
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, NAPERVILLE COMMUNITY UNIT
SCHOOL DISTRICT 203, DUPAGE AND WILL COUNTIES, ILLINOIS, HELD AT DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATION CENTER, 203 WEST HILLSIDE ROAD, NAPERVILLE, IL.
March 2, 2026, AT 7:00 P.M., CLOSED SESSION 6:00 p.m.

Call to order

President Charles Cush called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Board members present: Charles Cush, Melissa Kelley Black, Holly Blastic, Joe Kozminski, and Marc Willensky, Kristine Gericke, and Amanda McMillen.

Administrators present were:

Dan Bridges, Superintendent,
Dr. Mark Cohen, Deputy Superintendent High Schools,
Dr. Meredith Haugens, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources,
Lisa Xagas, Assistant Superintendent for Strategy and Engagement,
Allison Boutet, Assistant Superintendent for Middle Schools,
Melissa McHenry, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

Closed Session

Amanda McMillen moved, seconded by Marc Willensky, to go into Closed Session at 6:03 p.m. for consideration of:

1. Pursuant to 5 ILCS120/2(c)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees or legal counsel, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or legal counsel to determine its validity.
2. Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(2) Collective negotiating matters between the school board and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees.

A roll call vote was taken, those voting yes: Cush, Blastic, Gericke, Kelley Black, Kozminski, McMillen, and Willensky. Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

The Board of Education entered closed session at 6:03 p.m.

Meeting Opening

Amanda McMillen made a motion, seconded by Kristine Gericke to return to Open Session at 7:03 pm. A roll call vote was taken. Those voting yes: Blastic, Willensky, Kelley Black, Kozminski, McMillen, Gericke, and Cush. No: None. The motion carried.

Welcome and Mission

Charles Cush welcomed all and read Naperville Community Unit School District 203's Mission Statement.

Roll Call

Board members present: Charles Cush, Kristine Gericke, Amanda McMillen, Melissa Kelley Black, Joe Kozminski, Holly Blastic, and Marc Willensky.

Pledge of Allegiance

Led by the Board of Education

Administrators present: Dan Bridges, Superintendent, Chuck Freundt, Assistant Superintendent for Leadership and School Services, Mark Cohen, Deputy Superintendent/High Schools, Michael Frances, Chief Financial Officer/CSBO, Chuck Freudt, Assistant Superintendent for Leadership and School

Services, Meredith Haugens, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Katie Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary, Allison Boutet, Assistant Superintendent for Middle Schools, Melissa McHenry, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services.

Recognition:

Good News:

Naperville Central Senior and Varsity Girls Basketball Player, Trinity Jones, was recently named as one of 24 girls nationwide on the McDonald's All American Basketball Team. She'll compete in the McDonald's All-American Games in Arizona later this month. Congrats and good luck Trinity!

Some 203 students can now say that they were part of setting a new world record!

Local nonprofit KidsMatter, in collaboration with Sure Shot Pickleball in Naperville, organized an event to host the largest Pickleball lesson. One of the locations included in the lesson through livestreams across Will, Kane, and DuPage counties was Naperville North High School.

446 people, including some of our District 203 students, participated in the attempt, which was officially recognized as successful by the Guinness Book of World Records.

Naperville 203 hosted a joyful community celebration of Black history and culture through music, rhythm, and movement on Sunday, February 22nd at Naperville North High School.

The event featured Ayodele African drumming and dancing, a performance by the NCHS Step Team, "Dynasty", Mays Music vocal musical showcase, and Food from The Soul Spot.

The emcees were Dr. Rakeda Leaks and NNHS senior, Brooke Welch.

Naperville North senior Tavfik Ibragimov was the 4th place finisher in the IHSA 3A State Wrestling Tournament. He earned IHSA All-State honors and closed out his career as a 100-match winner, great job!

Members of Naperville 203's Black in 203 Equity Affinity Group acknowledged Black History Month with a show of unity. We are grateful for their contributions, leadership, and commitment to our students and community—past, present, and future. We appreciate the meaningful impact and care they bring to our district every day.

The Finance & Business Services Career Conference was on Monday, February 23rd. Over 300 students from Naperville Central and Naperville North spent the day at the NIU Naperville Campus hearing from industry professionals in accounting, finance, marketing, entrepreneurship, and other fields. The students also participated in a college and career fair during the event.

We are incredibly proud to highlight the work of Naperville Central's own Ashlynn Goldstein.

By working alongside state legislators and health organizations, Ashlynn is championing a future where CPR training is equitable, realistic, and inclusive of female anatomy. A new bill spearheaded by Ashlynn would require both male and female mannequins to be available during CPR training. Ashlynn's courage to address the "training gap" shows Naperville Central as a leader and inspires schools across Illinois to follow her lead. Join us in celebrating Ashlynn's vision and leadership.

The first installment of our new Parent Tech Series, Core Connections: Navigating the Digital World for Families, was hosted on February 11th.

This first session explored D203's beliefs around AI and how we can support students in developing the Profile of a Learner competencies in a world where AI tools are increasingly common.

We were also joined by an industry professional from the D203 Workforce Innovation Council, who shared how AI is being used in his workplace today and what that means for the future workforce. Additional sessions later this spring will focus on balance with technology usage and online safety.

Public Hearing-Driver's Education Waiver

Administrator's Comments

Superintendent Bridges stated on January 20, 2026, the Board already approved this waiver. There was information left out of the notice, so ISBE stated we had to hold the Public Hearing again.

Public Comments

None.

Board of Education Comments

None.

Close Public Hearing Driver's Education Waiver

Amanda McMillen made a motion, seconded by Joe Kozminski, to close the Public Hearing-Driver's Education Waiver at 7:10pm. Those voting yes: Blastic, Kelley Black, Willensky, Gericke, McMillen, Kozminski, and Cush Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

Public Hearing-ASA Waiver

Administrator's Comments

Superintendent Bridges stated on January 20, 2026, the Board already approved this waiver. There was information left out of the notice, so ISBE stated we had to hold the Public Hearing again. Recommend approval as presented.

Public Comment

None.

Board of Education Comments

A Board member reiterated that this will remove this from the newspaper. Website only, would only be part of people who use our district. We talked about ways we could get this information out.

Superintendent Bridges stated we will use social media. Will be Included in a report to the community.

Close Public Hearing ASA Waiver

Amanda McMillen made a motion, seconded by Joe Kozminski, to close the Public Hearing-ASA Waiver at 7:14pm. Those voting yes: Blastic, Kozminski, Gericke, Kelley Black, Cush, McMillen, and Willensky. Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

Public Comment:

President Cush gave the parameters for public comment.

Kelly Scotti-resident and employee. It is gravely important to look beyond staff reductions as we move forward. Staff allocation based on school needs rather than just building numbers. Witnessed a great deal of change over the last 20 years. Team's greatest desire is to continue to offer best practices to students. There is a very diverse population at Beebe. Gave statistics on the students and needs since 2023. Math growth and reading growth great growth with smaller class sizes and the right people working with students. Able to divide and conquer more easily. Teams have been able to produce glow moments. I hope that the Board of Education will be mindful and consider need and equitability.

President Cush reminded the Board and Community that because questions raised during Public Comment address District Operational matters board has designated our Superintendent as the spokesperson for the District. As our designate to respond to Public Comment, he will apprise the Board accordingly.

Action by Consent:

President Cush reminded the Board and Community of the board agreements. He noted that it is each Board member's responsibility to prepare for each meeting and to effectively express our concerns either to the Superintendent or the Board President in a timely manner. Board members have also agreed that avoiding surprises is paramount in displaying respect to all District Administration. The Board has tasked itself to send questions in advance of each meeting to the Superintendent to allow the provision of the best possible response for the community. It also allows for efficiency during the community's meeting. Those same questions as well as new ones may be asked in Open Session. For transparency, please note if any questions were asked earlier. Mr. Bridges, did you receive questions from Board members? Superintendent Bridges responded that he received questions from all seven Board members.

1. Adoption of Personnel Report

	Effective Date	Location	Position
RETIREMENT-CERTIFIED			
Melanie Pace	5/22/2026	Ranch View	4th Grade
RESIGNATION-CERTIFIED			
Lauren Newtoff	5/22/2026	Mill Street	Learning Behavior Specialist
Erica Boyle	5/22/2026	River Woods	Physical Education
Kelly McNamara	5/22/2026	River Woods	1st Grade
Lauren Guerrero	5/22/2026	Naper	2nd Grade
Amber Wilko	5/22/2026	Jefferson	Language Arts/Math
Megan Drake	5/22/2026	Ellsworth	2nd Grade
REVISED CONTRACT-CERTIFIED FULL-TIME			
Kristen Malesky	8/11/2025 - 5/22/2026	ARECC	Early Childhood
EXTEND LEAVE OF ABSENCE-CERTIFIED			
Mary Zarembski	4/6/2026 - 5/22/2026	ARECC	Early Childhood
Sadie Dwyer	SY 2026/2027	LJHS	Multilingual Teacher
Anna Scherl	SY 2026/2027	Highlands	Kindergarten
RETIREMENT-CLASSIFIED			
Linda Arneth	4/11/2026	NCHS	Executive Secretary
Jill Quick	6/30/2026	Ellsworth	Health Technician
Lisa Johnson	7/31/2026	NNHS	Executive Secretary
Toni Tardy	8/31/2026	NCHS	Attendance Specialist
RESIGNATION-CLASSIFIED			
Robert Zieman	2/2/2026	Transportation	Bus Driver
Juan Ramos	2/5/2026	NCHS	Custodian
Bart Darfler	2/24/2026	Transportation	Bus Driver
EMPLOYMENT-CLASSIFIED FULL-TIME			
Angela Albrecht	2/20/2026	Kingsley	Special Education Paraprofessional

Deena Swaroopa Bulla	2/24/2026	Kingsley	Special Education Paraprofessional
EMPLOYMENT-CLASSIFIED PART-TIME			
Joanna Maloney	2/23/2026	Prairie	Instructional Paraprofessional

2. Memorandum of Agreement

Joe Kozminski made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented, seconded by Amanda McMillen. Those voting yes: Willensky, McMillen, Blastic, Kozminski, Gericke, Cush, and Kelley Black. Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

Board of Education Reports:

Board member Willensky reported on Black History Month event at NNHS. He recognized the people who put that together. Also attended the Business Fair. Spoke to students who appreciated the opportunity to network. Businesses appreciated the questions asked. Thanked Michael Frances and Merideth Haugens who presented with members of their teams to share their paths and experiences. He also thanked Ernst and Young.

Board member Blastic reported on her visit to Steeple Run. A real family atmosphere. Grateful for the visit.

President's Report

President Cush thanked Vice President Gericke for chairing the meeting last month in my absence.

Superintendent/Staff/School Reports:

Superintendent Bridges Introduced Chuck Freundt. This is an update to the Carbon Action Plan that the Board approved in March 2025.

Carbon Action Plan

The Naperville Community Unit School District 203 Carbon Action Plan, approved in March 2025, serves as a strategic roadmap to reduce the district's environmental impact with a definitive goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. To ensure the district remains on track, a midterm target has been established to achieve a 35% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2035. The plan's initiatives are concentrated within three primary sectors: buildings and energy, transportation, and waste. Using data from 2018 as a baseline, the district monitors its progress through annual updates to its greenhouse gas inventory and a public-facing dashboard.

A cornerstone of the CAP's implementation is the Steering Committee, which includes students, board members, staff, and community members who meet to prioritize actions and ensure the plan leads to tangible progress rather than remaining static. During its inaugural year, the committee focused on foundational projects such as a solar feasibility study and the design of a new transportation facility. This new facility represents a significant investment in sustainability, featuring geothermal wells and solar panels projected to save the district over \$4 million in energy costs over the next 25 years after an initial six-year return on investment.

In the transportation sector, the district is working to increase electric charging capacity for its fleet and procure additional electric buses while assessing maintenance areas for future transitions to renewable energy. Regarding waste management, a new contract has enabled the development of a district-wide recycling program, which is being accelerated by a dedicated subcommittee. Beyond operational efficiency, the CAP prioritizes student learning opportunities, involving students in the steering committee and using new green infrastructure as educational tools to explore emissions reductions and sustainable technology. Though the district faces current fiscal pressures, leadership emphasizes that

many CAP initiatives, such as energy-efficient infrastructure, are designed to provide long-term financial savings alongside environmental benefits.

Board Questions/Comments:

President Cush gave the parameters for giving the questions and noted the 3 minute limit. Marc Willensky will be the timekeeper this evening.

I asked in advance-metrics-looking for something timelier as we go forward. Not that we will do an audit as our reductions each year but what will be some things we are doing that will measure the optimizing of how we are making progress?

Mr. Freundt responded that the intent is to update the metrics on the site annually. We will also include the narrative that goes with it.

Can you remind us why the baseline is 2018?

Mr. Freundt noted that because of the pandemic, we had to take out some of our building usage so we used the three full years of data.

I love the dashboard but noticed the data is 2018, 2022, 2023. How frequently will you be doing benchmarks to track the data?

Mr. Freundt noted the plan is to update it annually. We do have data from 2024 and 2025 and plan to add that this summer.

In the annual metrics will it include cost savings?

Mr. Freundt noted that is a good topic for the steering committee to discuss and decide how we want to show that. Not every reduction measure will yield a cost savings.

Board member read a statement-lens of what I am thinking about. This is important but should not be accelerated over education. The education of our students must come first.

This has been noted as an opportunity for student learning. Where are we on that and has any action been taken on that?

Mr. Freundt noted that most of what has occurred has been planning. Students on the steering committee have an opportunity for learning. The transportation center will offer additional opportunities. Student education is at the heart of what we do.

Do you have a plan for the continuity when students roll off?

Mr. Freundt stated there will only be about a 25% turnover so there will be plenty of students remaining who will offer continuity.

A Board member offered clarity on the deficit information. These deficits have been one time expenditures under Policy 4.20. We have used some of those funds to build the transportation center.

Superintendent Bridges added that when we look at our spending and our budget. Numbers include construction costs and not our operational budget. Up to this point, we have not run an operational deficit. We may have one this year.

Mr. Frances referenced the AFR report, available on our website and on ISBE's website. He referenced the expenditures to revenue ratio. We will be bringing an amended budget later this year. We may for the FY26, for the first time, we will likely have expenses exceed revenue.

Discussion without Action:

EC-12 Certified and District SPED Staffing Projection

Board member noted that he will recuse myself from this discussion as my daughter is a part time teacher in the district.

Superintendent Bridges welcomed the team. He noted we give this presentation to the Board every March. We will be asking for action on March 16, 2026. He gave an overview of the reductions.

The EC-12 Certified and District Student Services Staffing Projection for the 2026–2027 school year recommends a total certified reduction of approximately 95 positions. This proposal includes the reduction of seven administrative positions to ensure the district is "right-sized" across all leadership levels while prioritizing funding for the classroom. These staffing changes are driven by the district's current fiscal reality, which includes a projected \$12.4 million deficit, and a long-term trend where

enrollment has declined by 875 students over 12 years while staffing levels simultaneously increased. The administration's goal is to return to sustainable pre-pandemic staffing levels while maintaining instructional integrity.

The proposed licensed staffing level for the upcoming year is approximately 1,477 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE), representing a net reduction of about 90 FTE when excluding administrative roles. To minimize the impact on current employees, the district plans to address these reductions through retirements, resignations, natural attrition, internal transfers, and the strategic use of certifications rather than direct one-to-one personnel cuts. As part of this transition, core class sizes will be adjusted to align more closely with the aspirational goals defined in board policy.

Regarding Student Services (SPED), overall staffing levels are expected to remain stable. Although the district plans to open two new elementary specialized classrooms to meet an increased need for self-contained settings, these will be supported by reallocating existing resources and related services, resulting in no additional FTE requirements. This staffing projection is part of a broader effort to stabilize the district's finances, which also includes a roughly \$4 million reduction in discretionary spending across areas such as travel, conferences, and duplicated technology platforms.

Board Questions/Comments:

Can we talk about addressing other cost saving measures that have been looked at before looking at staff reductions?

Superintendent Bridges shared the putting of reductions in three buckets:

- Maximizing revenue-advocacy
- Discretionary spending-looked at what is discretionary by department. Looking at redundancies.
- Streamlining staffing to prepandemic levels

We have identified about \$4 million dollars.

Can you talk about travel and some of it being funded by grants?

Superintendent Bridges stated we will reduce the number of people we send to conferences and will have to send some as it is required.

We value all staff. Appreciate that there have been steps being looked at before staffing.

Superintendent Bridges noted that some of this has to be done now due to legal timelines.

I appreciate the collaboration and the MOA's that have been approved.

Superintendent Bridges stated we are doing our best to look at areas of attrition.

Board member read a statement. I spend a lot of time reviewing the resources that I cited and it is frustrating when others may not have reviewed the same documents. Shared some statistics on student enrollment and staffing numbers. I can post online so people can review and fact check.

I appreciate the work looking at all areas of possible reductions. Doing all we can to balance the budget.

Debt Service Levy

Superintendent Bridges noted this is an annual review. Has to be filed in March. Recommendation to not abate any of the levy. Reminded the Board that they did not abate the debt service levy.

Board Questions/Comments:

When we vote we need to vote no if we do not want to abate.

Superintendent Bridges noted that if there is not going to be a yes vote, we will not need the resolution.

Hearing this, I hate to raise any taxes but we need to raise as much revenue as we can. I would be in favor of no action.

Abatement resolution, if we don't vote we don't have to bring it up. Has this been included in projections. Have we ever put it in the budget?

Mr. Frances stated that it would affect the FY27 budget.

Is there any way to notify us of the amount?

Superintendent Bridges noted that the recommendation is to not abate this year and the future year.

Is the debt service fund in the budget this?

Mr. Frances stated it is found in all reports.

The federal subsidy has been decreasing, does that go down as we get closer to the end of these bonds?

Mr. Frances stated they go down as the interest goes down as the bonds get paid down.

Superintendent Bridges added that the 2008 bonds were paid back early to save taxpayers.

We should keep the money.

If we have consensus then we will not have to bring it back?

We all agree we do not need to bring it back for action.

Discussion with Action:

Driver's Education Waiver

Board Questions/Comments:

None.

Amanda McMillen made a motion to approve the Driver's Education Waiver as presented, seconded by Kristine Gericke. Those voting yes: Kozminski, Cush, Willensky, McMillen, Blastic, Kelley Black, and Gericke. Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

ASA Waiver

Board Questions/Comments:

None.

Amanda McMillen made a motion to approve the ASA Waiver as presented, seconded by Kristine Gericke. Those voting yes: Willensky, Gericke, Blastic, McMillen, Cush, Kozminski, and Kelley Black. Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

Consideration of Board of Education Expenses:

Superintendent Bridges noted the Board Policy that requires Board of Education expenses to be approved by roll call vote.

Board Questions/Comments:

None.

Amanda McMillen made a motion to approve The Board of Education Expenses as presented, seconded by Kristine Gericke. Those voting yes: McMillen, Gericke, Blastic, Kelley Black, Willensky, Cush, and Kozminski. Those voting no: None. The motion carried.

New Business

None

Old Business

None

Upcoming Events

March 5-6 Parent Teacher Conferences

March 16 next Board of Education meeting

March 17-eLearning Day due to Elections

Adjournment

Amanda McMillen moved and seconded, by Kristine Gericke, to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. Those voting yes: Kozminski, Kelley Black, McMillen, Willensky, Gericke, Blastic, and Cush. The motion carried.

Approved: March 16, 2026

Charles Cush, President
Board of Education

Susan S. Patton, Secretary
Board of Education