

**Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting of
Hawthorn Community Consolidated District #73, Lake County, Illinois
841 W. End Ct, Vernon Hills IL 60061
7:00 p.m. on the 19th day of February 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

President Robin Cleek called the Board of Education meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Board Secretary Julie Clifford was absent. Vice President George Fievet served as Acting Board Secretary and called attendance. The following members were present: George Fievet, Karl Borchers, Michael Engle, Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer, and Stephanie Peters. Also in attendance were Asst. Supt. of Finance & Business Operations Ms. Jennifer Akin; Asst. Supt. of Student Services Ms. Alicia Corrigan; Asst. Supt. of Teaching & Learning Dr. Allison Stein; Asst. Supt. for Human Resources Mr. Adam Palmer; and Superintendent Dr. Pete Hannigan.

PUBLIC COMMENT

HEA President Erin Roche provided public comment announcing that the Hawthorn Education Association (HEA) will host a Cookie Gram fundraiser from February 23 through March 6 in partnership with Lavish Bakehouse. Proceeds from the fundraiser will support the Key to 73 Foundation, with Cookie Grams delivered the week of March 10. All staff are encouraged to participate.

RECOGNITION

Board Members George Fievet and Karl Borchers recognized Ms. Brittany Ulrich, teacher at Townline Elementary School. Ms. Ulrich was nominated by Jennifer Schmidt for her ability to build strong relationships with students and create a supportive classroom environment. Townline Principal Dr. Jennifer Haack and Building Assistant Supervisor Lauren Sachs also shared their endorsement, highlighting Ms. Ulrich's leadership in team teaching within the LBS1 program and her commitment to using data to guide student success. Ms. Ulrich was presented with a certificate of recognition.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcement(s) at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Robin Cleek reported that the Board conducted its required semi-annual review of closed session minutes from the 2023–2024 school year and recommended that the minutes remain closed due to confidentiality.

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board approve the semi-annual review of the unreleased closed session minutes and keep them closed; seconded by Stephanie Peters.

Roll Call Vote: Joel Finfer, George Fievet, Stephanie Peters, Karl Borchers, Michael Engle, and Robin Cleek.

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays.

ED-RED REPORT

Mr. Joel Finfer provided an overview of ED-RED's advocacy efforts, noting that nearly 500 education-related bills are currently being monitored. He discussed the long-term nature of legislative advocacy and the importance of continued engagement to protect and support public education.

SEDOL REPORT

Mr. Michael Engle reported that the SEDOL Executive Board last met on February 19 and the Governing Board last met on December 3. Updates included approval of an emergency sewer repair contract at Fairhaven School and the award of summer construction bids for projects at Cyd Lash Academy, Gages Lake School, the Pre-Vocational Center, John Powers Center, and Fairhaven School. Mr. Engle concluded his report by noting that the next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2026, and the next Governing Board meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2026.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Vice President George Fievet reported that the Site & Facilities Committee last met on February 10, 2026. Planning for summer projects remains on track for June construction start dates, with materials already being ordered. Thirteen vendors submitted bids for custodial services, demonstrating strong interest; review and discussion of those bids will follow in March. The committee also reported that Lakeside Transportation was acquired by First Student as of February 1, and district leadership is reviewing contract implications and potential future impacts. Additionally, the North Campus Parent Food Council will launch on February 25, with a

student event planned for later this year. The committee also welcomed Kevin Kolcz, Executive Director of Technology to the district, who has begun supporting building technology and printer equipment installations.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

No report at this time.

KEY TO 73 FOUNDATION REPORT

In the absence of Board Secretary Julie Clifford, the Board shared reminders regarding the upcoming Key to 73 Foundation golf outing in June and a parent social event at Aged in Oak scheduled for February 20, 2026.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Mr. Adam Palmer presented the recommended staffing plan for the 2026–2027 school year. The plan is based on enrollment projections, student needs, and fiscal responsibility, with projected enrollment remaining stable at approximately 3,378 students. Administration does not recommend additional general education, student services, or multilingual staffing, and three elementary classroom positions will be reduced through attrition due to enrollment trends. Mr. Palmer also provided information regarding elementary extracurricular opportunities, noting that buildings maintain a consistent stipend structure while allowing flexibility for additional clubs based on student interest and staff sponsorship.

Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Dr. Allison Stein recommended applying for a waiver to reclassify Middle School North from a targeted Title I school to schoolwide status. If approved, the change would expand flexibility in how Title I funds are used, simplify reporting requirements, and provide broader support opportunities for students. Dr. Stein noted there is no identified downside to the proposed change.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

No report at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 6.1 Board Meeting Minutes: February 5, 2026
- 6.2 Closed Session Minutes: February 5, 2026
- 6.3 Expenditure Report: February 19, 2026
- 6.4 Amazon Expense Report: February 19, 2026
- 6.5 Mastercard Report: December 22, 2025
- 6.6 Treasurer's Report: December 2025
- 6.7 Personnel Report

New Hires: 1

Leaves of Absence: 2

Resignations: 3

Retirement: 1

1 New Hires: Michie Furukawa, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, HSYL, 01/17/2026.

2 Leave of Absence: Rebecca Davidson, Foreign Language Teacher, MN, 05/07/2026; Sarah Greenwood, 2nd Grade Teacher, TL, 02/06/2026.

3 Resignations: Miki Son, LBS1 Teacher, Aspen, 02/13/2026; Srividya Manoj, Instructional Assistant, TL, 02/10/2026; Colby Schiller, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 05/28/2026.

1 Retirement: Elaine Wessels, Instructional Assistant, Lincoln, 06/01/2028.

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that the Board of Education approve the **Consent Agenda** items as presented; seconded by George Fievet.

Roll Call Vote: Karl Borchers, Michael Engle, George Fievet, Robin Cleek, Stephanie Peters and Joel Finfer.

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Dr. Hannigan reviewed Policy PRESS Issue 120, noting that the Policy Sub-Committee met on January 22 to review the updates and that 31 policies were presented at the February 5 Board meeting. The Board was also required to respond to a question related

to Policy 6:60 regarding instruction on the causes and effects of the Irish Famine. The committee recommended responding “yes,” and the District requested Board approval of the policy updates included in PRESS Issue 120.

Dr. Allison Stein reviewed the Elementary Math Foundational Resource Recommendation and recommended that the Board approve the adoption of Bridges in Mathematics, Third Edition for implementation beginning in the 2026–2027 school year as the district’s elementary math foundational resource.

ACTION ITEMS

Policy PRESS Issue 120

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved that the Board of Education approve Policy PRESS Issue 120; Stephanie Peters seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Karl Borchers, Michael Engle, George Fievet, Stephanie Peters, Robin Cleek, and Joel Finfer.

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Elementary Math Foundational Resource Recommendation

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board of Education approve the Elementary Math Foundational Resource Recommendation; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Karl Borchers, Michael Engle, George Fievet, Julie Clifford, Robin Cleek, and Joel Finfer.

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

INFORMATION

1. Enrollment - Uploaded
2. FOIA Log, Dr. Hannigan reported that the District has received two FOIA requests since the last board meeting and has been responded to as identified in Section 8.2 of the Board agenda.
3. Media Clips

TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

Board members discussed gathering additional information regarding the district’s transportation services following the acquisition of Lakeside Transportation by First Student. Additional information will be reviewed at a future meeting after being discussed during a Site & Facilities committee meeting.

ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), President Cleek requested a motion to adjourn to CLOSED SESSION for the following purpose(s):

- *The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. However, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee of a public body that is subject to the Local Government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and shall be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with this Act. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).*

With no further business to discuss in open session, George Fievet made a motion to adjourn to closed session. The motion was seconded by Joel Finfer. The Board adjourned to closed session at 7:30 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

With no further business to discuss, Stephanie Peters made a motion to adjourn the closed session. The motion was seconded by Joel Finfer. Motion passed 6 aye, 0 nay. The closed session adjourned to open session at 8:45 pm.

With no further business to discuss in open session, Joel Finfer made a motion to adjourn the open meeting. The motion was seconded by Karl Borchers. The Board adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

All in favor? Yes.

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Flores

Robin Cleek, President

Julie Clifford, Secretary

Date Minutes Approved: _____