

BOARD OF EDUCATION SCHOOL DISTRICT 149

MINUTES OF

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

September 17, 2026

The Board Meeting convened at 6:34 p.m.

Roll Call: Present: Mr. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mrs. Tillman, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. King, and Mrs. Crayton. Mrs. Elston via Zoom.

Also in attendance: Dr. Mellodie Brown, Attorney Mckenna Kolenberg, Janene Preston, Candice Peoples, Shayna Cole, Dr. La Toyla Jones, Tamisha Bufford, Marilyn Barnes, Jaqueline McGee, Secrett Stone, Anna Karrison, Renee Carter, Tammy Buckley, Dr. Robert Grossi, Dr. Nakita Cloud, Latasha Clark, Karen Slate, Kimberly Owens, Danielle Franklin, Brenda Boyd, Kimberly Wright, Tia Williams, Dr. Jenkins-Alexander, Sparkle Tiffith, Robert Bufford, Ernesta Ransom, Jamar Everett, Aja Fields, Tanyelle Hannah, Andre Varnado, Chief White, Officer Rhodes, Renia Mitchell, Jerry Doss, Deborah Nelson, Dr. Nate Cunningham Jr., Abiola Oke-Samuel, Awestyn Farmer, Ta'Vyah. Mitchell, Darryl Watkins, and Kyle Riley.

The Pledge of Allegiance – Said by all

MOTION by Mr. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Crayton, to accept Board Member Elston into the meeting via Zoom.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mr. Tillman, Mrs. Crayton, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. King, Mrs. Tillman, and Mrs. De Vasher-Williams.

MOTION CARRIED

Cabinet Reports –

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Brown thanked the community for its patience during the recent chiller issues. She reported that she is working with JMA and the Director of Buildings and Grounds, Mr. Anderson, to create an inventory and maintenance tracking system for district equipment, including HVAC, plumbing, and roofing.

Dr. Brown noted that the chillers at Berger Vandenberg, Caroline Sibley, and Carol Moseley Braun are approximately 20, 30, and 25 years old, respectively. She is working with Dr. Grossi and JMA on a financially sustainable, phased replacement and maintenance plan. The proposed plan will be presented to the Board of Education for approval.

Dr. Brown also announced the launch of the Science Curriculum Adoption Committee. The committee will use the EQUIP rubric to evaluate how well prospective lessons and units align with the Next Generation Science Standards. She thanked the teachers, administrators, and district office staff serving on the committee.

Presentation by District 205 Student Board of Education:

Representatives of Thornton Township High School District 205's Student Board of Education invited the Board and community to the second annual Turn Up for Peace event on October 17 at Thornridge High School. They described it as a free, student organized event promoting peace and nonviolence

through family activities, food, entertainment, raffles, and community resources. The day will conclude with a memorial tribute and fireworks.

The presenters encouraged families to register for free tickets and invited businesses and nonprofit organizations to apply to participate as vendors at no cost.

Superintendent Dr. Mellodie Brown informed the Board that our current total enrollment is 1,893 student. 1,254 students in elementary and 639 students in the middle school.

Committee Reports – None

Board President Report –

Mr. Tillman reported that, after nearly a year of discussion, the district has moved forward with developing its strategic plan. He thanked Dr. Natalie Williams, the strategic planning facilitator, for keeping the work engaging and productive. He noted that nearly all Board members attended the planning session, along with numerous staff and community members. He particularly appreciated the input from community members and said he looked forward to the next session.

Mr. Tillman then discussed a proposed partnership with Mrs. Brenda Boyd, who has supported District 149 through giveaways and her work with Big Brothers Big Sisters. He said the donations are made possible through Sister Strong, the nonprofit organization she founded more than 20 years ago. He thanked Mrs. Boyd for her continued support and explained that, if the memorandum of understanding on the evening's agenda was approved, the district would formally partner with her organization.

Mr. Tillman also addressed the effect of recent severe storms on district buildings, including a storm that caused power outages that day. He referred to his earlier comments about the need for backup generators, then focused on the air conditioning problems in several schools. Although the district has invested substantially in renovating approximately half of its school buildings, he said additional work is needed. Some major air conditioning components are approximately 25 years old, at or beyond their expected 15- to 25-year useful life. The district has made temporary repairs to keep the systems operating, but he cautioned that major components, including chillers costing approximately \$250,000 each, could fail. He said he would ask the Board to continue investing in the replacement or significant upgrade of air conditioning systems so students and staff can remain comfortable during extreme heat.

Public Comments –

Board Vice President De Vasher-Williams addressed a prior discussion about mentoring and other services for superintendents. She said she had contacted Dr. Bridges at the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), who provided information about services available to IASA members at no cost. According to Board Vice President De Vasher-Williams, those services include professional development, mentoring through field service directors and directors of academic empowerment, and in-house legal representation. She specifically noted that IASA provides mentoring for superintendents in their first, second, and third years. She wanted to clarify the distinction because the prior meeting discussion and minutes referred to the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB).

Board President Tillman responded that his earlier statement concerned IASB because IASB was the organization identified during the prior discussion. He said he had contacted IASB Executive Director Kimberly Small and shared her email response with the Board. He noted that Ms. Small had mentioned IASA as a possible source of services, but he had limited his inquiry to IASB and had not investigated IASA's offerings.

Board Vice President De Vasher-Williams reiterated that she wanted the Board to know that the services she described are available through IASA.

2026-2027 Budget presented by Dr. Robert Grossi -

Dr. Grossi stated that he had presented the tentative budget the previous month and that changes made since then would require additional Board action at a later meeting.

He reported that the tentative budget included an estimated \$2.3 million in capital expenditures based on information available at the time. As he had mentioned during the August presentation, he was awaiting more specific information. The current estimated cost to complete the projects is approximately \$3.9 million, which he said is consistent with the amount historically remaining for those projects.

Dr. Grossi also reported that two payments had not been included in the administrative salary line of the tentative budget: a \$108,000 settlement or retirement agreement for the former superintendent and a \$128,000 sick day payout. He said that including these amounts would result in an 18 percent increase in administrative costs, exceeding the 5 percent statutory limit. He advised that the Board would need to request a waiver from the General Assembly because of the circumstances. He expected to bring a proposal to the Board at the next meeting or the meeting after that.

Dr. Grossi stated that the district still anticipates a \$792,000 operating surplus and has healthy fund balance reserves. He said the district remains in solid financial condition, although the projected figures have changed.

Mr. Crivens asked whether the increase from \$2.3 million in the tentative budget to \$3.9 million represented a \$1.6 million difference.

Dr. Grossi confirmed that it did. He explained that the original amount was an estimate pending more specific information from the architect and clarified that the \$3.9 million is the estimated cost to complete projects already in progress, with no new projects included. T

Mr. Tillman noted that the August budget was tentative, and Dr. Grossi agreed.

Dr. Grossi reiterated that he wanted to call the changes to the Board's attention because additional action would be required.

Separately from the budget discussion, Dr. Grossi said he looked forward to working with the district's new business manager and that they had spent considerable time working together since the business manager started. Although he does not anticipate a decrease in his firm's workload over the next several months, he announced that his firm would reduce its fee by \$1,000 per month.

Prior to the Board vote, Mr. Crivens asked how much the Board could approve that evening if a waiver for the increase in administrative costs still had to be requested from the General Assembly.

Dr. Grossi explained that the budget reflects anticipated expenditures, including administrative costs associated with contracts already in place. He said the figures in the budget represent those existing obligations; the need to request a waiver does not change what is included in the proposed budget.

Mr. Crivens then asked whether the Board could approve \$3.9 million that evening.

Dr. Grossi clarified that the Board would be voting on the total budget, which includes the \$3.9 million in capital expenditures.

MOTION by Mrs. Crayton seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to approve the SY 26-27 School District 149 budget. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM H
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Agenda Items

MOTION by Mrs. Crayton, seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to approve authorizing Township Treasurer to pay invoices August 21, 2026, August 25, 2026 and September 17, 2026 chargeable to the following accounts: Education Fund \$1,222,726.06 Operations and Maintenance Fund \$ 159,540.35 Debt Services \$ 5,449.22 Transportation \$ 18,469.30 Capital Projects \$ 472,592.91 Tort Immunity \$ 314,857.64 \$2,196,635.48 ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM I
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Consent Agenda Items

MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. King, to approve consent agenda items J1-12: 1. Approval of payroll summaries for August 14, 2026, in the amount of \$921,213.92 2. Approval of payroll summaries for August 28, 2026, in the amount of \$883,257.81 3. Approval of the minutes from the regular board meeting held August 20, 2026 4. Approval of the Consolidated District Plan 5. Approval of renewal of SY 26/27 ESL curriculum through Imagine Learning, in the amount of \$15,750.00 6. Approval of renewal of Cisco Secure Email Cloud Security subscription, through Sentinel, in the amount of \$8,800.00 7. Approval of renewal of SY 26/27 GoGuardian Admin and Go Guardian Teacher, through Xerox, in the amount of \$33,300.94 8. Approval of MOU with Sistahs S.T.R.O.N.G. 9. Approval of Trunk or Treat in partnership with Fass Glass Corvette Club on Saturday, October 31, 2026 at 12:00 - 3:00 p.m., school to be determined 10. Approval of the Superintendent to attend the AASA National Conference on Education in Atlanta, Georgia, February 25–27, 2027, at an estimated total cost of \$3,100.00 11. Approval for the Board of Education and administrators to attend the NSBA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., April 2–4, 2027, with registration costs estimated at \$10,000.00; airfare, lodging, and other related expenses to be determined 12. Personnel Report Resignation: a. Approval of resignation of Theresa Gist, Custodian at Caroline Sibley, effective date August 24, 2026	AGEND ITEM J1- 12
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b. Approval of resignation of Patricia Miller, Principal at Berger-Vandenberg, effective date August 17, 2026 c. Approval of resignation of Shawn Phelps, Custodian at STEM, effective date August 17, 2026 d. Approval of resignation of Denzell Sanders, Custodian at STEM, effective date September 2, 2026 Employment: e. Approval of employment of Carmen Barnes, 7th Grade Science Teacher at SOFA, effective date TBD f. Approval of employment of Donovan Dudley, Paraprofessional at Caroline Sibley, effective date TBD g. Approval of employment of Tavana Ferrell, Paraprofessional at Carol Moseley Braun, effective date TBD h. Approval of employment of Andre Varnado, Business Manager at District Office, effective date September 2, 2026 i. Approval of employment of Lindsey Williams, Culture & Climate Coach at NBLA, effective date TBD Leave of Absence: j. Approval of FMLA for Kellee Johnson, PE Teacher at NBLA, effective August 25, 2026 through September 8, 2026 k. Approval of Intermittent FMLA for Karen Slate, Principal at NBLA, effective August 25, 2026, through June 30, 2027 l. Approval of Intermittent FMLA for Jeanne Watson, Kindergarten Teacher at Berger-Vandenberg, effective August 28, 2026 through May 21, 2027 m. Approval of Intermittent FMLA for Janene Preston, Executive Assistant at District Office, effective September 4, 2026 through November 30, 2026 ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	
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Adjourn to Closed Session

MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. King, to adjourn to a closed session at 7:07 p.m. • The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees or legal counsel of Dolton School District 149, 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) • Student Disciplinary Cases 5ILCS 120/2(c)(9) ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM K
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Adjourn from Closed Session at 8:21 p.m.

Final Action on Closed Session Items

MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mr. Crivens, to approve student #001 discipline decisions, as discussed in closed session. ROLL CALL VOTE: Nay: Mrs. Tillman, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION NOT CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM L1
MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mr. Crivens, to approve student #002 discipline decisions, as discussed in closed session. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM L1
MOTION by Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, seconded by Mr. Crivens, to approve student #003 discipline decisions, as discussed in closed session. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. Tillman, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM L1
MOTION by Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, seconded by Mrs. King, to approve a \$2,200.00 per month stipend, beginning June 1, 2026, for extra duties for Renee Carter. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. Tillman, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM L2

Old Business

MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Crayton, to ratify Board poll on September 2, 2026 to replace microprocessor control board at Caroline Sibley, through QMI, in the amount of \$11,996.77. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM M1
MOTION by Mrs. King, seconded by Mrs. Crayton, to ratify Board poll on September 2, 2026 to repair chiller at Carol Moseley Braun, through QMI, in the amount of \$37,135.72. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. King, Mrs. Crayton, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM M2
MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Elston, to approve the July 16, 2026 Board meeting minutes. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM M3

Before requesting a motion, Mr. Tillman asked Attorney McKenna Kohlenberg to explain the first reading. Attorney Kohlenberg clarified that the Board was receiving and acknowledging the proposed updates in PRESS Issue 122 for discussion. The first reading would not approve the proposed policy changes; formal approval would be considered at the next Board meeting.

MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. King, to approve the first reading of Press Plus Policy 122. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM M4
MOTION by Mrs. Crayton, seconded by Mrs. King, to amend the May 27, 2026 Board meeting minutes to reflect that the employment contract approved for Sparkle Tiffith was for the position of Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM M5
MOTION by Mrs. Crayton, seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to amend the May 27, 2026 Board meeting minutes to reflect that the employment contract approved for Dr. La Toyla Jones was for the position of Assistant Superintendent. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM M6
MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mr. Tillman, to amend the May 27, 2026 Board meeting minutes to reflect that the employment contract approved for Dr. Mellodie Brown was for the position of Superintendent. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mr. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, and Mrs. Crayton. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM M7

New Business

MOTION by Mr. Crivens, seconded by Mr. Tillman, to approve Resolution 2026-09 authorizing Odelson, Murphey, Frazier & McGrath, LTD. to intervene on behalf of Dolton School District NO. 149 in the property tax appeal of Countryside Nursing and Rehab. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mr. Crivens, Mr. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, and Mrs. Crayton. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N1
MOTION by Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, seconded by Mr. Crivens, to approve Resolution 2026-09-01 authorizing Odelson, Murphey, Frazier & McGrath, LTD. to intervene on behalf of Dolton School District NO. 149 in the property tax appeal of Sandridge Apartments. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. Tillman, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N2
MOTION by Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, seconded by Mrs. Elston, to approve teacher evaluation training through Frontline Education, in the amount of \$1,350.00. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Tillman, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N3
MOTION by Mrs. Crayton, seconded by Mrs. King, to approve literacy professional development through Savvas for the October 7th SIP Day, in the amount of \$11,250.00. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N4

MOTION by Mrs. Crayton, seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to approve Focus Walk professional development session through Savvas for the November 18th SIP Day, in the amount of \$15,000.00. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N5
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Mr. Crivens asked whether the furniture purchase had been put out for bid. He said the same question applied to the next furniture item and asked how the district was ensuring it received the best furniture at the best price.

Mr. Tillman responded that certain purchases, including furniture and school supplies, do not require a bid under the exception he described.

Dr. Brown stated that KI was the same furniture company used at Berger Vandenberg and had already furnished other classrooms at Diekman.

Mr. Crivens said that using the company previously did not establish that the district was getting the best price, and he wanted his concern on the record.

MOTION by Mrs. Crayton, seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to approve the purchase of media center furniture for Diekman, through KI, in the amount of \$46,039.64. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, and Mr. Tillman. Nay: Mr. Crivens and Mrs. De Vasher-Williams. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N6
MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Crayton, to approve the purchase of media center furniture for Caroline Sibley, through KI, in the amount of \$77,369.78. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mrs. Elston, and Mr. Tillman. Nay: Mr. Crivens and Mrs. De Vasher-Williams. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N7

De Vasher-Williams said she had a question about the scope of work but could not recall its wording. She asked whether the work was for the foyer area; Dr. Brown confirmed.

MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. Crayton, to approve quote from Joseph Construction for security upgrades to the foyer at District Office, in the amount of \$33,284.00. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N8
MOTION by Mrs. Crayton, seconded by Mrs. King, to approve quote from Joseph Construction for the installation of a sound isolation system in the Superintendent's Office, in the amount of \$24,061.00. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N9
MOTION by Mrs. Crayton, seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to approve J.L. Adler Roofing & Sheet Metal, Inc. as the roofing contractor for Caroline Sibley School, as recommended by the architect through the bidding process, in the amount of \$107,205.00. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N10

Mrs. Tillman commented that knowing the boundaries would help the district determine what it could do with the land. The parcel was described as extending from the former tennis court area toward the back of the property.

MOTION by Mrs. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, to approve quote from WT Group, for boundary survey at the Middle School, in the amount of \$8,950.00. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N11
MOTION by Mrs. Elston, seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to approve quote from All Type Fence Company, for fence repair at Diekman School, in the amount of \$2,980.00. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mrs. Elston, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, Mrs. Crayton, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, and Mr. Tillman. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N12
MOTION by Mr. Tillman, seconded by Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, to approve Andre Varnado, as the IMRF Authorized Agent for Dolton School District 149. ROLL CALL VOTE: Aye: Mr. Tillman, Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, Mrs. Tillman, Mrs. Elston, Mrs. King, Mr. Crivens, and Mrs. Crayton. MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM N13

Adjournment

MOTION by Mrs. De Vasher-Williams, seconded by Mrs. Tillman, to adjourn the board meeting at 8:43 p.m. ROLL CALL TO VOTE: Aye: ALL IN FAVOR MOTION CARRIED	AGENDA ITEM O
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Wilbur Tillman, President

Sheryl Tillman, Secretary