

Hellgate Elementary Board of Trustees

Special Meeting February 19, 2026

6:00 p.m.

OPENING

The Board of Trustees of Hellgate Elementary School District #4 met in special session on Thursday, February 19th, 2026. The meeting was held in-person. The meeting was called to order by Board Vice Chairman, Rich Thornock. Trustees participating were: Rich Thornock, Kallie Gatzemeier, Jacquelyn Ryan, and Scott Rouse. Trustees absent were Tom McLaughlin, Beth Herron, and Tom Cook. Superintendent Molly Blakely and District Clerk Justine Reese were present for the meeting. District legal representation, Elizabeth Kaleva was in attendance. District staff participating included Jamie Courville (Building 4 Principal) and Brendan Brown (Special Services Director). Community members included the parent of Student A and Student A. There were up to 10 total guests/participants in the meeting, in-person.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at the meeting.

ACCEPTANCE OF STAFF RESIGNATION:

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to accept the resignations of the following certified staff members, effective June 10, 2026 (letters are available in official board packet).

- Ms. Lindsay Depuydt, kindergarten teacher, currently on a one year leave of absence
- Ms. Claire Walde, second grade teacher, currently on one year leave of absence
- Ms. Eliza West, fourth grade teacher

There was no discussion on the topic. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

OUT OF DISTRICT STUDENT APPROVAL CONSIDERATION:

A motion was made by Kallie Gatzemeier to approve the following out of district students, who began the 2025-2026 school year, as in district students, but have since moved (Board Policy #3141). The students are: HS, grade 8, moved 10/27/2025 and KH, grade 1, moved 10/12/2025. There was a clarifying question related to policy 3141. The motion was seconded by Scott Rouse. Voting in favor of the motion were: Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: EXPULSION HEARING

The purpose of the hearing was to consider the expulsion of Student A. Deeming the rights of the individual outweigh the right of the public to know, Board Vice Chair Rich Thornock called for an executive session of the board "The next matter to come before the Board for consideration is a personal matter and in this connection it has been determined as follows: (1) that the matter of individual privacy is involved, (2) that such privacy demands protection of the individual for the sake of reputation and otherwise that little, if anything could be gained by publicly disclosing the information to be discussed, & (3) that the demand of individual privacy, in this matter clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure." All participants remained for the meeting. The meeting was closed at 12:05 p.m.

Executive Session

The Board came out of executive session at 12:29 p.m.

EXPULSION HEARING DECISION:

A motion was made by Scott Rouse to accept the recommendation to expel Student A for the remainder of the school year. There was no discussion on the item. The motion was seconded by Kallie Gatzemeier. Voting in favor of the motion were: Rich Thornock, Jacquelyn Ryan, Kallie Gatzemeier, and Scott Rouse. Voting against the motion were none. The motion carried unanimously.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next regular meeting of the Board will be March 16th, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment at this time.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Tom McLaughlin, Board Chair

Justine Reese, Business Manager/Clerk