

**Minutes of Gurnee School District 56
Board of Education Meeting
January 22, 2025**

The following Board members were in attendance: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, Becky Kotsinis, and Germain Castellanos. Absent: Mark Pos and Mandi Florip.

Also in attendance:

Luis Correa, Superintendent
Martin Da Costa, Director of Business | CSBO
Eric Esteban, Director of Technology
Pete Helfers, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Sean Smith, Director of Facilities and Grounds
Rachel Solomon, Director of Pupil Services
Miriam Torres, Multilingual & Assessment Coordinator
Principals: Jen Glickley, Ryan Lazar, Sara Roscheger, and Allison Waller
Lori Rupsch, Board Clerk

Board President Blockinger called the regular meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and asked that everyone join him in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Member Pahl made a motion with a second from Board President Blockinger to accept the minutes from the regular meeting on December 18, 2024, as presented. Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, Becky Kotsinis, and Germain Castellanos. Absent: Mark Pos and Mandi Florip.

The regular December 31, 2024, Treasurer's Report identified cash and investments of \$3,658,258.38. The Revenue Report identified receipts of \$848,077.00 and the Expenditure Report identified expenses totaling \$5,988,933.87. The cash balance in the Activity Fund for December was \$104,365.85. The Financial Reports plus the Revised December (\$4,884,900.67) and Regular January (\$961,464.71) Bills for Payment Reports were approved on a motion by Board Member Kotsinis and seconded by Board Member Pahl. Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, Becky Kotsinis, and Germain Castellanos. Absent: Mark Pos and Mandi Florip.

During the *Public Participation* portion of the meeting, Mrs. Lizbeth Rivas addressed the Board of Education regarding the 2025-2026 school calendar. Mrs. Rivas requested that the Board revise and remove the late starts on Wednesdays. She stated that the late starts on Wednesdays placed a burden on parents in the District. Ms. Gail Saunders reintroduced herself to the Board and shared her email with those in attendance: gaildistrict56@gmail.com.

Dr. Correa requested that each building principal provide the Board of Education highlights that had occurred at their building since the previous Board of Education meeting. This included pictures from:

Viking: Student/Staff Basketball Game; Lunchroom Bingo

River Trail: NJHS Induction; 5th Grade Science Experiment on Precipitation

Spaulding: Winter Clothes Donations by Local Churches; Dance Night Flyer

Prairie Trail: Co-Teaching Multiplication Activity; 12,308 Books Check Out of LRC; and Snowman Art Project

District Office: Mr. Helpers as Elf on the Shelf; Dr. Correa as the Gingerbread Man

At this time, Dr. Correa requested that each administrator report on department projects/tasks that they were currently focused on:

Mr. Esteban: 1st eLearning Day; Office Safety Installation

Mr. Smith: Cold Weather Protection Plan; Receiving of Maintenance Grant

Ms. Torres: Winter iReady Diagnostics; BPAC Meeting

Ms. Solomon: DBAC Training; IDEA Grant Expenditures

Mr. Helpers: Portrait Pathways Event; ELA Pilot; Science Review This Summer

Mr. Da Costa: TIF Joint Review Meeting in Park City

Board Member Garcia reported to Mr. Smith a leak in one of the gutters near an entrance at River Trail School. Mr. Smith stated that this repair was scheduled for this summer but he would have his staff put a cone in the spot and add extra salt. Mr. Da Costa was asked to explain the TIF process.

Mr. Da Costa was in attendance to share with the Board of Education the status of the FY25 budget after the second quarter. He reported that the District had received all of the revenue expected from the 2023 tax levy and was on target. The Education Fund expenditures, which were 70% of expenditures, was on target with the budget. Some of the other funds were way over in expenditures because most of those expenditures occurred during the summer.

Dr. Correa requested that the Board of Education make the Professional Leave and Conferences report a matter of record of the minutes of the regular January 22, 2025, Board of Education meeting.

A Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request was received by Dr. Luis Correa via email on January 15, 2025, from Ms. Sheila Norman (Illinois Retired Teacher Association) requesting a listing of names and email addresses of certified retiring staff for FY25. Mrs. Rupsch responded to Ms. Norman on January 15, 2025, with the requested information.

A second Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request was received by Dr. Luis Correa via email on January 13, 2025, from Mr. Owen Wang (Lake County Gazette) requesting the number of "migrants" (e.g. illegal aliens/non-U.S. citizens) who were currently enrolled in the District. Mrs. Rupsch sent an email to Mr. Wang on January 15, 2025, with a response authored by area superintendents with the assistance of an attorney.

Dr. Correa presented to the Board of Education for second reading the proposed calendar for the 2025-2026 school year. On a motion from Board President Blockinger with a second from Board Member Garcia, the Board voted to approve the 2025-2026 school calendar as presented by the administration. Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, Becky Kotsinis, and Germain Castellanos. Absent: Mark Pos and Mandi Florip.

Dr. Correa provided the Board of Education a group of policies to review to ensure that those policies reflected the intent of the Board. This was a goal of the Board made during training provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB). Ultimately, all Board policies would be reviewed during a three-year cycle. Current policies for review were 7:15, 7:20, 7:30, 7:40, 7:50, and 7:60. The Board would officially approve the recommended changes at the next Board of Education meeting.

Mr. Smith was in attendance seeking Board approval for professional engineering services from Gewalt Hamilton Associates for pavement improvements at both Spaulding and Viking Schools not to exceed \$132,325.00. On a motion from Board Member Pahl with a second from Board Member Garcia, the Board voted to accept the proposal presented by Gewalt Hamilton Associates to provide professional engineering services for proposed pavement improvements to be done in 2025 and not to exceed \$132,325.00. Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, Becky Kotsinis, and Germain Castellanos. Absent: Mark Pos and Mandi Florip.

Board Member Kotsinis made a motion to approve the following items as presented on the consent agenda. Board Member Castellanos seconded the motion.

- Authorization to Prepare the 2025-2026 Budget
- Spaulding School P.E. Fundraising Request
- River Trail School Great Americans Fundraising Request

Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, Becky Kotsinis, and Germain Castellanos. Absent: Mark Pos and Mandi Florip.

During the *Public Comment* portion of the meeting, Ms. Gail Saunders inquired if a calendar survey had gone out to parents.

On a motion by Board Member Kotsinis and seconded by Board Member Pahl, the Board voted to adjourn open session at 5:44 p.m. The Board went into closed session at 5:44 p.m. to discuss the following items on a roll call vote:

- The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), as amended by P.A. 93-0057.
- Student disciplinary cases. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9).

- The placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10).
- Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).
- Discussion of lawfully closed meeting minutes, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21).

Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, Becky Kotsinis, and Germain Castellanos. Absent: Mark Pos and Mandi Florip.

The Board of Education came out of closed session at 6:21 p.m. on a motion from Board Member Kotsinis and seconded by Board President Blockinger. Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, and Becky Kotsinis. Absent: Mark Pos, Mandi Florip, and Germain Castellanos.

On a motion from Board Member Kotsinis with a second from Board Member Pahl, the Board voted to approve the personnel recommendations as presented by the Superintendent. Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, and Becky Kotsinis. Absent: Mark Pos, Mandi Florip, and Germain Castellanos.

On a motion from Board Member Pahl with a second from Board Member Garcia, the Board voted to approve closed session minutes for the meeting on December 18, 2024, as presented. Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, and Becky Kotsinis. Absent: Mark Pos, Mandi Florip, and Germain Castellanos.

A motion was made by Board Member Kotsinis and seconded by Board President Blockinger to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 p.m. Motion carried on a roll call vote. Roll Call: Ayes: Odie Pahl, Cesar Garcia, Jim Blockinger, and Becky Kotsinis. Absent: Mark Pos, Mandi Florip, and Germain Castellanos.

Respectfully submitted:

James Blockinger, President

Odie Pahl, Secretary
Board of Education, District #56
Lake County, IL