



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
SCHOOL DISTRICT 25, WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
June 9, 2025**

Call to Order

President Rogers called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. on June 9, 2025, in the Administrative Service Center, Boardroom, 28W250 St. Charles Road, West Chicago, IL 60185.

Roll Call

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

Other attendees included John Langton, Interim Superintendent; Dr. Patrick McGill; Dr. Mike Fitzgerald, Principal and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum; Dr. Joel Filas, Business Manager; Dr. Julie Salamone, Director of Student Services; Sarah Smith, Evergreen Principal; and Allison Agres, Evergreen 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 Gina Vlantis and seconded by Dennis Peterson, passed.

Voice Vote: Passed

Approval of Draft Minutes (Roll Call Vote)

Approval of Draft Minutes from the Regular Board Meeting on May 12, 2025

Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Regular Board Meeting on May 12, 2025. This motion, made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

Voice Vote: Passed

Approval of Draft Minutes from the Special Board Meeting on May 19, 2025

Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Special Board Meeting on May 19, 2025. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Voice Vote: Passed

FY2025 Budget Amendment Hearing

Enter Public Hearing

Motion to enter public hearing at 7:01 p.m. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen
Dennis Peterson, Don Sutenbach, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Budget Amendment Presentation: At 7:01 p.m., the Board of Education conducted a public hearing where Dr. Filas introduced the amended budget for the 2025 fiscal year. The purpose was to officially include fund transfers approved earlier but not part of the original August budget. It also allowed an evaluation of whether the district could support additional spending from higher-than-expected revenues or savings elsewhere.



The Education Fund received \$271,000 more than initially estimated, due to increased interest income and additional state and local grants. This enabled the district to allocate \$105,000 to new science curriculum programs. Conversely, the Transportation Fund is projected to decrease by \$71,000, reflecting reduced reimbursements from the State of Illinois, which lowered its coverage to 80% of eligible transportation costs.

Overall, the amended budget lowers the district's projected deficit from \$4 million to \$3.9 million. This planned shortfall supports a long-term investment strategy aimed at replacing and upgrading HVAC systems in all school buildings.

Public Comment

None

Board Discussion

None

Adjourn Public Hearing and Return to Open Session

Motion to adjourn public hearing at 7:08 p.m. This motion, made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Vince Engstrom, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen
Dennis Peterson, Don Sutenbach, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Presentations

2024-2025 Evergreen School Improvement Plan Update - Mrs. Smith presented Evergreen's School Improvement Plan, outlining strategic efforts to strengthen staff capacity and student needs. Key initiatives included:

- General education teachers facilitate daily morning meetings.
- Second Step SEL lessons are integrated into classrooms.
- Social workers implement the Everyday Speech curriculum.

These initiatives have fostered stronger teacher-student relationships, built a greater sense of community, and supported social-emotional growth. Additional measures included the creation of a staff resource library and professional development in CHAMPS and de-escalation strategies, which have contributed to a notable decrease in support calls.

The plan also emphasized enhanced collaboration among staff, resulting in more peer observations and increased student engagement. Positive trends in student performance were reported. Looking ahead, next steps will focus on sharing survey results and further promoting collaborative practices and feedback among staff.

2024-2025 Benjamin School Improvement Plan Update - Dr. Fitzgerald presented Benjamin's School Improvement Plan, outlining strategies aimed at enhancing student achievement through both qualitative and quantitative measures. He noted that Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) and Illinois Science Assessment (ISA) data have not yet been released by the State Board of Education and will be shared with the Board upon receipt.

STAR assessment results indicated that the school did not meet its targeted 3% growth in reading, with scores increasing from 48% to 51%, and math performance also fell short of the growth goal for students meeting or exceeding expectations. In response, Dr. Fitzgerald met individually with each student outside



of ELA classes to review their previous scores, discuss their perceptions of their performance, and emphasize the importance of motivation, accountability, and sustained effort in middle school.

To address these challenges, the school has implemented smaller math classes and reduced the number of RTI classes to provide more individualized attention. Professional development initiatives are being expanded, and testing strategies refined, with data indicating that allowing approximately 25 minutes per test improves performance. Notably, the HMH growth measure showed strong gains: fifth grade increased by 17%, sixth grade by 20%, and seventh and eighth grades by 9%.

The school is also engaging students in the Five Essentials survey process to gather feedback and guide improvement efforts. Overall, these initiatives reflect a collaborative teaching approach that is producing measurable gains in student growth and engagement.

Reports

Learning and Teaching Report: Dr. Fitzgerald provided an update on the Learning and Teaching Department, highlighting several key initiatives and accomplishments. He reported that the district's literacy plan has been successfully submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education. The plan focuses on evidence-based literacy instruction, ongoing educator support, and equitable literacy conditions for all students. As part of this effort, the district has received a \$3,200 literacy grant to further support implementation.

The district has also begun utilizing HMH's Coachly platform, with Ms. DeChristopher leading the initiative to provide targeted support for instructional improvement. Plans are in place to increase the number of licenses for the platform next year, as well as to strengthen the resources and professional learning available to instructional coaches.

Regarding professional development, an initial outline for next year's calendar has been developed, with stakeholder discussions scheduled for July 2 to review and refine the plan. Work on the School Improvement Plan is ongoing, with Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) reports expected in September and new reports anticipated in October.

Business and Operations Report: Dr. Filas provided an update on the Business and Operations Department. He reported that the district has received \$5.2 million in property tax revenue, representing approximately 45% of the total levy. The fiscal year will conclude on June 30, and the annual audit is currently underway, supported by the district's new electronic record-keeping system.

The district secured \$3,862 in funding for professional development aligned with the literacy plan and received a state library grant to enable librarians to order new resources. Dr. Salamone obtained a \$10,000 grant to support English language learners. In addition, the General Assembly has allocated \$300 million in additional funding to the state aid program, with Benjamin expected to receive up to \$500.

In preparation for the new school year, interactive display panels are being removed for replacement, and decommissioned document cameras and furniture have been repurposed for use in Catholic schools. As part of the district's ongoing safety initiatives, Arcon has begun a 10-year outdoor safety survey.

Facilities work is progressing at both buildings. At Evergreen, classroom renovations are underway, with casework removed and flooring installation scheduled to begin soon. At Benjamin, locker removal is complete, and delivery of new lockers is anticipated in the near future.

Superintendent's Report: Mr. Langton provided an update on the Superintendent's Department, highlighting the achievements of Benjamin graduates. At the recent Senior Awards Night, it was noted



that 75 Benjamin alumni represented 14% of the senior class at West Chicago High School. Of these, 22% graduated with distinction and 40% graduated with the highest distinction. Benjamin graduates also comprised 44% of Illinois State Scholars and 38% of departmental award recipients.

Mr. Langton expressed pride in these accomplishments, crediting the dedication of students, families, and staff, and recognizing key personnel for their leadership and support. He reported on two recent FOIA requests and expressed gratitude to the Board for their trust during his interim tenure, stating his confidence in the district's continued success under Dr. Patrick McGill's leadership.

Other Reports

SASED: Mr. Langton reported on his attendance at the SASED Board of Directors meeting on May 21, where the board finalized plans for the upcoming school year, approved meeting dates, committee assignments, the budget, summer school lease agreements, and a roof repair contract for the Southeast Alternative School. The meeting also included a review of SASED programs and services.

He noted that Mr. Engstrom attended the SASED Governing Board meeting on May 28, during which new officers were elected and the FY26 budget was approved.

LEND: On May 23, Dr. Filas and Mr. Langton attended a LEND Council meeting where the board reviewed membership dues, the proposed budget, and meeting dates, and elected new officers. Co-Executive Directors provided legislative updates on recent Illinois budget proposals, noting that they will have minimal impact on the district

Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

Consent Agenda: Items Removed

None

Consent Agenda (Roll Call)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. This motion, made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Action Items (Roll Call Vote)

Approval of the 2024-2025 Amended Budget

Motion to approve the 2024-2025 Amended Budget, as presented. This motion, made by Andrew Drinnin and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Approval of the Interest Transfer Resolution

Motion to approve the Interest Transfer Resolution, as presented. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Dennis Peterson, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None



Approval of the 2025 Resolution to pay the June/July Bills

Motion to approve the 2025 Resolution to pay the June/July Bills, as presented. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Dennis Peterson, passed.

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

Approval of Board Committee Appointments

Motion to approve the 2025-2026 Board Committee Appointments, as presented. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.

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

Approval of the Second Reading and Subsequent Adoption of PRESS Plus Issue 118 Board of Education Policy Updates

Motion to approve the Second Reading and Subsequent Adoption of PRESS Plus Issue 118 Board of Education Policy Updates, as presented. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

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

Approval of the Second Reading and Subsequent Adoption of the Revised Board of Education Policy 2:150 Committees

Motion to approve the Second Reading and Subsequent Adoption of the Revised Board of Education Policy 2:150 Committees, as presented. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
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 for the Board's consideration all questions or communications submitted through the active electronic link, along with the status of the District's response.

Adjournment (Voice Vote)

Motion to adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting at 8:35 p.m. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Dennis Peterson, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed



Respectfully submitted by:
Solly Garcia, Board Recorder

President, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education

Recorded: June 9, 2025

Approved: August 11, 2025