

**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 17th day of September 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, Michael Engle, Karl Borchers, Joel Finfer, Robin Cleek, Stephanie Peters and Julie Clifford. Also in attendance were Asst. Supt. of Finance & Business Operations Ms. Jennifer Akin; Asst. Supt. of Teaching & Learning Dr. Allison Stein; Asst. Supt. for Human Resources Mr. Adam Palmer; and Superintendent Dr. Pete Hannigan. Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Ms. Alicia Corrigan was not present.

PUBLIC COMMENT (*REOPENED at 7:58PM*)

There was no public comment during the initial designated public comment period. The Board voted to reopen public comment at 7:58 p.m. Elizabeth Augustine, an Elementary North parent, requested that the Board consider a future discussion regarding student screen use in classrooms, including iPads, projectors, and instructional videos, as well as the educational outcomes associated with technology use. President Cleek encouraged Ms. Augustine to submit her questions through the District website so the appropriate administrator could respond.

RECOGNITION

The Board recognized Megan Goldman, Director of Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Learning, and Sol Cabachuela, District Family Liaison, for representing Hawthorn at the Illinois State Board of Education School Wellness Conference at Illinois State University. Ms. Goldman presented on the District's partnership with Youth and Family Counseling, and Ms. Cabachuela assisted with the question and answer session. The Board commended their work in sharing Hawthorn's whole child student support model with educators from across the state.

The Board also recognized student athletes from Middle School North and Middle School South who qualified for the IESA State Track and Field Competition, along with four students who qualified for the 2025 IESA State Cross Country Championships. Coaches Mike Becker and Megan Meyer of Middle School South and Chase Leonardi of Middle School North shared highlights of the students' achievements, including school records, state placements, and the growth of the track programs. Coaches recognized the athletes' dedication, sportsmanship, and commitment. The Board congratulated the students and coaches for their accomplishments. The student athletes were awarded with certificates and medals of excellence.

Following the recognitions, the Board took a five minute recess and subsequently resumed the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements at this time.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Cleek reviewed the revised Board agreements from the July Board retreat. With no suggested changes, the Board unanimously approved the agreements to remain in effect until the next Board retreat. She reminded members to notify Ms. Jessica Flores of their plans to attend the October 14 Lake Division dinner, the October 16 ED-RED luncheon, and the Triple I Joint Annual Conference, and invited interest in serving as the Board's delegate assembly representative.

President Cleek also reported on a quarterly meeting of Vernon Hills governing agencies that she attended with Dr. Hannigan. Updates included legislative efforts to provide school districts relief from profit-driven FOIA requests, the conclusion of the Vernon Hills Town Center tax increment financing district after 23 years, and the Countryside Fire Protection District's October 4 open house.

ED-RED REPORT

Mr. Joel Finfer reported that the Illinois General Assembly's veto session would begin in December.

SEDOL REPORT

Mr. Michel Engle reported that the last SEDOL Governing Board meeting was held on August 5 and the Executive Board meeting was held on August 27. SEDOL held its first quarterly directors meeting of the school year on September 15, with discussions focused on program updates, continuous improvement planning, funding, monitoring of the new tuition model, and professional development. He noted that work continued on the fiscal year 2025 audit and that SEDOL planned to seek proposals for auditing services beginning in fiscal year 2027.

Mr. Engle also reported that the SEDOL Board approved an emergency contract with McDonough Mechanical Services to replace the main boiler at Laremont School at an estimated cost of just over \$50,000. The next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for September 24, and the next Governing Board meeting is scheduled for December 2.

FINANCE & FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Vice President George Fievet reported that the Finance & Facilities Committee met on September 8. Discussions included planning for summer 2027 facility improvements, including renovations to the Aspen library, improvements to the Elementary North playground, and additional flooring projects. The committee also reviewed the District's five-year facilities plan and discussed potential grant opportunities to help offset project costs. Mr. Fievet also provided an update on the anticipated Route 45 closure in early October and its potential impact on transportation. District staff were preparing adjusted bus routes and would communicate changes to affected families. Families were encouraged to use the My Ride K-12 app for transportation updates. He reported on food service updates, including expanded menu options, a fourth entrée choice, and middle school breakfast carts. A K-5 Parent and Student Food Advisory meeting was scheduled for September 23 at 6:00 p.m. He also noted that Impact Networking had completed its District onboarding and was shifting its focus toward PowerSchool-related technology projects.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Julie Clifford reported that the Wellness Committee would begin its meetings on October 27, with the meeting open to the public.

KEY TO 73 FOUNDATION REPORT

Ms. Julie Clifford reported that the Key to 73 Foundation would meet on September 22 and was preparing for its Bad Momz of Comedy fundraiser on October 6 at Austin's in Libertyville.

PRESENTATIONS

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Mr. Adam Palmer presented the District's annual 10-day enrollment and staffing update. He reported that the District welcomed 33 new licensed staff members for the 2026–2027 school year. Average class sizes at the beginning of the year were approximately 20.8 students in kindergarten through fifth grade and 22.4 students in middle school core classes. The District would continue monitoring enrollment and staffing trends and consider current enrollment data when planning for the 2027–2028 school year.

Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations, Ms. Jennifer Akin presented the annual Teacher and Administrator Salary and Benefits Report, as required by state law. The report summarized compensation and benefits expected to be paid during the 2026–2027 school year and would be posted on the District website.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Ms. Jennifer Akin discussed the anticipated fiscal year 2027 School Maintenance Project Grant application. She explained that the state-funded matching grant could help offset eligible facility maintenance and improvement costs. If awarded, the District was considering using the grant toward replacement of second-floor flooring at Middle School South during summer 2027. Formal approval to apply was expected to return to the Board in October.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Dr. Hannigan thanked staff for their work preparing for and welcoming students to the 2026–2027 school year, noting that the opening of school had gone smoothly. He also reminded families that school would not be in session on Monday, September 21.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Board Meeting Minutes: August 13, 2026
- 7.2 Amazon Expense Report: September 17, 2026
- 7.3 Expenditure Report: September 17, 2026
- 7.4 Mastercard Report: July 21, 2026
- 7.5 Treasurer's Report: July 2026
- 7.6 Disposal of Surplus Technology Equipment
- 7.7 Personnel Report

New Hires: 10
Resignations: 13
Leave of Absence: 5
Change of Status: 5
Retirement: 1

10 New Hires: Melissa Colletti, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, EN, 08/26/2026; Nora Fellowes, Instructional Assistant, HSL, 08/17/2026; Marlen Ixba, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, TL, 08/20/2026; Alexandra London, Office Clerk, AS, 08/31/2026; Erika Neri Conejo, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 09/01/2026; Erika Do Nascimento Roda, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, DL/TL, 08/20/2026; Zoe Senese, Instructional Assistant, EN, 08/27/2026; Elvira Yagfarova, Instructional Assistant, EN, 08/17/2026; Timothy Yoder, Instructional Assistant, MN, 09/14/2026; Brianna Vogt, Registered Nurse, EN, 09/17/2026.

13 Resignations: Ritu Aggarwal, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 09/10/2026; Nagapriya Alagarsamy, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 09/09/2026; Elizabeth Anthony Joseph Peter, Instructional Assistant, HSYL, 09/01/2026; Stephanie Eberle, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 08/05/2026; Nora Fellowes, Instructional Assistant, HSYL, 09/18/2026; Deepkia Sathish Kumar, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, ES, 08/18/2026; Sonia Manoharan, Instructional Assistant, EN, 08/28/2026; Daanval Mansour, Instructional Assistant, MN, 08/03/2026; Shobhna Parecha, Instructional Assistant, EN, 08/10/2026; Meenkashi Sharma, Instructional Assistant, EN, 08/25/2026; Darlin Tino, Instructional Assistant, HSYL, 08/07/2026; Sarah Trees, Instructional Assistant, AS, 08/10/2026; Shelby Vojack, Registered Nurse, EN, 09/11/2026.

5 Leaves of Absence: Azucena Bahena, Psychologist, AS/HSYL, 01/04/2027; Jenny Niedblaski, 3rd Grade Teacher, AS, 09/17/2026; Udani Hettiarachchi, Instructional Assistant, ES, 08/17/2026; Mageshwari Naveem, Instructional Assistant, EN, 08/17/2026; Kavitha Puppala, Instructional Assistant, HSYL, 09/04/2026.

5 Change of Status: Ujwala Chebrolu, Instructional Assistant, Lincoln, 08/17/2026; Shannon Cooney, Lead HR Specialist, District, 09/22/2026; Devina Dixit, Instructional Assistant, Lincoln, 08/17/2026; Barry Litwin, Lunch/Recess Supervisor, TL, 08/16/2026.

1 Retirement: Julie Rohfling, English Teacher, MN, 05/28/2027.

Joel Finfer requested to remove section 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from August 13, 2026** from the consent agenda.

MOTION: Stephanie Peters moved that the Board of Education approve 7.1 **Board Meeting Minutes from August 13, 2026**; seconded by George Fievet.

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

Motion carried: 5 ayes; 2 abstain

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

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 naves

Dr. Hannigan reviewed PRESS Issues 121 and 122, noting that the Policy Subcommittee reviewed 56 policies on July 28, which were presented to the Board on August 13. He highlighted two recommendations: answering “yes” to Policy 2:200 regarding posting special meeting notices and agendas at meeting locations, and “no” to Policy 2:220 regarding requiring roll call votes for all action items. Both recommendations align with IASB guidance and current District practices.

Ms. Jennifer Akin reviewed the final 2026–2027 budget, highlighting updates to audited fund balances, the Vernon Hills tax increment financing district, and equalized assessed valuation estimates. She recommended approval of the final budget in the ISBE prescribed format. Ms. Akin also presented the 2027–2028 budget calendar and recommended its approval, along with her designation to prepare the tentative budget.

Dr. Allison Stein reviewed the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement between the Lake County Regional Office of Education and Hawthorn District 73, clarifying that the agreement would provide the District access to the program if needed without requiring its use.

ACTION ITEMS

PRESS Issue 121 and 122

MOTION: George Fievet moved that the Board of Education approve PRESS Issue 121 and 122; Stephanie Peters seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Final 2026/2027 Budget

MOTION: Karl Borchers moved that the Board of Education approve the Final 2026/2027 Budget; Michael Engle seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Approval of the 2027/2028 Budget Calendar and person to work on the 2027/2028 Budget

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved that the Board of Education approve the 2027/2028 Budget Calendar and designate Jennifer Akin to work on the 2027/2028 Budget; Stephanie Peters seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement for Lake County Regional Office of Education Program Between the Lake County Regional Office of Education and Hawthorn D73

MOTION: Joel Finfer moved that the Board of Education approve the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement for Lake County Regional Office of Education Program Between the Lake County Regional Office of Education and Hawthorn D73; Stephanie Peters seconded the motion.

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

Motion carried: 7 ayes; 0 nays

INFORMATION

1. Enrollment - Uploaded
 2. FOIA Log, Dr. Hannigan reported that the District has received 4 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
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TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Karl Borchers made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Michael Engle. The meeting adjourned at 8:01 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: _____