

GRANT COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 124 MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING FEBRUARY 19, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Grant Community High School District 124, County of Lake, State of Illinois, was held on Thursday, February 19, 2026 and called to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Library of Grant Community High School, 285 E. Grand Avenue, Fox Lake.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All those in attendance stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

On Roll Call, the following Members were found to be present:

Mrs. Kathy Kusiak, President
Mr. John Jared, Vice President
Mrs. Shelly Booth, Secretary
Mrs. Ivy Fleming, Member
Mrs. Laurie Hembrey, Member
Mr. Ed Lescher, Member

Members absent: Mr. Bob Yanik, Member

Administration present:

Dr. Jeremy N. Schmidt, Superintendent
Mrs. Beth Reich, Business Manager
Mr. Blair Schoell, Principal

Student Representative: Ms. Izzy Ellington

AUDIENCE

Christi Flaker, Lorraine Lavajo, Francis Lavajo, Lance Lavajo, Hayden Schmidt

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of regular meeting held January 15, 2026

Minutes of closed meeting held January 15, 2026

February Bills Payable

January Treasurer's Report

Quarterly list of authorized depositories, investment managers, dealers, and brokers

Destruction of closed meeting audio recording from July 24, 2024 and August 16, 2024

** A motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mrs. Booth to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Kusiak, Jared

Nay: None

Absent: Yanik

Motion – **Passed**

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Recognition and Informational Items

Student Recognition: Student of the Month

Dr. Schmidt introduced Lance Lavajo, in the presence of his mother and father, as the February Student of the Month. He read Lance's profile of accomplishments, which included academic achievements, extracurricular activities, service to the community and future plans after graduation. Dr. Schmidt made mention of how Lance's schedule is quite rigorous and if something is going on at the school you can almost guarantee that Lance will be there. Lance said "thank you to every single person here, because you all played some sort of part in me being here today." He also mentioned that he always strives for greatness, he thanked his most amazing parents who push him to be the best he can be and helped pave the path that he is on. As his high school career comes to a close, he is going to bring the spirit of Grant with him always.

Staff Recognition: Excellence in Education

Mr. Schoell announced that the 2nd quarter Excellence in Education winner was Dulce Olmos-Ocampo. Dulce was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting to be recognized, but Mr. Schoell read the writeup submitted by Dulce's peers. Having worked closely with Dulce as her previous Divisional Administrator he touched on Dulce's incredible support for Multilingual Learners and how he really saw her shine in this respect. Mr. Schoell also touched on what an asset Dulce is to have and how lucky Grant Community High School is to have her.

Board of Education Professional Development Opportunity

Dr. Schmidt advised that the IASB Lake Division meeting will take place on April 15 from 6:00 - 8:00 in Mundelein. Eric Santos from the Learning Technology Center is presenting on Artificial Intelligence. He advised the Board of Education to let him know if they would like to attend.

Faculty Professional Development

Dr. Schmidt advised that Friday, February 13 marked the Regional Office of Education's countywide institute day. Grant was represented with faculty and staff participation, through faculty presenters, and as a host site for Special Education department staff. Overall, the day was a success and Dr. Schmidt thanked all the teams responsible for assisting in making the day possible.

Additional School Funding Sources

Dr. Schmidt and Mrs. Reich discussed what the County Schools Facility Tax (CSFT) is and the disbursement process that goes along with this tax. The CSFT is a tax not to exceed 1% that could be imposed throughout Lake County on certain purchases. The tax money would then provide an additional funding source for school facilities. Dr. Schmidt and Mrs. Reich also advised that the tax is available to all counties and many counties in Illinois already have implemented or have brought the proposed tax to referendum. Other Lake County schools are currently discussing the tax and if it should be presented for resolution. The process is as follows: Boards of Education that represent more than 50% of the student enrollment in a county approve a resolution to place the CSFT question on the ballot. The Regional Office of Education certifies the question to the County Clerk, the County Clerk then places the ballot at the next regularly scheduled election. If 51% or more of voters approve the resolution, the CSFT goes into effect. The estimated revenue for GCHS would be approximately 1.8 million dollars.

Student Support Coordinator

Dr. Schmidt advised that interviews are about to begin for the Student Support Coordinator position that is currently open. This 10-month coordinator will lead the implementation and standardization of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).

Student Representative to the Board of Education

The application window is now open for students to apply for the Student Representative to the Board position for next school year. The application window closes on March 13, with interviews to follow. We look forward to having an announcement ready for the April meeting and introducing you to our next student representative.

Principal's Report

Mr. Schoell presented his monthly report which included information on upcoming Music in Our Schools event, Access testing, ACT test preparation, college and career readiness, 5Essentials Survey and the exciting winter season we have had with many state send offs.

Student Representative's Report

Izzy Ellington provided her report which included information on the successful seasons our dance team and both boys and girls bowling teams have had. She updated the board with student perspectives on summer school opportunities and our current E-Learning plan. Izzy touched on the recent speech showcase that was held on February 6 and the speech team's impressive success at regionals. The 2nd annual pickleball tournament that benefits our first generation bulldogs is set for March 8th in which Izzy encouraged the Board of Education to get their teams together.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Action Items

2026/27 Board Meeting Date Changes

Due to the Homecoming 2026 date change, it is necessary to change our September Board of Education meeting date. In order for our Hall of Fame celebration to align with Homecoming we are recommending that the September Board Meeting be held on September 24.

The November 19, 2026 meeting date conflicts with the pre-conference sessions for the IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Conference. To allow for Board members and administrators to take advantage of attending those early professional development sessions, if they choose, the administration is recommending that the November meeting be held on November 12, 2026.

** A motion was made by Mrs. Booth, second by Mrs. Fleming to approve the September meeting date from September 17, 2026 to September 24, 2026, and changing the November meeting date from November 19, 2026 to November 12, 2026, as presented.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Kusiak, Jared, BoothH

Nay: None

Absent: Yanik

Motion – **Passed**

Overnight Travel

Dr. Schmidt advised that the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) performed well at the Northern Area Regional competition in January and are requesting to attend the FBLA State Competition in Springfield from April 9 to April 11, 2026. Approximately 23 students will attend with 2 teachers. The cost to the district is estimated to be \$6,755.18.

** A motion was made by Mrs. Booth, second by Mrs. Hembrey to approve the overnight travel request as presented.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Hembrey, Lescher, Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming

Nay: None

Absent: Yanik

Motion – **Passed**

Personnel

Dr. Schmidt recommended the following personnel recommendations:

Employment of the following individuals:

- Lauren Becmer, Asst. National Honor Society Sponsor, effective immediately
- Mary Ellyn Carroll, Part-time Food Service Utility, \$15.00/hr., starting February 17, 2026
- Anthony Johnson, Spring Event Coordinator, effective at the start of the spring sports season
- Ben Schram, Asst. Football Coach, effective immediately
- Gavin Smyth, Asst. Softball Coach, effective immediately
- Emily Weber, PBIS Data Specialist, effective immediately
- Laurel Wodrich, Job Coach for Transition Program, \$29.09/hr., starting February 17, 2026. When Division 1 license is obtained, pay rate will go to \$31.09/hr.

Recommend accepting the retirement request of the following individuals:

- James Cramer, Health and Wellness Teacher, effective at the end of the 2028-29 school year
- John Eiduke, Social Studies Teacher, effective at the end of the 2028-29 school year

** A motion was made by Mr. Lescher, second by Mrs. Booth to approve the personnel recommendations as presented

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Lescher, Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey

Nay: None

Absent: Yanik

Motion – **Passed**

BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Lawn and Grounds Maintenance Bid Update

Mrs. Reich advised that there were 4 bidders for the Lawn and Grounds Maintenance Bid. We are currently getting references from the 2 lowest bidders. She advised she will have a recommendation for a contract award at the March meeting.

Long-Term Financial Projections

Mrs. Reich advised that we have the finalized AFR from the auditors and have begun working with Frontline 5Cast to build our five-year financial projections. We are updating and finalizing it with retirements, possible hires, and anticipated revenue and expenses. There will be a presentation at the March Board of Education meeting.

Long-Term Facility Planning

Mrs. Reich gave an update as to where we are in the process of the long-term facility planning project. She advised that there will be a walk-through next week of the transition center/business office, the main school building and the transportation building. She explained the next steps are a kickoff meeting and then setting meetings for departments to share needs with the team.

OTHER BUSINESS

FOIA

Dr. Schmidt informed the Board that four Freedom of Information Act requests were received and fulfilled.

Menards Inc. 2023-2026 Appeals

Mrs. Reich updated the Board regarding the tax appeal legal settlement with Menards Inc.

CLOSED SESSION

** At 8:18 p.m. a motion was made by Mrs. Hembrey, second by Mr. Jared to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing semi-annual review of closed session minutes 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21); student disciplinary cases 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(9); other matters relating to individual students 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(10); and the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1)

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher

Nay: None

Absent: Yanik

Motion – **Passed**

** At 8:42 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mr. Lescher to end closed session and return to open session.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher, Kusiak

Nay: None

Absent: Yanik

Motion – **Passed**

ACTION CLOSED SESSION

** A motion was made by Mr. Jared, second by Mrs. Hembrey to authorize opening of the following closed session minutes: July 17, 2025, August 17, 2025, September 18, 2025, October 16, 2025 and November 13, 2025.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Kusiak, Jared, Booth, Fleming, Hembrey, Lescher

Nay: None

Absent: Yanik

Motion – **Passed**

ADJOURN

** At 8:43 p.m. a motion was made by Mrs. Hembrey, second by Mr. Lescher to adjourn the meeting.

Kathy Kusiak, President

Shelly Booth, Secretary