

BOARD OF EDUCATION SCHOOL DISTRICT 149
 MINUTES OF
 THE SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
 March 5, 2026

The Board Meeting convened at 7:35 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, and Mrs. Crayton.
 Mrs. Elston arrived at 7:38 pm
 Mrs. De Vasher-Williams arrived at 9:03 pm.

Also in attendance: Dr. Maureen White, Attorney Felicia Frazier, Attorney McKenna Kohlenberg, Janene Preston, DeWayne Anderson, Jamar Everett, Dr. Nicole Robinson, Chief Pointer, Officer White, Maurice Harris, and Dolly Mansker.

The Pledge of Allegiance – Said by all

Public Comments –

Maurice Harris with the Yellow Bus Company shared with the Board that they are still interested in partnering with the District to provide bus transportation.

Adjourn to Closed Session

<p>MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Elston, to adjourn to a Closed session at 7:40 p.m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees or legal counsel of Dolton School District 149, 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) <p>ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mrs. Crayton, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM E</p>
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Adjourn from Closed Session at 8:54 p.m.

Final Action on Closed Session Items

<p>MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Crayton, to approve termination of Dr. Nicole Robinson, Director of District Services. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Elston, and Mr. Tillman. Nay: Mr. Crivens and Mrs. King. MOTION CARRIED</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM F1</p>
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New Business

Mrs. King stated that when the matter had previously been discussed in August, the District had been covering the cost of eighth-grade graduation for the previous three years. She recalled that at that time, Dr. White had indicated she would review what neighboring districts were doing and report back to the Board with that information. Mrs. King stated that she did not recall receiving that follow-up information.

Dr. White responded that she did not recall formally presenting the information back to the Board. She indicated that surrounding districts generally require students to pay certain graduation-related costs.

Mr. Crivens asked how many students would be affected by the proposed fee.

Mr. Tillman responded that the district was expecting slightly over 200 students.

Mr. Crivens then raised a concern that the proposal included two payment options but did not reference a fee waiver structure for families unable to afford the fee. He emphasized that it is important for school districts to have a process available for families who may not have the financial means to pay.

Attorney Kohlenberg stated that many public school districts in Illinois typically charge approximately \$50 for eighth-grade graduation-related expenses, noting that fee structures vary by district.

During the discussion, Dr. White clarified that the anticipated eighth-grade class size was approximately 238 students.

Mrs. King asked whether the letter notifying families of the fee had already been sent prior to Board approval.

Dr. White confirmed that the communication had been sent inadvertently. She explained that a principal had believed she had authorized the letter to be sent. Dr. White stated that she instructed the principal to stop collecting payments immediately after realizing the communication had been sent prematurely. She indicated that six parents had already submitted payment before the directive to halt collection was given.

Dr. White further explained that information from surrounding districts showed that districts often pay for the venue, decorations, stage, chairs, and overall ceremony setup, while students typically pay for the cap and gown. She clarified that the \$150 fee would cover the eighth-grade dance, the class trip, and the cap and gown, while the district would continue to pay for the graduation ceremony expenses, including the facility rental, decorations, DJ, stage setup, and seating.

Mrs. Tillman commented that she had previously discussed the matter with Mr. Tillman and Mrs. Crayton, noting that historically families had paid for graduation-related expenses when her own children attended school. She indicated that she was unsure when the district transitioned to covering the full cost in recent years.

Mrs. King reiterated that her concern was not necessarily about the fee itself but about the process, explaining that families had already received a letter about the fee before the Board had formally approved it.

Mrs. Tillman agreed that the process should be followed appropriately and acknowledged that Dr. White had clarified that the communication was sent in error.

Mr. Crivens returned to the issue of fee waivers and stated that if the District was going to communicate the fee to families, the communication should also include information about the process for requesting a fee waiver. He explained that families who qualify through programs such as TANF, Social Security benefits, or other

government assistance programs often lack additional funds for such expenses, and that documentation requirements could be used to determine eligibility.

Mrs. Tillman asked whether the District’s existing fee waiver policy for instructional materials extended to items such as caps and gowns, dances, and field trips.

Dr. White responded that the policy did not specifically include those items, but stated that throughout her experience, the District has historically addressed these situations on a case-by-case basis, assisting families who express financial hardship.

Mrs. Tillman stated that historically, families who needed assistance would communicate directly with the principal, and those requests would be handled through school leadership. She also noted that board members and community members had previously assisted families in need with items such as attire for school dances.

Mr. Crivens reiterated that, in his professional experience, it is beneficial to clearly state the availability of a fee waiver process and outline the documentation required, rather than relying solely on informal or discretionary processes.

Mrs. Crayton responded that when she had multiple children attending school at the same time and needed assistance, she approached the school principal, and the matter was addressed through school leadership without a formally published process.

Mr. Crivens acknowledged that approach but reiterated that establishing a clear and consistent process could ensure transparency and fairness.

Mrs. Tillman then asked Attorney Kohlenberg whether the District could rely on existing policy language regarding eligibility criteria.

Attorney Kohlenberg confirmed that the District already has eligibility criteria outlined in its policy, which could be referenced.

Mrs. Tillman stated that in that case the language could simply reference that families must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in district policy, and she indicated agreement with that approach.

<p>MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mr. Tillman, to approve 8th grade graduation fees in the amount of \$150.00 per student, to be paid by the parent/guardian. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, and Mrs. De Vasher-Williams. MOTION CARRIED</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM G1</p>
<p>MOTION by Mr. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to amend the date of March 19, 2026 Board Meeting to March 16, 2026. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, and Mrs. Crayton. MOTION CARRIED</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM G2</p>

Mr. Crivens asked what the cost of the Board Recognition and Scholarship Banquet was and what fund this would come out of.

Dr. White reported that the cost was \$125 per person, or \$1,250 for a table of ten.

Mrs. Tillman asked whether the expense would be paid from a specific grant or designated fund.

Dr. White clarified that the cost was not associated with a grant but would be paid from District funds designated for such purposes.

Mr. Crivens asked whether those funds could only be used for that type of activity and could not be used to offset other expenses, such as graduation-related costs.

Dr. White responded that the District utilizes different funds for different purposes and that another fund had previously been used to pay graduation-related expenses. She stated that she would need to review which specific fund had been used for those expenses over the past three years.

Mrs. Crayton expressed appreciation for the opportunity for district leadership to attend the event. She commented that she was pleased to see principals in attendance at the event in previous years and stated that it reflected positively on the district. She further noted that it was encouraging to see both board members and district leadership participating together and representing the district.

MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Crayton, to approve the Board, Superintendent, Cabinet Members, and Principals to attend the Board Recognition and Scholarship Banquet on March 19, 2026. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mrs. Elston, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. Abstain: Mr. Crivens MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM G3
MOTION by Mr. Crivens, seconded by Mrs. Elston, to approve an e-Learning day for election day on Tuesday, March 17, 2026. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM G4

Adjournment

MOTION by Mr. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to adjourn the board meeting at 9:20 p.m. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: ALL IN FAVOR MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM H
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Wilbur Tillman, President

Sheryl Tillman, Secretary