 0.

Upon Roll Call, the following Board members answered as present: Ms. Adrienne Eynon (Zoom), Ms. Lisa Graham, Mr. Eric Hayes, Ms. Jessica Katz, Ms. Kate Tarbert, Mr. Brian Van Klompenberg, and Ms. Mileva Zunjic.



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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Tarbert invited public comment.

There was no public comment.

CORRESPONDENCE

Ms. Donegan reported that one Freedom of Information Act request had been received and responded to since the last regular meeting, and that it was included in the Board packet for review.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Whole Child Approach Presentation

Members of the Whole Child Committee presented an overview of the District's Whole Child Approach, which is aligned with the *Portrait of a Sears Graduate* and the District's 2022–2027 Strategic Plan and focuses on the social-emotional and behavioral goals the District has for each student at Sears. The presentation reviewed the 2025–2026 Whole Child action plan and shared current metrics related to student involvement, discipline, attendance, social-emotional well-being, and school climate.

Committee members highlighted progress in areas such as increased participation in athletics and extracurriculars, reductions in chronic absenteeism, positive outcomes on social-emotional screenings, and continued positive ratings on the school culture and climate survey. The committee celebrated the District's "Exemplary" designation and overall progress on the Illinois School Report Card.

Presenters further explained how the school's Whole Child Approach is embedded within the District's Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and outlined the universal supports, targeted interventions, and intensive services Sears offers to meet students' varying levels of social-emotional and behavioral needs. In addition, committee members shared accomplishments and next steps for four focus areas: continued implementation of the Caring School Community program, refinement of consistent behavior practices, expanded student leadership and community-building opportunities, and a growing emphasis on cognitive development and executive functioning.

Update to Bullying Investigation Procedure



Ms. Donegan reported that Illinois law requires the District to conduct an investigation upon receiving certain specified reports of bullying. The District has recently utilized third-party counsel to conduct these investigations. She stated that, in response to parent feedback, the District is updating its procedures to transition to an internal model in which a District administrator will conduct the investigation, including interviews with relevant students, staff, and, when appropriate, parents or guardians.

Ms. Donegan added that this model will be feasible only if all participants in a bullying investigation conduct themselves appropriately throughout the process. She explained that, in addition to students, parents and guardians are expected to participate respectfully. Any use of swearing, raised voices, degrading comments, or a disrespectful tone or manner will result in a parent or guardian not being interviewed, or, if such behavior occurs during an interview, the interview will be terminated and will not be rescheduled. In these instances, future communication with parents and guardians regarding the investigation will be limited to the final determination letter.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Business Office Update

Mr. McBride highlighted the District's recent achievement in earning LEED certification for The Joseph Sears School. He explained that LEED, a globally recognized green building certification developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, reflects the District's commitment to sustainability and its Master Facilities Plan. He reported that the District earned top marks in areas such as Indoor Environmental Quality, Energy Performance, and Innovation, citing efforts to create healthy, comfortable learning environments, improve energy efficiency through cleaner, more effective systems, and implement community-focused, environmentally supportive initiatives. Mr. McBride acknowledged the contributions of the Master Facilities Plan Sustainability Committee and noted students' role in promoting sustainability through school programs, clubs, and curriculum integration.

Mr. McBride also provided an update on the Cook County tax bill delays and their impact on District finances. He reported that while the delayed tax bills have now been issued, the timing of the District's receipt of funds remains uncertain. He further shared that Cook County has postponed the first installment of the 2025 tax bills to April, but current projections indicate this change is not expected to affect the District's overall cash flow.

Building Report

In Dr. Helfand's absence, Mr. Rosen shared highlights since the last meeting, including the first-trimester Panther Pride Awards, which recognized two students from each of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades for exemplifying the school's core values of Responsibility, Kindness,



Honesty, and Respect. He also noted the annual Turkey Trot, emphasizing how the event fostered school spirit, physical fitness, and sportsmanship.

Additionally, Mr. Rosen highlighted the success of the fall food drive, sponsored by Planet Panther and the JSSPVA, in support of the New Trier Township Food Distribution Center. He reported on the Book Fair and thanked the JSSPVA for its sponsorship, and expressed appreciation to the families and community members who donated gently used children's books to the Andrea's Angels program, recognizing the positive impact of the school community.

TrueNorth Update

Ms. Donegan reported that the TrueNorth Leadership Council had not yet met this month, so there is no update at this time.

ED-Red Update

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

JSSPVA Update

Ms. Katz shared that the past month has been especially busy for the JSSPVA, noting that the book fair was a great success, particularly with the expansion to include a literacy night featuring an author visit and engaging student activities. She also reported that the JSSPVA Spirit Wear online shop is currently open and has been very successful, prompting consideration of additional options such as pop-up shops. In addition, the JSSPVA is actively preparing for the annual World Culture Fair in January, focusing on event planning and recruiting volunteers to host tables.

BOARD COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS

Building and Finance Committee Report

Ms. Zunjic reported that the Committee met on December 4, during which it received an update on the District's LEED Certification, highlighting a significant sustainability milestone for the District. The Committee also reviewed the District's proposed food service plan, which the Board will consider for action under New Business. Additionally, Ms. Zunjic shared that the Committee discussed the Cook County tax delay and the potential issuance of Tax Anticipation Warrants (TAWs), which the Board will also be taking action on later in the meeting.



Board Policy Committee

Mr. Hayes reported that the Policy Committee has not met since the last regular meeting in November; however, the Board will conduct a final reading of the latest recommended school board policy updates from the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) later in the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Resolution Authorizing The Issuance Of Not To Exceed \$4,000,000 Taxable Tax Anticipation Warrants In Anticipation Of The Collection Of Taxes Levied For The Year 2025 For Educational Purposes And Authorizing The Sale Of Said Warrants To The Purchaser Thereof

Mr. McBride stated that in September, in response to the ongoing Cook County tax delays, the District determined it was necessary to issue \$4,200,000 in Tax Anticipation Warrants (TAWs) to maintain cash flow and meet its monthly financial obligations, despite remaining above the Board of Education's 40% fund balance threshold. He noted that Cook County has not yet distributed funds to local taxing districts, including District 38, and has not communicated with the District regarding the delays or provided any indication of when funds may be received.

In light of these circumstances, and as a precautionary measure, the administration recommended that the Board approve the authority to issue additional TAWs in an amount not to exceed \$4,000,000 in anticipation of the collection of taxes levied for the 2025 tax year. Mr. McBride added that, if approved, the warrants would only be issued if it appears the current delay will extend into February or if the anticipated spring distribution mirrors the timing of the most recent delayed billing cycle.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve a resolution authorizing the issuance of not to exceed \$4,000,000 taxable tax anticipation warrants in anticipation of the collection of taxes levied for the year 2025 for educational purposes and authorizing the sale of said warrants to the purchaser thereof. A motion was made by Ms. Graham, seconded by Ms. Zunjic, to approve the resolution as presented.

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

Approval of Resolution Calling On The Cook County Treasurer And Other Cook County Officials Responsible For The Issuance Of Property Tax Bills To Resolve Systemic Issues

Ms. Tarbert stated that, in response to Cook County's failure to timely distribute funds from property tax bills, as well as its failure to communicate with the District regarding the delays or provide any indication of when funds will be disbursed, the administration is recommending that the Board of Education approve a resolution calling on the Cook County Treasurer and other responsible Cook County officials to address and resolve the systemic issues related to the 2024



second installment property tax bills, including administrative and communication failures. The resolution also authorizes the administration to work with legal counsel to consider all available legal options for recouping costs the District has been forced to incur as a result of the County's failure to provide local taxing bodies with their tax revenues in a timely manner.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve the resolution calling on the Cook County Treasurer and other Cook County officials responsible for the issuance of property tax bills to resolve systemic issues. A motion was made by Ms. Katz, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to approve the resolution as presented.

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

Approval of 2026 School Maintenance Project Grant

Mr. McBride reported that, to support the school's life-safety needs, the District has applied for a School Maintenance Project Grant, a dollar-for-dollar state matching grant program that provides awards of up to \$50,000 to grantees exclusively for the maintenance or upkeep of buildings used for educational purposes. He stated that if approved, the District will use the grant to help fund the replacement and modernization of the public address/intercom system, as well as the synchronized clock and signage system, all of which are important for effective communication in the event of any emergency at the school.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve the certification of the School Maintenance Project Grant. A motion was made by Mr. Hayes, seconded by Mr. Van Klompenberg, to approve the certification of the School Maintenance Project Grants as presented.

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

Approval of In-House Food Service Program

Mr. McBride reported that the District is seeking Board authorization to proceed with steps to implement an in-house food service program for the 2026–2027 school year. He stated that the goal is to develop a lunch program that meets the school community's nutritional, operational, and financial needs while providing students with nutritious, appealing meal options. He further shared that a family survey distributed to assess interest, preferences, and priorities related to lunch offerings yielded strong support for an in-house program. Mr. McBride explained that, if the Board approves this direction, the next steps would include working with food service providers and using the survey feedback to develop a menu that best meets the needs of District 38 families.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to approve the implementation of an in-house food service program for the 2026-2027 school year. A motion was made by Mr. Van Klompenberg,



seconded by Ms. Zunjic, to approve the implementation of the in-house food service program, as presented.

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

Approval of Authorization of Administration to Pay Bills Between December 16, 2025, and February 23, 2026

Mr. McBride stated that because the January meeting is a Committee of the Whole meeting, at which no formal Board action is taken, he is requesting authorization to pay bills between the December and February meetings to ensure timely payment of the District's obligations. He added that all bills would continue to be reviewed by Mr. Van Klompenberg, the Board of Education's designated bill reviewer, prior to payment.

Ms. Tarbert entertained a motion to authorize the administration to pay bills between December 16, 2025, and February 23, 2026. A motion was made by Ms. Graham, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to approve the authorization of administration to pay bills between December 16, 2025, and February 23, 2026.

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

ONGOING BUSINESS

Final Reading 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 Ms. Zunjic, seconded by Mr. Hayes, to approve the recommended school board policy updates as presented.

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

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

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 Ms. Graham, seconded by Ms. Katz, 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 November 17, 2025
- Closed Session Minutes of the Regular Meeting on November 17, 2025
- Monthly Financial Report for November 2025
- Monthly Investment Report for November 2025
- Accounts Payable from November 18, 2025, through December 15, 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 8:22 p.m. The motion passed with a voice vote of all ayes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

All Ayes.

Attest for Distribution: _____
Mr. Eric Hayes, Secretary

Approved: _____
Ms. Kathryn Tarbert, President

ATTEST: _____
Mr. Eric Hayes, Secretary