

**NORTHWEST INDIANA SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE**  
**2150 W. 97<sup>th</sup> PLACE**  
**CROWN POINT, IN. 46307**  
**February 18, 2026**

Executive Session: The Board of Managers met in executive session at 5:30 p.m. and discussed items related to IC 5-14-1.5-6.1.

1. Mrs. Smith-Gomez called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Mrs. Beilke took roll call. The following members were recorded as present: Mrs. Erica Smith-Gomez for Highland, Mr. Bradley Keehn, for Hobart, Mrs. Louise Neese for Lake Ridge and Mrs. Tara Beilke for Hanover. There was no representation for Lake Station or River Forest or Tri-Creek.
3. Mrs. Smith-Gomez asked for comments or questions on agenda items from the audience. There were none.
4. Mrs. Smith-Gomez asked for any additions or deletions to the January 14, 2026 minutes. Mrs. Beilke moved for Board approval of the January 14, 2026 minutes, as presented. Mrs. Neese seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
5. Ms. Gilmore recommended Board approval of the monthly financial reports dated January 31, 2026. Mrs. Neese moved for Board approval of the monthly financial report dated January 31, 2026. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Beilke and passed unanimously.
6. Ms. Gilmore requested Board approval of Resolution #26-02: To Transfer Amounts from the Education Fund to the Operations Fund for January 2026. Mrs. Beilke moved for Board approval of Resolution #26-02, as presented. Mr. Keehn asked Ms. Gilmore if the Cooperative had a limit on how much could be transferred. Ms. Gilmore said there is not a limit for Cooperatives. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keehn and passed unanimously.
7. Mrs. Horn requested Board approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between Geminus Headstart and the NISEC. Mrs. Beilke made the motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Geminus Headstart and the NISEC, as presented. Mr. Keehn asked if there were any changes made to the MOU from last year. Mrs. Horn said the dates within the MOU were the only updates made, the agreement itself remained unchanged. Mr. Keehn seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
8. Mrs. Horn requested Board approval of the collection fund fundraiser for the staff at Eagle Park Community School. Mrs. Horn shared the fundraiser will be ongoing for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year and proceeds raised from the fundraiser will be used for Eagle Park School staff celebrations and condolences. Mr. Keehn moved for Board approval of the fundraiser, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Beilke and passed unanimously.
9. Mrs. Horn requested Board approval of the indoor air quality management plan for the NISEC Administrative Office and Eagle Park Community School. Mrs. Beilke made the motion to approve the indoor air quality management plan, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Neese and passed unanimously.
10. Mrs. Horn requested Board approval of 6 Alternative and Residential Contracts, 2 for the School City of Hobart, 1 for Tri-Creek School Corporation, 1 for Lake Station Community Schools, 1 for Lake Ridge New Tech School and 1 for Hanover Community School Corporation. Mrs. Beilke made the motion to approve

the 6 alternative and residential contracts, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keehn and passed unanimously.

11. **Director's Report:**

- Mrs. Horn shared the Certified Teacher Contracts and Registered Contracts were sent out to staff at the beginning of February via our Blue Ink digital signing platform.
- Mrs. Horn provided an update regarding current litigation.
- Mrs. Horn shared the flyer for Family Night at Eagle Park Community School. She said Family Night will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2026 from 5:30pm to 7:30pm.
- Mrs. Horn shared the flyer for the NISEC SEPAC Resource Fair. She said the Resource Fair will be held on Thursday, February 26, 2026 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at the Hobart Community Center. Mrs. Horn and Mrs. Cain shared that Amanda Clauson, Lead for NISEC SEPAC, has been highlighting a vendor a day on social media to spread the word for which vendors will be at the Resource Fair.
- Mrs. Horn shared the save the date flyer for NISEC's Staff Appreciation dinner. NISEC's Staff Appreciation dinner will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at the Halls of St. George.

12. **Personnel:**

Mrs. Horn recommended approval to the following personnel actions:

**a. Retirement**

None at this time.

**b. Resignations**

Certified

*Brittany Tuna*, Mild Interventions Teacher at Lowell Intermediate School, effective February 4, 2026.

Classified

*Alisha Blood*, Paraprofessional at Lowell Intermediate School, effective January 20, 2026.

*Yvette Serrano*, Paraprofessional with the NISEC preschool ARENA testing team, effective February 27, 2026.

*Mandi Smiley*, Paraprofessional at Jane Ball Elementary, effective February 27, 2026.

**c. Terminations**

None at this time.

**d. Appointments**

Certified

*Christina Menchaca-Torres*, Life Skills Teacher at Highland High School, effective March 2, 2026

Classified

*Benjamin Cash*, Paraprofessional at Highland Middle School, effective January 20, 2026.

*Morgan James*, Paraprofessional at The Early Learning Center at George Earle, effective February 10, 2026.

*Kira Lesczynski*, Paraprofessional at Southridge Elementary, effective February 2, 2026.

*Schuyler Lopez*, Long Term Teacher Substitute at Joan Martin Elementary, effective March 2, 2026.

*Jennifer Nelson*, Paraprofessional at Eagle Park Community School, effective February 11, 2026.

*Autumn Romans*, Paraprofessional split between Lowell Intermediate School and Lowell Middle School, effective February 17, 2026.

*Sabrina Russell*, Intense Interventions Tech at Eagle Park Community School, effective January 20, 2026.

Registered

*Jennifer Barrera*, Behavior Support Specialist at Eagle Park Community School, effective February 9, 2026.

*Polly Brown*, Behavior Intervention Specialist/Long Term Teacher of Service Substitute at Eagle Park Community School, effective February 10, 2026.

**e. Independent Contracts**

None at this time.

**f. Leave of Absence**

Christina Puzzilla, FMLA leave pursuant to the memo from Kathy Cain, dated February 13, 2026.

Tammi Frailich, leave of absence from March 30, 2026 – April 6, 2026, 3 days of PTO and 2 day unpaid for a total of 5 days off.

Jessica Tippy, leave of absence from March 19, 2026 – March 27, 2026, 3 days of PTO and 4 days unpaid for a total of 7 days off.

**g. Conference Leave**

*Kirsten Gilmore*, UNITE Meeting with IDOE, Noblesville, IN, January 23, 2026.

*Jill Bruhn*, ICASE, Plainfield, IN, February 12, 2026 – February 13, 2026.

*Kathy Cain*, ICASE, Plainfield, IN, February 11, 2026 – February 13, 2026.

*Alisha Gorman*, ICASE, Plainfield, IN, February 12, 2026 – February 13, 2026.

*Rebecca Harkema*, ICASE, Plainfield, IN, February 12, 2026 – February 13, 2026.

*Marsha Horn*, ICASE, Plainfield, IN, February 11, 2026 – February 13, 2026.

*Michelle Mullins*, ICASE, Plainfield, IN, February 12, 2026 – February 13, 2026.

**h. Other**

None at this time.

Mrs. Beilke moved for Board approval of the Personnel Report, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keehn and passed unanimously.

13. Mrs. Smith-Gomez asked for comments or questions from the Board.  
Mrs. Smith-Gomez and Mrs. Beilke both welcomed Bradley Keehn to the Board. Mr. Keehn said he is excited for the opportunity to serve on NISEC's Board of Managers.
14. Mrs. Smith-Gomez asked for comments or questions from the Audience.  
There were none.
15. Mrs. Neese moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Beilke and passed unanimously.