

**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 18th day of March 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

The Board Secretary called attendance and the following members attended: George Fievet, Karl Borchers, Michael Engle, Robin Cleek, Joel Finfer, and Julie Clifford. 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. Board member Stephanie Peters was not in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Platt-Kilstein, President of the Hawthorn Key to 73 Education Foundation, presented a \$5,000 donation to the Board of Education. The funds will support summer camp scholarships for District 73 students.

RECOGNITION

Board Members George Fievet and Karl Borchers recognized several individuals and community partners for their contributions and achievements. Jennifer Harris, Athletic Director for Hawthorn Middle School North and South, was recognized for her 14 years of leadership and dedication to student athletics. She was recently featured by the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) for her commitment to building strong relationships with students and the community, and for connecting students to meaningful opportunities through athletics. Middle North Principal Katie Waggoner provided additional remarks highlighting Ms. Harris's impact on students and programs. Ms. Jennifer Harris was awarded with a certificate of recognition.

The Board also recognized Big Ed's BBQ for its meaningful engagement with the school community. After receiving a letter from a fourth-grade student at Elementary South expressing appreciation for the restaurant, owner "Big Ed" visited the school to personally thank the student. The visit created a memorable experience for the class and highlighted the importance of kindness, connection, and community partnerships. Mr. Ed was awarded with a certificate of recognition.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcement(s) at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Board President Robin Cleek reminded members that Statements of Economic Interest are due and should be completed and filed by May 1. She also wished everyone a pleasant and restful spring break.

ED-RED REPORT

No report at this time.

SEDOL REPORT

Board member Michael Engle reported that the SEDOL Executive Board met on February 19 and the Governing Board met on March 4. He noted that the FY27 budget includes an approximate \$2.3 million expenditure reduction, with no changes to class sizes or staffing ratios. Staffing reductions will be managed through retirements and reductions in contracted agency staff. Mr. Engle also shared that Grayslake North High School will end its contract to host the Deaf and Hard of Hearing high school program after the 2026–2027 school year. SEDOL is gathering input from families and stakeholders, and no decision has been made regarding a new host location. This change does not impact programming at John Powers Center. The next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for March 19, and the next Governing Board meeting is scheduled for June 3.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Vice President George Fievet reported that the Site and Facilities Committee met on February 18. The committee met with representatives from First Student, which acquired Lakeside Transportation effective January 31. No immediate changes are anticipated for students during the current school year; however, minor updates such as driver uniforms and bus branding are being implemented. First Student has indicated that existing transportation services and programs will remain in place, with potential technology enhancements anticipated in the future. Mr. Fievet noted that several items listed under discussion on the evening's agenda were also reviewed by the committee. The committee continues its regular monitoring of food service operations, focusing on ongoing improvements and ensuring all students have access to warm meals across district buildings. In addition, updates were

provided in the area of technology, including continued progress on the installation of new copiers throughout the district. The next Site and Facilities Committee meeting is scheduled for April 7.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

No report at this time. The next meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2026 at 3:00 PM.

KEY TO 73 FOUNDATION REPORT

Board Member Julie Clifford reported that the Foundation recently met and shared updates on fundraising efforts. A recent Portillo's fundraiser raised \$481, and an upcoming Chipotle fundraiser is scheduled for April 8. The Foundation also hosted a bingo night as part of its ongoing fundraising activities. Ms. Clifford noted that funds raised continue to directly support Hawthorn students and programs, including contributions to the Eagle Net and summer school scholarship programs. She also shared that planning is underway for the Foundation's annual golf outing and encouraged community members to participate as sponsors, donors, or volunteers. Additional information is available through the Foundation's website and newsletter.

PRESENTATIONS

Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Dr. Allison Stein, along with Directors of Teaching & Learning Lauren Boardman and Stephanie Sidaway, presented an update on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in Hawthorn District 73. The presentation outlined the purpose of AI in education, emphasizing its ability to enhance instruction, support data analysis, and increase opportunities for personalized and differentiated learning. Presenters highlighted that the District is maintaining a human-centered approach, ensuring that students and staff remain the primary decision-makers when using AI tools. An overview of current implementation was provided, including the use of generative AI tools by staff to support lesson planning and instructional design, as well as embedded AI tools within existing platforms. The presenters also shared progress on the development of District AI guidelines, which focus on purposeful use, transparency, academic integrity, and the safe and ethical application of AI. The guidelines are being developed with input from staff and administrators, and will continue to evolve as technology advances. Next steps include finalizing AI guidelines, identifying recommended tools, providing professional learning for staff, and developing resources to support students and families in understanding AI.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Business Operations Jennifer Akin reviewed several items related to the business department. Mrs. Akin presented an overview of the proposed County School Facility Sales Tax (CSFT), outlining its potential to generate additional revenue dedicated to facility improvements. She reviewed how the tax would function, the estimated financial impact for the District, and the process required for placing the measure on the ballot for voter consideration. She also reviewed several contract renewals, including food service, landscaping, and waste disposal services. The food service contract reflects a standard annual increase, while the landscaping contract maintains current pricing. The waste disposal contract includes a previously agreed-upon increase in its final year. In addition, Mrs. Akin presented the results of the custodial services bid process, recommending a new contract to continue services with a modest cost increase. Finally, she reviewed the proposed disposal of surplus technology equipment, noting that obsolete devices would be sold through a buyback program, with the District receiving compensation based on condition.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan wished the school community a restful and enjoyable spring break.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes: February 19, 2026
- 7.2 Closed Session Minutes: February 19, 2026
- 7.3 Expenditure Report: March 18, 2026
- 7.4 Amazon Expense Report: March 18, 2026
- 7.5 Mastercard Report: January 21, 2026
- 7.6 Treasurer's Report: January 2026
- 7.7 Personnel Report

New Hires: 10

Leaves of Absence: 5

Resignations: 14

Retirement: 1

Change of Status: 1

10 New Hires: Erin Hauck, LBS1 Teacher, AS, 03/02/2026; Christine Keil, LBS1 Teacher, TL, 03/09/2026; Julia Richards, Occupational Therapist, MN, 03/05/2026; Megan Shanders, Speech/Language Pathologist, MN, 03/09/2026; Lynda Claver, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, HSYL, 03/12/2026; Ritu Dhayal, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, DL, 03/02/2026; Matthew Killian, Technology Support Specialist, District, 03/30/2026; Emma Rapplean, Instructional Assistant, EN, 03/12/2026; Deepa Samiappan, Instructional Assistant, EN, 03/18/2026; Lili Strumburger, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, 02/23/2026.

5 Leave of Absence: Sangita Parande, Library/Media Facilitator, MS, 03/30/2026; Laura Tagliaferro, Instructional Assistant, EN, 05/26/2026; Concetta Caringella Gaspar, Instructional Coach, District, 09/08/2026; Evan Lyons, Music Teacher, DL, 04/27/2026; Gerri Silver, K-Teacher, HSYL, 03/30/2026.

14 Resignations: Lauren Brownstein, Social Worker, MS, 06/02/2026; Dalton DePoy, LBS1 Teacher, EN, 06/02/2026; Meghan Ehemann, 3rd Grade Teacher, EN, 06/02/2026; Peter Griffin, Math Teacher, MN, 06/02/2026; Darcy Hawkins, 5th Grade Teacher, ES, 06/02/2026; Marilyn Jaimes, LBS1 Teacher, DL, 06/02/2026; Matthew Johnson, Science Teacher, MN, 06/02/2026; Nicole Jones, 3rd Grade Teacher, ES, 06/02/2026; Jenna Manos, 4th Grade Teacher, TL, 06/02/2026; Miranda Randel, Art Teacher, TL, 06/02/2026; Ashley Reese, 3rd Grade Teacher, ES, 06/02/2026; Hannah Rubinstein, 4th Grade Teacher, DL, 06/02/2026; Shannon Vitale, 3rd Grade Teacher, EN, 06/02/2026; Yuanfang Peng, Instructional Assistant, MN.

1 Retirement: Rachel Spatz, Psychologist, TL/DL, 03/20/2026.

1 Change of Status: Margaret Kirst, LBS1 Teacher, DL, 08/17/2026.

Julie Clifford requested to remove section **7.1 Board Meeting Minutes: February 19, 2026** and **7.2 Closed Session Minutes: February 19, 2026** from the consent agenda.

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board of Education approve **7.1 Board Meeting Minutes: February 19, 2026** and **7.2 Closed Session Minutes: February 19, 2026**; seconded by George Fievet.

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

Motion carried: 5 ayes; 1 abstain

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

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Mr. Adam Palmer reviewed the 2026–2027 Staffing Plan for Board approval. He reported that, based on current enrollment projections, the plan includes no additional general education staffing, a reduction of three elementary classroom positions through attrition, and no changes to student services or multilingual staffing.

Dr. Allison Stein reviewed the request to apply for a waiver to reclassify Middle School North from a targeted Title I school to a schoolwide program. She recommended Board approval of the Middle School North Schoolwide Plan, which will be signed by Dr. Hannigan and maintained on file, with submission to ISBE as required.

ACTION ITEMS

2026-2027 Staffing Plan

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that the Board of Education approved the 2026-2027 Staffing Plan; Karl Borchers seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 0 nays

Title I School Wide Waiver for MSN

MOTION: George Fievet moved that the Board of Education approve the Title I School Wide Waiver for MSN; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Karl Borchers, Robin Cleek, Michael Engle, George Fievet, Julie Clifford, 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 9.2 of the Board agenda.
3. Media Clips

TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Board Member Julie Clifford requested ongoing updates regarding AI integration as plans and guidelines become more formalized.

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, Karl Borchers made a motion to adjourn to closed session. The motion was seconded by Joel Finfer. The Board adjourned to closed session at 7:52 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

With no further business to discuss, Joel Finfer made a motion to adjourn the closed session. The motion was seconded by Michael Engle. Motion passed 6 aye, 0 nay. The closed session adjourned to open session at 8:56 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 8:56 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: _____