

MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Of the Board of Education
Riverside School District No. 96
Held on Wednesday, August 5, 2026
Ames Elementary School

SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING

20-596 A. Secretary Stephanie Gunn called the Special Board of Education Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and on roll call, the following members were recorded as being present:

	Mr. Olech
	Mr. Hunt
	Ms. Kachlic
	Ms. Gunn
Absent:	Mr. Barsotti
	Ms. Claps
	Mr. Muirheid

Also in attendance were Superintendent Martha Ryan-Toye, Director of Teaching and Learning Casimira Gorman, Director of Special Education & Student Services Nora Geraghty, Director of Technology Molly Marquardt, field technician, the recording clerk to the Board of Education, community members, a videographer from Riverside TV, and a reporter with *the Landmark*.

B. Public Comment/Response.

Stephanie Shaw spoke tonight on behalf of Riverside for Balanced Learning, a growing coalition of parents dedicated to ensuring technology in our schools is used intentionally, transparently, and in ways that best support student learning and well-being. Ms. Shaw acknowledged the district's ongoing partnership with the group, emphasizing that they are not seeking to eliminate technology, but rather to achieve a healthy balance. She looks forward to continuing this collaborative work with the district.

C. Changes to the Agenda.

There were no changes to the agenda.

20-597 D. Approval of Consent Agenda.

The Secretary to the Board of Education read the Consent Agenda items aloud.

A motion was made by Mr. Hunt and supported by Ms. Kachlic to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion carried the following roll call vote:

Ayes:	Mr. Hunt
	Ms. Kachlic
	Mr. Olech
	Ms. Gunn
Absent:	Mr. Barsotti

	Ms. Claps
	Mr. Muirheid
Nays:	None
Abstain:	None

E. New Business/Committee Reports

1. Facilities Committee - Mr. Olech.

a. Summer Facility Update.

- Mr. Wilder updated the Board on the summer construction projects, highlighting several key facility improvements. At Hauser, workers replaced the windows and installed a new boiler, and completed minor tuckpointing and field landscaping. At Blythe Park, construction of the new playground is underway and on track for completion in mid-September. Thanks to our custodial team's hard work, deep cleaning at every school is complete, ensuring our facilities are clean, safe, and ready for opening day.

2. Finance Committee - Ms. Claps.

a. Initial FY 27 Budget Discussion.

- Director of Finance Steve Wilder shared the tentative FY 27 budget with the board.
- The 2027 fiscal year (FY27) budget represents the projected revenue and expenditures for the 2026-2027 school year.
- The Illinois school code requires that the tentative budget be put on display for 30 calendar days prior to final approval. Final approval must take place prior to the end of September.
- As of June 30, there was a 48% fund balance in our operating funds (Education, Operations & Maintenance, Transportation, and Working Cash) compared to our expenditures in those same funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year (FY26).
- Fund balances are savings we can use in the future. For the last few years, the district has used fund balances to complete major capital improvement projects without raising property taxes or issuing any debt.
- FY 27 Revenue: 88% of the district's revenue comes from local property taxes. Property tax increases are limited to a 2.9% increase under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL). While there were some modest increases, funding also decreased in some areas.
- FY27 Expenditures: The majority of our expenditures are our greatest resource...our staff. The administration has budgeted for a 3% increase in salaries and wages.
- Health Insurance costs are up an average of 17.3% (16.2% for our HMO plan, and 18.4% for our PPO plan).
- No major Capital Improvement Projects have been budgeted for in FY27 while we develop a 5-year facility plan that aligns with the district's financial resources.
- Board members should share any additional questions with him.
- The matter will be returned to the board for public hearing and vote at the September regular business meeting.

20-598 E. Resolution Transferring funds from the Educational Fund to the Capital Projects Fund - Action Item.

A motion was made by Mr. Hunt and supported by Mr. Olech to authorize and direct the School Treasurer to make a permanent transfer in the amount of \$3,411,953 from the Educational Fund to the Capital Projects Fund, as presented.

The motion carried the following roll call vote:

Ayes:	Mr. Olech Ms. Kachlic Mr. Hunt Ms. Gunn
Absent:	Mr. Barsotti Ms. Claps Mr. Muirheid
Nays:	None
Abstain:	None

3. Education Committee - Mr. Hunt.

- a. Technology Update 2026-2027.
 - Director of Technology Molly Marquardt shared a technology update with the board of education.
 - Feedback has been continuously gathered on student devices, student access, and student safety. Staff has also been collaborating on these items.
 - Parents have also provided ongoing communication, collaboration, and feedback on these items.
 - Riverside for Balanced Learning
 - PTA/PTO's
 - For the 2026 - 2027 school year, the district plans to develop a technology committee that will include parents and staff members.
 - Website Access for Students
 - Students will not be able to access YouTube on any K-8 device.
 - We continuously monitor devices and block sites as they come up.
 - Student devices will lock at 10:30 pm and unlock at 6:30 am. Devices also prevent time changes and access to Wi-Fi networks other than the student network.
 - Teacher Monitoring Tools were discussed.
 - Student Passwords
 - All student Google passwords will be reset by the first day of school. A plan is in place to help students if they forget their passwords. Student password resets will follow the same cycle as the device cycle.
 - Securly & Securly Home
 - Securly Filtering
 - All student devices have our filtering service, "Securly," installed.
 - Securly Home
 - Parents can see their students' activities on their District 96 device at home and implement parental controls/locks while on the home network.
 - Once a student enters a District 96 building, the district's controls override parental controls for the school day.
 - Parent Webpage,
 - Before the start of the school year, we will launch a new webpage on the District 96 website with all the information parents need about student technology.
 - Cell phone ban
 - For the 2027 - 2028 school year, Illinois law SB 2427 will apply to school districts.

- The law institutes a statewide cell phone and personal device framework to create distraction-free classrooms, encouraging students to connect more deeply with curriculum and each other, and allowing educators to focus on teaching.
 - The law requires school districts to develop and implement a “bell-to-bell” policy that restricts cell phone access between the first arrival bell and the final dismissal bell. For kindergarten through 8th grade, this includes class, lunch, passing periods, and other non-instructional hours.
 - We already implement these practices in our buildings.
 - Staff were informed of these changes at the end of last school year.
 - The board thanked Molly for this presentation.
- b. Hauser SEL Curriculum Discussion.
- Director of Teaching & Learning Casimira Gorman updated the board members on the SEL Curriculum. Hauser Jr. High piloted CharacterStrong, an SEL curriculum, last spring. CharacterStrong is an evidence-based K–12 educational program that combines Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) with intentional character education. Designed to be a flexible curriculum to help schools build positive cultures, lower disciplinary issues, and teach life skills such as empathy, self-regulation, and leadership.
 - The core CharacterStrong curriculum for sixth-grade students will be delivered predominantly through the Citizenship course.
 - Middle school instructional teams (Grades 6–8) will align to determine the optimal placement of CharacterStrong modules across content areas, promoting the natural integration of social-emotional learning throughout the curriculum.
 - This program creates opportunities for students to have relational discussions and leave with actionable steps.
 - The program costs \$ 3,999.00 per school year.
 - The board thanked Casimira Gorman for this presentation.

20-599 F. Approval of 10-Year Health Life Safety Assessment Proposal - Action Item.

A motion was made by Ms. Kachlic and supported by Mr. Olech to approve the proposal with DLA to complete the 10-year Health Life Safety survey during the 2026-2027 school year.

This matter has been discussed at a previous board meeting. This is a mandatory facility safety audit required by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). This is not meant for facility planning but about the state of the district’s facilities and compliance with those standards. This process should be completed by October.

The motion carried the following roll call vote:

Ayes:	Ms. Kachlic Mr. Hunt Mr. Olech Ms. Gunn
Absent:	Mr. Barsotti Ms. Claps Mr. Muirheid
Nays:	None
Abstain:	None

G. Public Comment/Response.

There were no public comments.

H. Future Meeting Dates.

1. August 19, 2026 – Regular Business Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the Hauser Learning Resource Center. (If necessary, the Board will enter into Closed Session at 6:15 p.m., and return to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.).
2. September 2, 2026 – Board Self-Assessment, 6:00 p.m. in the Hauser Learning Resource Center.
3. September 16, 2026 – Regular Business Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the LRC at Hauser. (If necessary, the Board will enter into Closed Session at 6:15 p.m., and return to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.).
4. October 7, 2026 – Committee of the Whole Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the library at Blythe Park School. This is a change from Central School.
5. October 21, 2026 – Regular Business Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the LRC at Hauser. (If necessary, the Board will enter into Closed Session at 6:15 p.m., and return to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.).

I. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

August 5, 2026

Date Recorded

Date Approved

President, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education