



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
SCHOOL DISTRICT 25, WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
April 14, 2025**

Call to Order

President Rogers called the regular meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. on April 14, 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: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause, Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis.

Other Attendees included John Langton, Interim Superintendent; 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 was made by Jodi Krause and seconded by Gina Vlantis. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Approval of Minutes

- Approval of the Draft Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting on March 10, 2025.
Motion to approve the minutes as presented. This motion was made by Jack Buscemi and seconded by Dennis Peterson. Passed.
Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None
- Approval of the Draft Minutes from the Special Closed Session Meeting on March 24, 2025.
Motion to approve the minutes as presented. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen. Passed.
Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None
- Approval of the Draft Minutes from the Special Board of Education Meeting on March 24, 2025.
Motion to approve the minutes as presented. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen. Passed.
Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None



- Approval of the Draft Minutes from the Special Closed Session Meeting on April 5, 2025. Motion to approve the minutes as presented. This motion was made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Andrew Drinnin. Passed.
Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause, Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None
- Approval of the Draft Minutes from the Facilities and Finance Committee Meeting on April 8, 2025. Motion to approve the minutes as presented. This motion was made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Jack Buscemi. Passed.
Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause, Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Hearing: Public Hearing for Proposed Budget Amendment:

Motion to Enter Budget Amendment Hearing at 7:03 pm. This motion was made by Jodi Krause and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause, Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Dr. Filas presented a revised budget that reflected necessary changes resulting from several inter-fund transfers. These transfers had been approved and executed following the adoption of the initial budget in September. The amendment to the budget enabled the Business Office to reassess and adjust the year-end fund balance projections, which were increased due to a higher investment income than initially anticipated. Furthermore, during the discussion regarding the Capital Fund, it was confirmed that all proposed projects, totaling \$14.8 million, are fully funded. This ensures that the planned initiatives can proceed without financial constraints.

Motion to Return to Open Session at 7:08 p.m. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause, Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Presentations:

WeVideo - Angela Anthony, Instructional Coach, presented on the implementation of WeVideo across grades 4 to 8. This video creation platform has been used throughout the district for a year and a half, giving students a unique opportunity to enhance their digital storytelling skills.

In the 4th grade, students utilized WeVideo to create engaging name animations, allowing them to express their creativity while learning basic video editing techniques. The 5th graders took their skills a step further by working on projects centered around iconic speeches from Martin Luther King Jr., where they crafted presentations.



The 6th-grade students participated in a STEM parade project, using WeVideo to showcase innovative ideas. Meanwhile, 7th graders explored language learning through weather forecasts presented in Spanish, combining their language skills with multimedia tools to produce informative and entertaining videos.

Implementing WeVideo has proven beneficial in increasing student engagement and enhancing teacher adoption of the platform.

Science Adoption - Danielle DeChristopher, District Instructional Coach and member of the science committee, presented a thorough recommendation to the Board regarding adopting the SAVAS Realize Elevate Science curriculum for students in grades K-6. This curriculum is specifically designed to align with next-generation science standards, ensuring that students engage with contemporary scientific principles and methodologies.

The SAVAS Realize Elevate Science program emphasizes inquiry-based learning. This approach encourages students to ask questions, explore concepts, and engage in hands-on experiments, supporting critical thinking and a deeper understanding.

To facilitate a successful implementation of this curriculum, the plan includes teacher training sessions and staff preparation to teach the new content effectively. Furthermore, ongoing professional development will be provided to support teachers as they adapt to the new curriculum. Additionally, there will be opportunities for summer curriculum writing, allowing teachers to collaborate and develop resources that enhance the learning experience and tailor it to the needs of their students.

Reports

Learning and Teaching Report: Dr. Fitzgerald updated the Board on several Learning and Teaching Department topics. First, proposals for Summer Curriculum Initiatives have been sent to teachers for writing projects. The principal will review these and give final evaluations at the start of the school year to ensure alignment with educational goals.

Efforts continue to provide meaningful Professional Development for staff, including a half-day science workshop on May 2nd to equip teachers with innovative strategies and resources. Due to ongoing construction at Evergreen, science manuals will be temporarily moved to Benjamin Elementary School to ensure teachers have access. A follow-up session is scheduled for November 11th to assess the new materials and gather educator feedback.

Lastly, the Mentee Program supports new educators by providing flexibility and accessibility for professional development that accommodates various schedules and preferences. This fosters an engaging learning environment for mentees as they progress in their careers.

Business and Operations Report: Dr. Filas updated the Board on the Business and Operations Department, particularly regarding the funding for a three-year capital project. He reported that the County finalized the tax levy in December, so property tax payments are expected this month.

However, Dr. Filas noted that the \$800 District Library grant may be at risk due to ongoing federal funding decisions.



Additionally, he shared disappointing news about the \$2.1 million grant for last year's sewer connection project, which has not been funded this fiscal year. On a positive note, after a meeting with Congresswoman Ramirez's office, Dr. Filas reported that the District will have a chance to refile the grant application for the next fiscal year, potentially securing funding not granted this year.

Superintendent's Report: Mr. Langton updated the Board regarding the current status of the pending consolidated election results. He highlighted a particularly close contest between Mr. Drinnin and Mr. Szajda, with the outcome resting on just one vote. The process of vote canvassing is expected to be finalized by the end of next week.

In addition to the election updates, Mr. Langton discussed the advancements in exploring options for live broadcasting board meetings. He reported that the necessary equipment has been ordered and is being tested to ensure it meets the Board's needs. A trial run is planned for the upcoming May meeting to prepare for the implementation of this technology. While this meeting won't be live-streamed, evaluating the setup and making any necessary adjustments before future broadcasts will be valuable.

FOIA Request: The district received several requests this month, including,

- Postal Source request on March 7, 2025 - Requested information on the current postage meter equipment and leasing information.
- SMART Local 265 request on March 14, 2025 - Requested information regarding the district's upcoming construction and maintenance work.
- ad.cuius.bonum@proton.me request #8 on March 29, 2025 - Requested information regarding electronic data maintained by the district's Treasurer for annual expenses paid to identified vendors, firms, and individuals for the fiscal years 2015 and 2005.
- ad.cuius.bonum@proton.me request #9 on March 30, 2025 - Requested information regarding electronic data maintained by the district's Treasurer for annual expenses paid to identified vendors, firms, and individuals for the fiscal years 2016 and 2006
- ad.cuius.bonum@proton.me request #10 on March 30, 2025 - Requested information regarding electronic data maintained by the district's Treasurer for annual expenses paid to identified vendors, firms, and individuals for the fiscal years 2017 and 2007.

Board Reports:

Facilities and Finance Committee - During the facilities and finance committee meeting on April 8th, key updates included:

- Consolidated completed the repairs at the Evergreen gym.
- Progress on the Evergreen School capital project was positive, supported by favorable weather and effective management from FH Paschen and Archon.
- Future summer projects at Benjamin Middle School include asbestos abatement and installation of larger lockers, with discussions on decommissioning old furniture and exploring reuse options.
- Carefest, a community initiative led by Tim, aims to beautify school grounds through landscaping efforts with local church involvement.
- Finance discussions focused on the lunch program and potential budget adjustments, including salary increases for non-collective bargaining employees.



SASED AND LEND - Mr. Langton addressed the board regarding the upcoming reorganization of the SASED governing board, noting that Mr. Buscemi will no longer be a member. He encouraged members to consider who might fill his seat. He also mentioned that meetings are held quarterly. He briefly touched on the LEND meeting and the significant number of pending bills in legislation. Additionally, he requested that the board take time to read any information forwarded from LEND.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

None.

Consent Agenda: Items Removed

None

Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. This motion was made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Jodi Krause. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Action Items (Roll Call Vote)

Approval of the Reduction in Force Resolution

Motion to approve the Reduction in Force Resolution as presented. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Jack Buscemi. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Approval of the Amended 2025-2026 School Calendar

Motion to approve the amended 2025-2026 school calendar as presented. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Approval of the K-6 Science Curriculum Purchase

Motion to approve the K-6 Science Curriculum Purchase at the cost not to exceed \$120,950.96 as presented. This motion was made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Andrew Drinnin. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Approval of the Interactive Display Panel Purchase

Motion to approve the purchase of Interactive Display Panels, for \$209,220 from BenQ, as presented. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Jack Buscemi. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,



Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Approval of the Laptop Computer Purchase

Motion to approve the purchase of Lenovo ThinkPad computers, for \$238,101 from CDW, as presented.

This motion was made by Andrew Drinnin and seconded by Jodi Krause. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,

Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Approval of the Document Camera Purchase

Motion to approve the purchase of the HoverCam Document Camera, for \$35,145 from Camcor, as presented. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Jack Buscemi. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,

Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Approval of the Amended FY25 Budget

Motion to approve the Amended FY25 Budget, as presented. This motion was made by Jodi Krause and seconded by Gina Vlantis. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,

Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Approval of the Asbestos Abatement Project

Motion to approve the Benjamin Middle School Asbestos Abatement Project with Midwest Environmental Consulting Services in the amount of \$37,944 and Asbestos Remediation and Casework Demolition with Valor Technologies for \$113,990, as presented. This motion was made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Andrew Drinnin. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,

Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Approval of the Outdoor Education Trip

Motion to approve the Benjamin Middle School Outdoor Education Trip contract with Timber-lee for \$14,301, as presented. This motion was made by Jodi Krause and seconded by Gina Vlantis. Passed.



Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Approval of the E-Rate Bid

Motion to approve the Data Center Warehouse bid in the amount of \$21,519, as presented. This motion was made by Jodi Krause and seconded by Jack Buscemi. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

None

Discussion Items

2025-2026 Lunch Program: Mr. Langton and Dr. Filas presented to the Board the various potential hot lunch options for Evergreen, provided by Sodexo, the district's current food service vendor. Sodexo submitted three distinct proposals for the Board's consideration. The Board emphasized the importance of maintaining lunch pricing at a level accessible to parents.

- Option 1: Expanded Cold Lunch: Currently, the district provides students with a free sack lunch and milk in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program. The meal is delivered by Sodexo, stored in our refrigerator, and distributed by staff. This option offers all students a cold lunch that mirrors BMS at \$4.09 per meal.
- Option 2a: Hot Lunch with a Sodexo-staffed Server: The District would offer a hot lunch menu for \$5.34 per meal. This rate includes the cost of the Sodexo-provided server at \$125 per day.
- Option 2b: Hot Lunch with Sodexo-Staffed Server; paid by the District: The District would provide a hot meal for \$ 4.09 per meal. This requires the District to cover the Sodexo server cost of \$21,875 daily, totaling \$26,285
- Option 2c: Hot Lunch with a District-staffed Server: The District would offer a hot meal menu for \$ 4.34 per meal under this option. This option would require the District to staff the program and pay all training costs associated with food service.

The consensus was to opt for option 2b to ensure affordability.

Standing Board Committees: Mr. Langton emphasized the importance of all board members, including new board members, recognizing the additional commitments that come with the role of Board Member. Currently, there is a lack of consistency in following the existing policy regarding standing board committees. It may be helpful to clarify the distinctions between board and district committees. Committee assignments are set to be finalized in the upcoming June meeting.

E-Learning Plan: Mr. Langton stressed prioritizing children's needs over adult convenience in education. He noted that having students in classrooms with their teachers is usually the best for learning, but



recognized some circumstances may prevent this. He called for discussions with the new superintendent to find consensus on addressing these challenges.

Ms. Jenny Moore voiced concerns about the district's e-learning plan in a recent meeting. She supported e-learning as a valuable tool but emphasized the need for adequate teacher contact time to support student learning effectively. Ms. Moore also referred to a survey sent to parents and staff regarding the e-learning plan, noting only a 21% response rate. She conveyed that this limited feedback does not accurately represent the views and needs of the entire school community and suggested that the district seek different ways to gather stakeholder input for improving the e-learning plan.

Communications 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.

Enter Executive Session

Motion to enter executive session at 9:12 p.m.. This motion was made by Bridgette Pedersen and seconded by Gina Vlantis. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Return to Open Session

Motion to enter return to open session at 9:57 p.m.. This motion was made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Jack Buscemi, Andrew Drinnin, Jodi Krause,
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None
Bridgette Pedersen, Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Adjournment (Voice Vote)

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:57 p.m. This motion was made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Gina Atlantis.

Voice Vote: Passed

Respectfully submitted by:
Solly Garcia, Board Recorder

President, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education

Recorded: April 14, 2025
Approved: May 12, 2025