

**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 16th day of April 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, Stephanie Peters, 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Hawthorn parent, Ms. Hollie Aronoff, made a public comment in support of a school-sponsored outdoor education program modeled after a similar program in District 75. She shared positive outcomes from a recent pilot trip involving Hawthorn students and highlighted the program's curricular and social-emotional benefits. Ms. Aronoff requested that the topic be added to a future Board agenda.

Ms. Jen Tait also made a public comment in support of the outdoor education program. She shared observations from serving as an overnight chaperone and noted the positive impact the experience had on students' confidence, participation, and social interactions.

RECOGNITION

Board members George Fievet and Karl Borchers spoke on behalf of the Board of Education to recognize outstanding staff and students. First, the Board recognized Paulina Zajkowska, teacher at Elementary South, for her dedication to supporting students with diverse learning needs and for her positive impact on students and colleagues. Ms. Zajkowska was presented with a certificate of recognition.

The Board also recognized the Middle North 6th/7th Grade Boys Volleyball Team for winning the conference championship. Coaches shared remarks regarding the team's hard work, teamwork, and sportsmanship throughout the season. In addition, the Board recognized middle school wrestling state qualifiers from Middle North and Middle South. Special recognition was given to Aiman from Middle North for placing first in the state. Coaches Michael Becker and Christopher Volpe shared remarks regarding the accomplishments of the student-athletes and the success of the wrestling program. The student-athletes were presented with medals and certificates of recognition.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcement(s) at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Board President Robin Cleek congratulated the Dual Language Program on its 25th anniversary and noted that the program continues to serve as a model for other districts. She shared that approximately 750 people attended the anniversary celebration. President Cleek also reminded board members of the upcoming deadline to file Statements of Economic Interest, requested RSVPs for the upcoming Hawthorn Honors Banquet, and discussed details regarding the upcoming eighth-grade promotion ceremonies scheduled for May 29 at Vernon Hills High School. She also encouraged board members to participate in school building tours to observe student learning and classroom engagement throughout the district. Board members interested in attending were asked to contact Jessica Flores and Dr. Hannigan. Lastly, President Cleek shared highlights from the recent Green Oaks, Libertyville, Vernon Hills networking meeting, including a presentation by Family Liaison Sol Cabachuela regarding community outreach efforts and family support services within the district in partnership with District 128. President Cleek noted the value of the collaboration and continuity of support for students and families transitioning to high school.

ED-RED REPORT

Board Member Joel Finfer provided an update regarding current legislative activity related to education. Mr. Finfer shared that 113 education-related bills had recently advanced out of committee. He also stated that additional legislation is expected to be introduced prior to the filing deadline and emphasized that ED-RED continues to advocate on behalf of its member districts.

SEDOL REPORT

Board Member Michael Engle reported that the SEDOL Executive Board met on April 16 and the Governing Board met on March 4. Mr. Engle shared that the tentative FY27 budget was reviewed during a special Executive Board meeting and will be presented at the April 23 Executive Board meeting for recommendation and reviewed by the Governing Board at its June 3 meeting. He noted that the approved budget development process includes calculations based on equalized assessed valuation, district enrollment, and average daily enrollment across SEDOL programs. Mr. Engle also shared that small group budget meetings with member district administrators and staff will take place in May and reviewed tentative 2026–2027 Governing Board meeting dates. The next scheduled Executive Board meeting is April 23, and the next Governing Board meeting is June 3.

SITE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Board Member Stephanie Peters reported that the Site & Facilities Committee met on April 7, 2026 to discuss several operational and facilities-related items. The committee reviewed rising utility costs and discussed potential opportunities related to solar credits as an alternative to installing physical solar panels. Ms. Peters noted that additional discussion will be needed due to the complexity of the process.

The committee also discussed the upcoming renewal of student iPad leases and the need to transfer funding through debt service as part of the district's standard replacement cycle. In addition, Ms. Peters shared updates regarding the district's transition from Lakeside to First Student for transportation services, which will require Board approval due to contract changes.

Ms. Peters also informed the Board of anticipated spring construction projects throughout the district that may impact transportation timing and encouraged families to monitor the transportation app for route updates and delays. Additional updates included the upcoming Quest food service audit and ongoing technology initiatives being led by the district's technology department. The next Site & Facilities Committee meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2026.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Board Member Julie Clifford reported that the Wellness Committee met on April 14 to review progress related to the district's Whole Child initiative and the measurement of the program's various pillars. Ms. Clifford shared that the district is currently meeting all indicators within the healthy, engaged, and supported pillars. She noted that areas identified for continued growth include the safety and challenged pillars. Ms. Clifford also shared that representation from Quest Food Service attended the meeting to discuss its approach to providing nutritious meals for students. Quest staff encouraged feedback and suggestions from students and staff regarding food service offerings.

KEY TO 73 FOUNDATION REPORT

Board Member Julie Clifford reported that the Foundation recently met and shared updates on fundraising efforts. Ms. Clifford shared that the Key to 73 Foundation is seeking volunteers to serve in open leadership and support roles, including secretary and treasurer positions. She also noted that the foundation is currently planning for the 2026–2027 school year and identifying additional ways to support the Hawthorn community through initiatives such as food pantries, toy drives, and coat drives. In addition, Ms. Clifford reminded the community about the upcoming Key to 73 golf outing in June and encouraged participation through sponsorships, donations, silent auction contributions, or volunteer support. She also recognized PGA Superstore for its partnership and support of the event.

PRESENTATIONS

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Business Operations Jennifer Akin and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Adam Palmer presented on the FY27 salary and benefits plan. The presentation provided an overview of projected investments for non-HEA staff, including non-represented staff, building assistant supervisors, and administrators. The presentation also highlighted the district's commitment to attracting and retaining high-quality staff through competitive salaries and comprehensive benefits in support of student achievement and organizational stability. Administrators reviewed projected salary increases across employee groups, rising benefit costs, and the district's continued focus on fiscal responsibility while prioritizing investments in personnel. Ms. Akin and Mr. Palmer also shared that approximately 86.89% of the district's operating levy is projected to be dedicated to salary and benefits by FY27, reflecting the district's continued investment in staff recruitment, retention, and consistent learning environments for students.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Alicia Corrigan shared an updated Memorandum of Understanding regarding the district's School Resource Officer. Ms. Corrigan explained that the updated MOU aligns with Board Policy 7:190 and Illinois law prohibiting school resource officers from issuing fines, tickets, or citations to students as disciplinary consequences on school grounds or during school transportation. The MOU also includes provisions related to confidentiality, training, collaboration, and annual program reviews. Ms. Corrigan noted that the updated agreement is required to be in place by July 1 in accordance with state law that took effect January 1.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Business Operations Jennifer Akin discussed the district's student transportation services for the 2026–2027 school year. Mrs. Akin reminded the board that First Student acquired Lakeside Transportation in January 2026 and has agreed to honor the district's existing transportation agreement through the 2026–2027 school year. She noted that transportation services, including the district's current bus tag hardware and K12 app functionality, will continue without changes during the upcoming school year.

Mrs. Akin also discussed the Resolution Transferring Funds from the Educational Fund to the Debt Service Fund. She explained that the transfer is required to support lease payments associated with the district's long-term Apple device lease agreement for student and staff technology devices.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan provided an update regarding returning student registration for the upcoming school year. Dr. Hannigan encouraged families to complete registration by May 1 to receive the early bird registration rate and shared that the district is currently at 46% completion districtwide. He also highlighted the district's annual registration competition among schools, noting that Hawthorn School for Young Learners was currently leading in registration completion percentages.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes: March 18, 2026
- 7.2 Closed Session Minutes: March 18, 2026
- 7.3 Expenditure Report: April 16, 2026
- 7.4 Amazon Expense Report: April 16, 2026
- 7.5 Mastercard Report: February 23, 2026
- 7.6 Treasurer's Report: February 2026
- 7.7 Approval of FY27 Administrative Salaries
- 7.8 Approval of FY27 Building Assistant Supervisor Salaries
- 7.9 Approval of FY27 Salaries for Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, and Tier 4 Personnel
- 7.10 Personnel Report

New Hires: 4

Retirement: 2

Leave of Absence: 11

Change of Status: 1

4 New Hires: Keyla Bustamante, 4th Grade Teacher, DL, 08/17/2026; Greer Deutsch, Social Worker, MS, 08/17/2026; Mary Kate Wolek, 4th Grade Teacher, DL, 08/17/2026; Jaanvi Mattalwar, Instructional Assistant, MN, 04/08/2026.

2 Retirement: Millie Naughton, 2nd Grade Teacher, DL, 06/02/2026; Valerie Cohen, Library/Media Facilitator, MN, 06/02/2026.

11 Leave of Absence: Kimberly Stergios, Building Assistant Supervisor, Lincoln, 08/10/2026; Kirstin Crispin, Interventionist, ES, 03/12/2026; Meghan Ehemann, 3rd Grade Teacher, EN, 03/30/2026; Claire Jones, LBS1 Teacher, MN, 03/30/2026; Jennifer Katz, Speech/Language Pathologist, ES, 04/15/2026; Tatyana Zhuravleva, ELL Resource Teacher, ES, 05/21/2026; Raymond Beltran, Custodian, ES, 03/16/2026; Emily DeWitt, Instructional Assistant, MS, 03/31/2026; Corri Kolb, Instructional Assistant, HSYL, 05/13/2026; Mageshwari Naveen, Instructional Assistant, EN, 03/04/2026; Brittani Scarpulla, Technology Support Specialist, District, 04/08/2026.

1 Change of Status: Elizabeth Jacks, LBS1 Teacher, AS, 08/17/2026.

Stephanie Peters requested to remove section **7.1 Board Meeting Minutes: March 18, 2026** and **7.2 Closed Session Minutes: March 18, 2026** from the consent agenda.

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board of Education approve **7.1 Board Meeting Minutes: March 18, 2026** and **7.2 Closed Session Minutes: March 18, 2026**; seconded by Joel Finfer.

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

Motion carried: 6 ayes; 1 abstain

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

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

President Cleek reviewed the action item: Consideration to Adopt Resolution directing the Regional Superintendent of Schools for The County of Lake, Illinois, to certify to the County Clerk of said County the question of imposing a retailers' occupation tax and a service occupation tax to be used exclusively for school facility purposes, school resource officers, and mental health professionals, for submission to the electors of said County at the general election to be held on the 3rd day of November, 2026. President Cleek stated that the Board remains aware of the burden on local property taxpayers while also navigating uncertain federal funding and declining reimbursement for mandated categorical programs. She explained that the proposed countywide 1% sales tax measure, authorized under Illinois law, could only be used for facility and security improvements, school resource officers, and mental health professionals.

President Cleek also noted that because the tax would be collected from all individuals shopping within Lake County, including non-residents, the funding burden would not fall solely on local homeowners. She further explained that school boards representing more than 50% of Lake County student enrollment must adopt similar resolutions in order for the question to appear on the November 2026 ballot. Adoption of said resolution on tonight's agenda would not increase taxes, but would instead allow Lake County voters the opportunity to consider the question through the election process.

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan reviewed the recommendation to approve contract renewals for Dr. Allison Stein, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, and Ms. Alicia Corrigan, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services. Dr. Hannigan shared that both contracts are for three-year terms. He noted that Dr. Stein continues to lead the district's teaching and learning initiatives with a focus on curriculum, instruction, and continuous improvement, while Ms. Corrigan continues to provide leadership in student services through support systems and compliance efforts that meet the diverse needs of students. Dr. Hannigan stated that both administrators play an important role in advancing district goals and supporting students, staff, and families, and respectfully recommended Board approval of the contract renewals.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Business Operations Jennifer Akin reviewed several business-related action items. Ms. Akin first reviewed the recommendation to continue transportation services with First Student for the 2026–2027 school year under the terms of the district's existing agreement following First Student's acquisition of Lakeside Transportation. She noted that this would represent the final year of the current agreement before the district proceeds with a formal bid process. Ms. Akin also reviewed the Annual Consolidated District Plan, which is required for the district to apply for grant funding through the Illinois State Board of Education. She shared that Townline Elementary and Middle North were approved as schoolwide Title I buildings for the 2026–2027 school year. Additional action items included renewal recommendations for Quest Food Management Services, Gillio Landscape Services, and Waste Management disposal services for the upcoming school year. Ms. Akin also reviewed the custodial services bid results. Following a formal bid process, the administration recommended awarding the custodial services contract to GSF USA Incorporated based on overall value, service reliability, and operational continuity. Lastly, Ms. Akin reviewed the recommendation to dispose of surplus Apple technology devices no longer usable for instructional or operational purposes. The devices will be transferred to Diamond Assets for evaluation and resale, with anticipated proceeds to the district based on device condition.

ACTION ITEMS

Before the Board vote, President Cleek turned the meeting over to Board Secretary Julie Clifford. The Board Secretary read the resolution by title, a copy of which had been provided to each member of the Board of Education prior to the meeting and to all attendees requesting a copy.

Board Secretary Julie Clifford requested a motion to approve the Consideration to Adopt Resolution directing the Regional Superintendent of Schools for The County of Lake, Illinois, to certify to the County Clerk of said County the question of imposing a retailers' occupation tax and a service occupation tax to be used exclusively for school facility purposes, school resource officers, and mental health professionals, for submission to the electors of said County at the general election to be held on the 3rd day of November, 2026.

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved that the Board of Education approve said resolution as presented; Robin Cleek seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Board Secretary Clifford then returned the meeting to Board President Cleek. President Cleek signed the resolution during the Open Meeting following Board approval.

Approval of Assistant Superintendent Contracts

MOTION: Michael Engle moved that the Board of Education approve the Assistant Superintendent Contracts; Karl Borchers seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

2026-2027 Student Transportation Services

MOTION: Stephanie Peters moved that the Board of Education approve the 2026-2027 Student Transportation Services; George Fievet seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Annual Consolidated District Plan

MOTION: Stephanie Peters moved that the Board of Education approve the Annual Consolidated District Plan; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Renewal of Food Service Provider

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board of Education approve the Renewal of Food Service Provider; George Fievet seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Renewal of Landscape Service

MOTION: George Fievet moved that the Board of Education approve the Renewal of Landscape Service; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Renewal of Disposal Service Contract

MOTION: Stephanie Peters moved that the Board of Education approve the Renewal of Disposal Service Contract; George Fievet seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Custodial Services Bid Results

MOTION: George Fievet moved that the Board of Education approve the Custodial Services Bid Results; Karl Borchers seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Karl Borchers, Robin Cleek, Michael Engle, George Fievet, Julie Clifford, Stephanie Peters and Joel Finfer.
Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Disposal of Surplus Technology Equipment

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved that the Board of Education approve the Disposal of Surplus Technology Equipment; George Fievet seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Karl Borchers, Robin Cleek, Michael Engle, George Fievet, Julie Clifford, Stephanie Peters and Joel Finfer.
Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

INFORMATION

1. Enrollment - Uploaded
 2. FOIA Log, Dr. Hannigan reported that the District has received five FOIA requests since the last board meeting and responses were provided as identified in Section 9.2 of the Board agenda.
 3. Media Clips
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TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Board Member Karl Borchers requested a future agenda item regarding the process and considerations involved in implementing a district-sponsored outdoor education program. Board members agreed unanimously to add the topic to a future agenda. Dr. Hannigan stated that the administration could provide a brief overview outlining the process and requirements involved in establishing a program of that nature.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Joel Finfer made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Karl Borchers. The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m. **All in favor? Yes.**

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Flores

Robin Cleek, President

Julie Clifford, Secretary

Date Minutes Approved: _____