

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (3rd Thursday)
SCHOOL DISTRICT 33, DUPAGE COUNTY, WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
February 20, 2025

President Rita Balgeman called the regular meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:02 p.m. at Leman Middle School, 238 E. Hazel St., West Chicago, Illinois. On roll call, the following members were present: Mrs. Rita Balgeman, Mrs. Morgan Banasiak, Mr. Tom Doyle, and Mr. Chad McLean. Absent: Mrs. Felicia Gills, Mrs. Sandra Garcia, and Mrs. Janette Hernandez.

ALSO PRESENT

Kristina Davis, Superintendent; Lea DeLuca, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; Karen Apostoli, Executive Director of Business and Operations; Sarah Burnett, Director of Human Resources; Fred Cadena, Director of Buildings and Grounds; Sherri Massa, Director of Student Services; Cathy Park, Director of Assessment and Accountability; Matt Ryan, Director of Technology; Sarah Norton, Director of Partnerships; Nicole Eimer, Director of Marketing, Communications, and Public Relations; Gina Steinbrecher, Assistant Director of Communications; and Jenny Brunke, Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ADDITIONS/CHANGES

An addition of Board Salute for Gina Steinbrecher was made under Recognition.

An addition of Litigation was made to close session.

SHARED AGREEMENTS

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 Growth and Achievement

Goal #2 – Learning Culture of Equity, Engagement & Agency

Goal #3 – Professional Culture of Teamwork & Continuous Improvement

Goal #4 – Family Engagement & Community Partnerships

Goal #5 - Effective and Innovative Use of 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 in which to conduct board work.

Board Secretary Tom Doyle shared his statement: “On behalf of the board, I would like to thank the Academic Leadership Council for all of their work toward providing the best learning opportunities for all D33 students. As we will see in tonight’s presentation, the ALC uses the “Plan Do Study Act” model to analyze data for the next steps. The council is tasked with evaluating our programs, resources, strategies, etc.

After going through some of the data that will be shared with us tonight, I noticed a lot of reasons to celebrate. We see a lot of academic improvement and success. There are also some opportunities for growth. We appreciate the Academic Leadership Team for coming together to analyze data and do the research needed to continuously improve our teaching and learning in all of our buildings. The data from the math scores, the reading scores (English and Spanish), the Culture Goals, and the Amplify pilot are just a few of the areas of focus for this committee. We understand the amount of time and effort that is required of this very important work.

Most of our book study chapters have emphasized trust. As a board, we need to trust in order to make informed decisions when voting. Thank you to the Academic Leadership Council for helping us all be prepared to make decisions according to what is best for all D33 students.”

RECOGNITION/SHOWCASE PRESENTATION

Board Salutes

The Board Salutes will be a standing item on the agenda starting with the February 3, 2022, board meeting. The Board of Education would like to recognize individuals of the District 33 community - which includes all staff members, students, bus drivers, parents/guardians, and guardians - for actions that build a positive culture and climate in District 33. This “shout-out” will become part of the official Board minutes under Board Salutes on the bi-weekly agendas.

Salute to: Karoline Giza, Teacher, Leman Middle School

Submitted by: Hazaiah Arellano, a 7th Student at Leman Middle School
"She is so nice. Also, she is polite and willing to help. Also, she takes care of any bad situations in classrooms. She wants to be a principal, and I believe she can do it."

Salute to: Syrena Rivera, Teacher, Leman Middle School

Submitted by: Ed Schell, Substitute Teacher, Leman Middle School
“Syrena does a great job with the students. Her ability to speak fluent Spanish allows her to teach detailed and complex topics to Spanish and English-speaking students. She is also very professional and helpful with teachers who need it. Lastly, she is always on the move at a quick pace to be

where she needs to be all over the building. Watching the way she acts motivates others to improve their performance.”

Salute to: Gina Steinbrecher

Retirement Recognition

The board and administration proudly salute Gina Steinbrecher, Assistant Director of Communication and Community Relations. As Gina Steinbrecher prepares to retire at the end of this month, we proudly reflect on her remarkable journey with District 33. With nearly two decades of dedicated service, Gina has made an indelible impact, first as an engaged parent, then as a reading aide, and later as our Assistant Director of Communication and Community Relations. In her role, Gina quickly became the trusted voice of District 33, recording district-wide calls, including the much-anticipated announcements for emergency learning days. Throughout the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gina worked tirelessly to ensure that timely, accurate updates were shared with our community, keeping everyone informed and safe. Gina's contributions have been instrumental in transforming our communication efforts. She introduced social media to the district, revitalized our branding, enhanced our website, and spearheaded numerous newsletters that streamlined our outreach to families and staff. Her commitment to clear, effective communication has forever changed the way we connect with our community. Beyond her professional achievements, Gina has built countless meaningful relationships with parents, staff, and community members. Her connection to District 33 runs deep—she raised her children here, with both attending Gary School's dual language program. Even her husband is a familiar face at the local Subway, always ready to chat with any District 33 staff member who walks through the door. Gina, thank you for your service to our schools and community. As you move on to this exciting new chapter, we extend our deepest gratitude for your unwavering dedication, hard work, and lasting impact on our district. We wish you the best as you move into retirement, filled with joy, relaxation, and a well-deserved time to enjoy all that life has to offer.

You will be missed but never forgotten!”

Presentation

School Goals, Winter Benchmark Results, & AAPPL Scores

Cathy Park, Director of Assessment and Accountability, shared the 24-25 district academic goals. Principals provided the winter 2024 scores for literacy and math and compared them with the winter 2023 results. They also provided the Spring 2025 goals and action plans.

Cathy Park reviewed the AAPPL results for 2023 and 2024. This marks the second year students in grades 3rd through 8th take the AAPPL test.

AAPPL (Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) assesses the Spanish language that students have acquired and practiced within a classroom setting, providing evidence that points toward learners proficiency level. Students in High School take the AAPPL test to obtain the Seal of Biliteracy upon graduation. Last year, 48 students received the Seal of Biliteracy at West Chicago Community High School, and 32 were former D33 students. Principals will come back in June to present the spring results.

Presentation

K-5 Literacy Resource Recommendation

Lea DeLuca, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, and Jenny Brunke, Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning, updated the

board with the Amplify pilot and provided the ALC recommendation. ALC (Academic Leadership Council) is a representative group of stakeholders that advises and makes recommendations to the Board of Education on matters concerning curriculum and instruction through the approved decision-making process. In August 2024, the Amplify literacy pilot began. 54 teachers in grades K-5 at all 5 elementary schools participated. Piloting teachers were surveyed in different areas, such as selecting a core resource (Amplify vs. ARC); English foundational skills resource (Amplify Skills, UFLI, or Blend of UFLI with Amplify skills); and Spanish foundational skills resource (Amplify Lectoescritura vs Avanza). A breakdown of MAP reading data comparing Amplify and American Reading Company from Kinder to 5th grade was also provided. The Literacy Subject Area Committee met on February 7th to review all data and agreed on recommendations to the Academic Leadership Council, with 16 in favor and 0 opposed. The Academic Leadership Council met on February 11th and agreed on a recommendation to the Board of Education, with 13 in favor and 1 opposed. The final recommendation is as follows: Amplify English Knowledge for Kindergarten through 5th grade; Amplify Lectoescritura for K-2 Spanish Foundation Skills, Spanish Grammar for 3-5 grade, Amplify English Knowledge and Spanish Conocimiento for Kindergarten through 5th grade at Gary; UFLI for K-2 English Foundational Skills; and Fastbridge for English/Spanish progress monitoring.

E.T.A.W.C. STATEMENT

Deb Taylor, E.T.A.W.C. President, shared a statement. "ETAWC would like to thank District 33 administrators for their willingness to come to the table and listen to us as we work together to help our students, teachers, and district grow. Numerous times throughout the year, ETAWC leadership has requested meetings with district administrators - above and beyond our regularly scheduled meetings - and those requests have been granted. Discussions have been had for such purposes as clarification on issues, tightening up communication and expectations, and problem-solving in response to inconsistent implementation of policies and procedures. Recently, district administrators sat with us as we shared feedback and concerns brought to us by some of our members in response to a curricular decision made at a district-level SAC committee meeting. ETAWC appreciates the time and the platform given to us by the district, allowing us to provide information from teachers' perspectives that may impact the decision. We look forward to continuing open dialogues and honest communication as we work together for our students, schools, and community."

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment at this time.

APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Banasiak, second by McLean, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

Approve Board of Education Meeting Minutes

...Approved the Board meeting minutes of January 9, 2025, January 23, 2025, and February 6, 2025;

Approve Current Expenditures

...approved the list of bills dated February 10, 2025, through February 20, 2025, in the amount of \$2,115,041.16;

Approve Current Payrolls	...approved payrolls of January 15, 2025, in the amount of \$1,836,706.23, and January 31, 2025, in the amount of \$1,852,177.53;
Approve Disposition of Closed Session Audio Tapes	...approved the disposition of audio tape of the Board of Education regular closed session dated August 3, 2023, and August 17, 2023. Meetings that are at least 18 months old and meet the State criteria are disposed of;
Approve Personnel Items	<p>...Approved the following personnel report:</p> <p><u>1 Administration:</u> Janet Gruenwald, Principal at Wegner, effective July 1, 2025;</p> <p><u>0 Certified:</u></p> <p><u>3 Classified:</u> Odalys Alcantar, Family Liaison at Pioneer Preschool, effective February 24, 2025; Cristal Guevara, Clerical Aide at Indian Knoll, effective February 11, 2025; Jonathan Antonio, Utility Custodian at ESC, effective February 18, 2025;</p> <p><u>1 Resignations:</u> Brittany Smith, Assistant Principal at Wegner, effective June 17, 2025;</p> <p><u>0 Leaves:</u></p> <p><u>0 Retirements:</u></p> <p>On roll call, the following members voted aye: Banasiak, McLean, Balgeman, and Doyle. Nays: None.</p> <p>Motion carried: 4 ayes, 0 nays.</p>
New Administration Biographies	Kristina Davis will read Janet Gruenwald's biography at the March 6, 2025, board meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Treasurer's Report and Budget Report	The Board of Education reviewed the Treasurer's Report and Budget Reports as of January 31, 2025, along with the financial charts.
Financial Report	Karen Apostoli, Executive Director of Business and Operations, provided the Board of Education with a financial report stating that the district received \$1,205,673.00 in Evidence-Based Funding, \$108,379.00 in Early Childhood -PreK for ALL, \$107,724.00 in Early Childhood-Prevention Initiative 0-3, \$2,316.60 in State Free Lunch and breakfast, \$16,853.00 in the Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program, and \$153,674.00 in Community Partnerships since the last meeting.
Student Activity Account Report	The Board of Education received a summary of each school's monthly activity accounts as of January 31, 2025.

DISCUSSION OF NEW / ONGOING BUSINESS WITH POSSIBLE ACTION

Elementary Literacy Resource Recommendations	The Board of Education will review the information provided during the presentation and vote at the March 6, 2025, board meeting.
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Staff Conference Attendance

The Board received information on two upcoming national conferences for staff and administrators to attend for professional development. The first is the AVID Conference, which will be hosted from July 23 to July 25 in Chicago, IL, and will include 45 staff members for the training. This includes elementary principals and the T&L Department. The second is the 2025 National Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference hosted from May 28th - 30th in Minneapolis, MN, for 10 staff and administrators. The board will review the information and vote at the March 6, 2025, board meeting.

STEM Fair MOU

The Board received the Memorandum of Understanding between ETAWC and District 33 regarding the first annual STEM Fair, which concerns the collective bargaining agreement and compensation. The board will review the information and vote at its March 6, 2025, meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Staffing Proposal

Motion by Doyle, seconded by Banasiak, to approve the addition of five reading interventionists (one at each elementary school). On roll call, the following members voted aye: Doyle, Banasiak, McLean, and Balgeman. Nays: None. Motion carried: 4 ayes, 0 nays.

Staff/Student iPads and Staff Laptops

Motion by Banasiak, seconded by McLean, to approve leasing new iPads for students and teachers and replacing all certified staff laptops with MacBooks. On roll call, the following members voted aye: Banasiak, McLean, Balgeman, and Doyle. Nays: None. Motion carried: 4 ayes, 0 nays.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Book Study

The Board of Education and District administrators discussed chapters 4 and 5 of their book study. Chapters 6 and 7 will be reviewed at the March 6, 2025 board meeting.

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 2 new requests since the last board meeting.

Out of District Placement

The Board received the Special Education report indicating that 27 special education students and 0 general education students have been placed out of the district as of January 31, 2025.

Short Term Leave

The Board received the short-term leave report.

Student Chronic Absentee

The Board of Education was provided with information on the Student Chronic Absentee report, showing that since February 13, 2025, the percentage of students chronically absent district-wide is 14.59%.

Student Suspension Report	The Board of Education received the Student Suspension report for January 2025, indicating 16 in-school suspensions, 6 out-of-school suspensions, and 0 Bus suspensions.
Truancy Referral Report	The Board of Education received the Truancy Referral Report for January 2025, indicating that 3 new students were referred to the Regional Office of Education, and 18 students continue to be listed on the Regional Office of Education truancy referral report.
School Newsletters	The Board reviewed the School newsletter.
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 items at this time.

REPORT OF DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Open Comments	No open comments at this time.
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REVIEW OF UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

The Board of Education members reviewed upcoming meetings.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion by McLean, second by Banasiak, to go into closed session at 8:25 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)** 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. **(4)** 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. On roll call, the following members voted aye: McLean, Banasiak, Doyle, and Balgeman. Nays: None.
Motion carried: 4 ayes, 0 nays.

ROLL CALL

On roll call at 8:42 p.m., the following members were present:

Balgeman, Banasiak, Doyle, and McLean.

Absent: Gills, Garcia, and Hernandez.

ALSO PRESENT

Kristina Davis, Superintendent; and Karen Apostoli, Director of Business and Operations.

Out of Closed Session

Motion by Banasiak, seconded by McLean, 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 previous closed session minutes to remain closed at this time, to be opened and made available for public inspection, or to remain closed forever.

Motion by Banasiak, seconded by McLean to approve previous closed session minutes to remain closed at this time, to be opened and made available for public inspection, or to remain closed forever.

Approve Closed Session Minutes

Motion by Banasiak, seconded by McLean, to approve closed session minutes as read. The President took a voice vote and declared the motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Banasiak, seconded by McLean, to adjourn the meeting at 9:46 p.m. The President took a voice vote and declared the motion passed.

President, Rita Balgeman

Secretary, Tom Doyle