**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**
**SCHOOL DISTRICT 25, WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**
**September 14, 2026**

**Call to Order**
Board President Rogers called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. on September 14, 2026, in the Evergreen Elementary School Multipurpose Room at 1041 Evergreen Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188.

**Roll Call**
Board Recorder Solly Garcia took a roll call vote of the members present: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Don Sutenbach, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis.

Other attendees included Dr. Patrick McGill, Superintendent; Dr. Michael Fitzgerald, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; Dr. Joel Filas, CSBO; Dr. Julie Salamone, Director of Student Services; Mrs. Sarah Smith, Evergreen Principal; and Mrs. Allison Agres, Assistant Principal.

**Pledge of Allegiance**
President Rogers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approve Agenda**
Motion to approve the agenda as presented. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.
**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

**Approval of Draft Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting of August 10, 2026.**
Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting of August 10, 2026. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Don Sutenbach, passed.
**Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed**

**Approval of the Draft Minutes from the Executive Session Meeting of August 10, 2026.**
Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Board of Education Executive Session Meeting of August 10, 2026. This motion, made by Andrew Drinnin and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.
**Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed**

**Presentation(s)**
**EL ACCESS Student Celebration**
The Board recognized 14 students who successfully exited the ACCESS program after demonstrating proficiency in listening, speaking, and writing. Dr. Salamone recognized the

Multilingual teachers for their continued support of the students. Families joined in the celebration, enjoyed refreshments, and took photos with their student.

**Tenure Staff**

The Board recognized newly tenured staff members Jenny Crane, Evergreen Social Worker; Allison Carter, Evergreen Instructional Coach; Stephen Lewis, Benjamin Middle School Music Teacher; and Heather Jimenez, Benjamin Middle School Special Education Teacher. The District is fortunate to have dedicated educators whose commitment makes a meaningful difference for our students.

**New Staff**

We are excited to welcome Ava Annecca, a first-year kindergarten teacher and Illinois State University graduate; Faith Schnabel, a first-year preschool teacher and Lewis University graduate; Erica Ruccia, an LBS1 teacher who brings valuable experience from Darien School District; and Lorenna Klobuchar, Music Director and a recent University of Illinois Chicago graduate. We are excited to welcome them to the District and look forward to a great year.

**FY2027 Budget Hearing**

Motion to enter into Public Hearing at 7:21 p.m. This motion was made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers.
Absent: None
Nays: None

**Presentation**

Dr. Filas reviewed the budget requirements established by Public Acts 103-0394 and 102-0895. These include reporting fund balance ratios based on average expenditures over the past three years for each major operating fund.

Dr. Filas shared that there were no major changes from the tentative budget presented in August. He noted that the budget reflects a more stable revenue stream and expenditures after the capital improvement plan is completed.

Board Member Sutenbach complimented the budget and thanked Dr. Filas for his work.

**Public Comment Regarding the FY27 Budget Amendment and additional Public Hearings.**

None

**Board Discussion on Public Comment Regarding the FY26 Budget Amendment and additional Public Hearings.**

None

**Adjourn Public Hearing**

Motion to adjourn Public Hearing and return to Open Session at 7:26 p.m. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.

**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

**Reports**

**Teaching and Learning Report**

Dr. Fitzgerald gave an update from the Teaching and Learning Department. The District's strategic plan continues to move forward. During Institute Day, the engagement, curriculum, instructional practices, and student support committees met. Staff from Evergreen and Benjamin worked together and shared ideas. Strategic Plan leaders and administrative liaisons are preparing for the September building meetings.

Dr. Fitzgerald is organizing the October 9 professional development day. The day will focus on curriculum experts from the University of Illinois Chicago, student support training, committee planning, a session on the Profile of an Educator, and professional development for English learner support.

Staff received new instructional materials. The district also sent Illinois Assessment of Readiness student reports to families, with instructions for using the family portal. Dr. Fitzgerald will share a full review of assessment results and the Illinois School Report Card at the December Board meeting.

**Operations Report**

Dr. Filas reviewed FY27 enrollment and shared that enrollment increased by 18 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. The District will continue to monitor enrollment and adjust staffing and classroom space as needed.

The District received the FY26 audit materials, and Baker Tilly will present the audit at the October Board meeting. Dr. Filas reported that the District again received ISBE's highest financial recognition.

The District scored 89% on its cybersecurity assessment, compared with a reported statewide average of 66%. The District also introduced the Securly Home parent portal to help families monitor their children's use of District devices at home.

**Superintendent Report**

Dr. McGill shared that the school year is off to a positive start, with many new and exciting things happening at District 25. He thanked teachers and committee leaders for their work on the Strategic Plan. He also shared positive feedback on the new food service program and noted that students are enjoying the fruit and vegetable bar and the new menu options.

Mrs. Smith sent out an orchestra interest survey to Evergreen families in kindergarten through third grade. Responses have been positive, and the District will continue exploring affordable options.

Dr. McGill reviewed the Securly Home parent portal, which lets families view online activity, apply additional filters, pause internet access, and set offline schedules on District devices.

He also shared upcoming GPS Parent Series programs.

- September 23 - When Kids Say " I Hate Myself": How to Respond.
- October 1 - Preparing Students with ADHD for Success.
- October 7 - Your Kid Belongs Here: Insights on Parenting Neurodiverse Children.
- October 8 - Next Steps: What Today's Kids Need for Tomorrow's World of Work.
- October 13 - Mattering: The Tension Between a "Never Enough" Mentality, Purpose, and Student Well-being.

Lastly, that the District received three FOIA requests, which included

1. Marlon Anderson of Midwest Bus Sales requested records related to pupil transportation services and vehicle purchases or leases from 2016 through 2026.
2. SmartProcure requested records regarding the District's previous contract with Sodexo.
3. CT Mills of Public Info Access LLC requested records showing district-issued direct-work telephone numbers, direct-dial lines, or work extensions for employees currently serving in the District's Central Office.

All requests were responded to within the appropriate time frame.

**Board Committee Reports**

**PTA Update:**

Member Sutenbach highlighted the well-attended back-to-school game night at Benjamin. Upcoming events include an outing at Sonny Acres on September 30 and the Fun Run on October 2.

**Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee meeting was canceled.
Dr. Filas reported that he and Dr. McGill met with Bob Lewis of PMA Financial to review debt management and tax rates in preparation for potential funding needs associated with health/life safety work.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items**

None.

**Consent Agenda (Roll Call)**

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. This motion was made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Don Sutenbach, passed.

**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

**Action Items (Roll Call Vote)**
**Approval of Staff Tenure**
Motion to approve staff tenure, as presented. This motion was made by Andrew Drinnin and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.
**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

**Approval of FY27 Budget**
Motion to approve the FY27 Budget, as presented. This motion was made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.
**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

**Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items**
None

**Discussion Items**
**Communication To and From the Board:** As a reminder, per Board of Education Policy 2:140, during the Board's regular meetings, the Superintendent will report to the Board all questions or communications submitted through the active electronic link, along with the status of the District's response.

**The District received two community communications.**
Mr. LaRose asked about employee background checks for new employees. Dr. McGill confirmed that the District follows the Illinois School Code requirements and uses all available screening resources as part of its hiring process, including background authorization for a background check by the Department of Children and Family Services and the National Sex Offender Database, which exceeds Illinois School Code standards.

In response to a student safety concern raised by Ms. Prokop, Dr. McGill shared that Mrs. Agres, Mrs. Tepe, and Dr. Filas meet quarterly and work with the DuPage County School Safety Network to review current practices and identify areas for improvement. Current practices include visitor identification lanyards, security camera improvements to reduce blind spots, and classroom radios for real-time communication.

**First Reading of PRESS Plus Issue 122**

The Board reviewed PRESS Issue 122. The proposed policy updates included several rewritten board exhibits, and one new exhibit. The Board policy revisions are minimal, including minor language changes and updated references

**Threat Assessment Annual Review**

Dr. Salamone provided a brief summary from the annual threat assessment meeting. The team reviewed current procedures with local law enforcment. Moving forward, the meetings will take place in the spring to ensure an updated plan is in place before the next school year.

**Executive Session**

Entered closed session for the purpose of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. Under Exemption #1, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

Motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:57 p.m. This motion was made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

**Motion to Return to Open Session**

Motion to return to open session at 8:07 p.m. This motion was made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Andrew Drinnin. Passed.

**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

**Action Items Following Executive Session**

**Approve Amendment to Superintendent's 2025-2028 Employment Contract.**

Motion to approve the Amendment to the Superintendent's 2025-2028 Employment Contract. This motion was made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None

Nays: None

**Approve Superintendent's 2027-2032 Employment Contract.**
Motion to approve the Superintendent's 2027-2032 Employment Contract. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.

**Roll Call Vote**: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

**Adjournment (Voice Vote)**
Motion to adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting at 8:09 p.m. This motion was made by Bridgette Pedersen and seconded by Vince Engstrom. Passed.

**Voice Vote**: **Unanimously Passed**

Respectfully submitted by:
Solly Garcia, Board Recorder

President, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education

Recorded: September 14, 2026
Approved: October 19, 2026