MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (3rd Thursday)
SCHOOL DISTRICT 33, DUPAGE COUNTY, WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
October 15, 2026

President Rita Balgeman called the regular meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:02 p.m. at Wegner Elementary School, 1180 Marcella Ln., West Chicago, Illinois. On roll call, the following members were present: Mrs. Rita Balgeman, Mrs. Morgan Banasiak, Mrs. Sandra Garcia, Mrs. Janette Hernandez, and Mrs. Molly Denton. Absent: Mr. Chad McLean.

ALSO PRESENT Kristina Davis, Superintendent; Lea Pizinger, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; Karen Apostoli, Executive Director of Business & Operations; Sarah Burnett, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources; Fred Cadena, Director of Facilities & Grounds; Cathy Park, Director of Assessment and Accountability; Sarah Norton, Director of Partnerships; Janet Ayala, Director of Multilingual Learners; and Niko Bubaris, Director of Technology.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Rita Balgeman led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES Under item XV-Closed Session, reason 5, potential litigation was added.

SHARED AGREEMENTS During the meeting, the Board agrees to:

1. *Make decisions according to what is best for ALL District 33 students.*
2. *Respect staff and other board members and their opinions.*
3. *Be willing to see things from the eyes of seven (7) people, not just one (1).*
4. *Allow everyone to complete their thoughts.*
5. *Commit to shared leadership.*
6. *Respect confidentiality.*
7. *Adhere to our belief in our students' full potential and successful future.*

Strategic Plan Goals

Goal #1 – Student Achievement
Goal #2 – Engaged Learning
Goal #3 – Strong Teams
Goal #4 – Family & Community Partnerships
Goal #5 - Smart Resources

SHARED AGREEMENTS REFLECTION

At the July 18, 2013, meeting, the Board of Education finalized its "shared agreements" and agreed to begin each regular board meeting by reflecting on one agreement. The Board revised the shared agreements on November 6, 2014. The agreement's purpose is to help maintain a positive environment for conducting board work.

Board member Kari McCue shared her agreement, "Shared Agreement #3: Be willing to see things from the eyes of seven people, not just one. As someone who was just sworn in as a Board member in July, this agreement has really stood out to me. Coming onto the Board, I knew I would bring my own experiences and perspectives to the table, but I also recognized that each of the other six members brings their own knowledge, experiences, and points of view. I think one of the strengths of having seven people on the Board is that we don't all have to see things the same way to work toward the same goal.

To me, this agreement means being willing to listen, ask questions, and consider perspectives I may not have thought about myself. It also means recognizing that another Board member may have information or insight that I hadn't considered. I also think this applies beyond the seven of us. We have to consider how our decisions affect our students, families, teachers, staff, and the entire District 33 community. As a new Board member, I'm still learning a lot. I don't feel like I need to have the answer the moment an issue comes before us. I think there is value in listening to the discussion, hearing different perspectives, and being open to seeing things differently as I learn more. Ultimately, my perspective is important, but it is only one perspective. Our strength as a Board comes from bringing those perspectives together, having respectful conversations, and making decisions based on what we believe is best for all District 33 students. That's something I hope to continue practicing throughout my time on the Board."

RECOGNITION/SHOWCASE PRESENTATION

Showcase

Wegner Showcase

Janet Gruenwald, Principal at Wegner, presented Wegner's Student Voice in Action initiative. This year's focus is on creating an environment where all students feel safe, can share their ideas, and build strong relationships. All Wegner students read "All Are Welcome". In addition, grade levels have developed morning meeting activities, including a cheer of the day, greetings in different languages, and classroom sharing. The Principal Advisory Committee, which began last year with fourth-grade students, has expanded this year to include both fourth- and fifth-grade students. The committee will review student responses to the Supportive Environment survey, identify areas for improvement, and develop action plans to address those areas.

The students also look forward to collaborating with district administrators on suggestions to improve safety. Several students participated in the board meeting by demonstrating the Welcome Song, asking board members questions from their question jar, and shared the joke of the day.

Superintendent News

Wegner's Superintendent News - Strategic Plan in Action

The Superintendent News updates the board and community on the many programs and activities occurring in the schools and departments, all aimed at helping us accomplish the goals of the District Strategic Plan.

- **Goal: Student Achievement**
  - Continuing to refine MTSS process
  - Make data visible to students
  - PDSA cycles with grade-level teams
  - Attendance focus
  - Focus on REACH instructional strategies
- **Goal: Engaged Learning**
  - Student ownership of Core Values
  - Student Mentoring
  - "We are Wegner" - Family Culture Night

This month, progress has been made in:

- Engagement: Students are actively participating, thinking, discussing, and invested in learning.
- Academic Writing: Students develop clear, structured writing that effectively communicates ideas. They write to explain thinking, justify answers with evidence, and communicate understanding using academic language.

Superintendent for the Day

Wegner's Superintendent for the Day

On September 22, third-grade students Bladimir R., Evelyn H., and Manuel W. participated in Superintendent for the Day. Continuing the district's focus on safety, the students visited several fourth-grade classrooms, asked questions, and collected student feedback about school safety, improvements, and what makes school enjoyable. When asked, "What would make our school better?" students suggested learning and listening to teachers, having fidgets, enjoying more field trips and spirit days, setting up soccer nets, and even building a Starbucks! In response to "What makes you feel safe at school?" students highlighted teachers, friends, feeling comfortable in their classrooms, safe hallway behavior, and being kind, respectful, and following CHAMPS expectations.

Students also shared what makes school fun, including more time to play Gaga ball, assemblies and spirit days, specials and recess, engaging activities, opportunities to try new things, and Amplify. Each student had a favorite part of the experience. Manuel enjoyed talking with other students, Bladimir appreciated spending time with the Superintendent, and Evelyn especially enjoyed visiting each classroom and taking notes.

Superintendent Davis thanked the students for their thoughtful feedback and the information they gathered, and thanked their parents for raising such wonderful children.

E.T.A.W.C. STATEMENT

Kerry Duffey, Deb Taylor, and Marilyn Jursich: "Good evening. As ETAWC leadership, the certified staff in District 33 bring a lot of opinions, concerns, and thoughts to us in the hope that we can find ways to advance public education locally. Yesterday we met with Kristina, Sarah, and Lea, and we recognize that as District leadership, they are also faced with a lot of opinions, concerns, and thoughts from stakeholders as they work diligently in service of our community. We appreciate their time and candor in our discussion. There is no "easy" job in education because it all matters. Every student, every day, every role. As Mrs. Denton reflected earlier this month, there is a need to embrace discomfort in order to grow. We understand that this means leaning into difficult conversations, and we are prepared to continue that work. We'd like to also thank Sarah Burnett for her work and collaboration with the ROE about the application of the salary advancement legislation since the last meeting. It was also helpful to have a platform today at FAC for people across the district to discuss some of the factors of the stressful workload. Kristina presented the nonnegotiables of our district to support student achievement. Although each of the items brought up aligns with the Strategic Plan and is supported by clear rationale, the sum of all the tasks and the strict expectations of how they are implemented this year is a stressor for many. Thank you, Mrs. Balgeman, for joining the conversation this afternoon. We are looking forward to collaborating in spaces like FAC, ALC, and within the buildings to find solutions and streamline some of these responsibilities that are falling on classroom teachers. We will encourage our members to speak up through these channels. This speaking up needs to be met with open minds and willingness to respond so we can all support students to our highest capability. Thank you."

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment at this time.

Public Comment Follow-Up

Rita Balgeman shared a follow-up ETAWC statement: "First, we want to acknowledge and express our appreciation for the work you do every day as stewards of our children's education. Teaching is demanding, important work. You are responsible for helping children develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to succeed, and you do that work while navigating increasingly complex needs and competing demands on your time. We recognize the weight of that responsibility, and we do not take your commitment to our students for granted.

Because we share that same commitment to our students, our responsibility as a Board is to set a clear vision and hold high standards across this district.

Our primary goal is simple: close educational gaps and ensure every single child is set up for success. We have made this an explicit priority. We want our students reading on grade level. We want them proficient in math. We want them prepared for high school and whatever comes next. Every child deserves the opportunity to succeed, and we firmly believe every student is capable of making that progress.

We recognize the reality we face: many of our students enter our schools already behind academically. Closing those gaps is not a simple task, and it will not happen without sustained hard work. We cannot ignore where our students are starting, but neither can we accept that where they start determines where they finish. Our responsibility is to help them get where they need to be.

We have raised the bar and strengthened our expectations year after year, and our new strategic plan pushes us even further. That is intentional. If we do not set ambitious goals, we will not achieve meaningful growth. If we set our expectations based only on what is comfortable or easy to accomplish, we risk shortchanging the students we are here to serve. The accomplishments of our last strategic plan showed us what is possible. That progress proves that when we challenge ourselves, we deliver better outcomes for our children. However, high expectations must be paired with the systems, resources, and support necessary to meet them. That is where our distinct roles come into focus.

As a Board, our job is to establish the vision, set the goals, and monitor progress towards our goals. Our job is not to determine daily operational decisions. That responsibility belongs to our superintendent and her administrative team, who translate our vision into practice.

Our expectations for district leadership are clear. We expect them to establish effective systems, provide strong curriculum and instructional resources, and ensure that our teachers have the strongest possible opportunity to succeed with our students. We expect them to examine how the district operates, identify inefficiencies, and make sure that the structures surrounding our teachers are helping rather than hindering their work.

These are not new or unexamined expectations. We regularly receive updates and discuss the considerable work already being done in these areas. At our most recent meeting, for example, we discussed curriculum and resource development. We have also discussed professional development for our staff and reviewed systems intended to make our district more supportive and efficient. We will continue to ask questions, review progress, and ask district leadership to lead the changes necessary to support our goals.

We hear you when you tell us that some of you are struggling, and we take those concerns seriously. We do not want our teachers spending

unnecessary time navigating inefficient processes or struggling when support can be provided.
What we need from you now is specific, constructive feedback on what gets in your way and what solutions would help.
Let me be clear about what that means. We are not going to lower our expectations for student achievement simply because achieving them is difficult. Our children deserve to read on grade level, to develop strong math skills, and to leave our schools prepared for what lies ahead. Our students are entitled to consistent, high-quality instruction across all our schools. Those expectations are not negotiable.
However, we recognize that additional support, more coaching, or different processes may help you meet those expectations. This is what we need to know from you - what additional support do you need to help our students achieve everything that is possible?
We ask that you work with district administration to communicate what you need. Reach out through your instructional coaches, building principals, building leadership teams, Faculty Advisory Council, or union leadership to share what you need. I attended today's Faculty Advisory Council meeting to listen directly, and we will work to ensure Board representation at future meetings as well.
I want to close by emphasizing this: we appreciate you, we respect your work, and we are not asking you to do this alone.
Every member of this Board is a parent, and several of us have been educators. We understand that teaching is hard work, that our students have increasingly varied needs, and that the demands placed on teachers are significant. We know that behind every discussion about curriculum, student achievement, and strategic priorities are real people working hard in classrooms every day. None of us can succeed in isolation, and no one should carry this burden alone.
The goal is not to make the work easier by asking less of our students or our schools. The goal is to make the work more effective, more sustainable, and better supported so that our students can achieve what we know they are capable of achieving.
That is what we are working toward, and we want to hear from you about what it will take to get there together.

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Banasiak, seconded by McCue, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

Approve Board Meeting Minutes	… approve the board meeting minutes of September 17, 2026, and October 1, 2026;
Approve Current Expenditures	…approved the list of bills dated October 3, 2026, through October 31, 2026, in the amount of $723,229.13;
Approve Current Payrolls	…approved payrolls of September 15, 2026, in the amount of $2,022,806.66; and September 30, 2026, in the amount of $1,818,717.44;

Approve Disposition of Closed Session Audio Tapes	…approved the disposition of audio tapes of the Board of Education regular closed session dated March 20, 2025, and April 10, 2025. Meetings that are at least 18 months old and meet the State criteria are disposed of;
Approve Personnel Items	…Approved the following personnel report: 0 Administration: 0 Certified: 5 Classified: Jocelyn Mercando, Paraprofessional at Turner, effective October 20, 2026; Amy Edling, Paraprofessional at Turner, effective October 20, 2026; Zayra Pedraza, Family Liaison at Gary, effective TBD; Qandil Bashara, Lunchroom Supervisor at Wegner, effective October 20, 2026; Elvia Velasquez, Family Engagement Specialist at ELC, effective October 26, 2026. 2 Resignations: Nicole Eimer, Director of Marketing, Communication, and Public Relations at ESC, effective October 1, 2026; Abelardo Gonzalez, Grounds Maintenance at ESC, effective October 8, 2026; 0 Retirement: On roll call, the following board members voted aye: Banasiak, McCue, Denton, Hernandez, Garcia, and Balgeman. Nays: None. Motion carried: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Report	Karen Apostoli, Executive Director of Business and Operations, provided the Board of Education with a financial report stating that the district has received $1,212,423.00 in evidence-Based Funding since the last meeting.
Treasurer's Report and Budget Report	The Board of Education reviewed the Treasurer's Report and Budget Reports as of September 30, 2026, along with the financial charts.
Student Activity Account Report	The Board of Education received a summary of each school's monthly activity accounts as of September 30, 2026.

DISCUSSION OF NEW / ONGOING BUSINESS WITH POSSIBLE ACTION

Presentation Follow-up	No presentation follow-ups at this time.
Appointment of District 33 Delegate and Alternate Delegate to the 2026 IASB Delegate Assembly	The Board will selected the Delegate and Alternate Delegate for the 2026 IASB Delegate Assembly. The Board will vote at the November 5, 2026, board meeting.

Proposed Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) Resolutions for Consideration at the 2026 IASB Delegate Assembly.	Kristina Davis, Superintendent, and the Board of Education discussed a portion of the resolutions that will be voted on during the Delegate Assembly. The Board will review all resolutions and will vote at the November 5, 2026, board meeting.
Discard List	The Board received information on the disposal of unneeded equipment and/or materials that are inoperable or too costly to repair. The Board will review the information and vote at the November 5, 2026, board meeting.
Server Quotes	The Board received quotes for purchasing new servers and storage. The Board will review the information and vote at the November 5, 2026, board meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Bushue Background Screening System	Motioned by Banasiak, seconded by McCue, to approve the contract with Bushue Background Screening. On roll call, the following board members voted aye: Banasiak, McCue, Balgeman, Garcia, Hernandez, and Denton. Nays: None. Motion carried: 6 ayes, 0 nays.
Insurance Renewal	Motioned by Banasiak, seconded by McCue, to approve the intent to renew the contract with Collective Liability Insurance Cooperative (CLIC) for the 2027-28 school year, which begins July 1, 2027. On roll call, the following board members voted aye: Banasiak, McCue, Denton, Garcia, Balgeman, and Hernandez. Nays: None. Motion carried: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Indigenous Peoples' Day/ Columbus Day	The Board received information on the activities that took place across the district in honor of Indigenous Peoples' Day/ Columbus Day.
Current Job Listing	The Board received the most recent posting of available job positions in School District 33.
Freedom of Information Report	The Board of Education received the Freedom of Information Act Report, noting 6 new requests since the last board meeting.
Out-of-District placement of Students with Disabilities	The Board received the Special Education report, indicating that 31 special education students and 1 general education student have been placed out of district as of October 7, 2026.
Short-term Leave	The Board received the short-term leave report.

Suggested Agenda Items for Next Board Meeting	No suggested items at this time.
Board Outreach	No Board outreach at this time.
Parking Lot	No parking lot at this time.

REPORT OF DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Open Comments	Lea and Cathy discussed student goals and growth in MAP scores that align with the 5-year strategic plan.

REVIEW OF UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

The Board of Education members reviewed upcoming meetings and events.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion by Banasiak, second by McCue, to go into closed session at 8:06 p.m. to discuss **(1)** the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of a specific employee(s), specific independent contractors, specific volunteers, or District legal counsel: however, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee of a public body that is subject to the Local Government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and shall be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2c) (1), amended by P.A. 101-459. **(2)** Student disciplinary cases. Any matter involving an individual student. 5ILCS 120/2(c)(10). Minutes of meetings held for this reason shall never be released to protect the individual student's privacy. **(3)** Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under this Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. **(4)** Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. **(5)** Litigation, when an action against, affecting, or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting. On roll call, the following members voted aye: Banasiak, McCue, Balgeman, Garcia, Denton, and Hernandez. Nays: None. Motion carried: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Roll Call	On roll call at 8:15 p.m., the following members were present: Balgeman, Banasiak, Garcia, Hernandez, Denton, and McCue. Absentees: McLean.

Also Present	Kristina Davis, Superintendent; Sarah Burnett, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Lea Pizinger, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; and Karen Apostoli, Executive Director of Business and Operations.
Out of Closed Session	Motion by Banasiak, seconded by McCue, to reconvene to open session at 9:45 p.m. The President took a voice vote and declared the motion passed.

ACTION ITEMS FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION

Approve Closed Session Minutes	Motion by Banasiak, seconded by McCue, to approve closed session minutes of October 1, 2026, as read. The President took a voice vote and declared the motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT	Motion by Banasiak, seconded by McCue, to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. The President took a voice vote and declared the motion passed.

President, Rita Balgeman

Secretary, Sandra Garcia