

# Minutes of Special Board Meeting for the Purpose of Conducting a Public Hearing on Building Closures for the Purpose of District Consolidation

## The Board of Education Harlem Consolidated School District # 122

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A Special Board Meeting for the Purpose of Conducting a Public Hearing on Building Closures for the Purpose of District Consolidation of the Board of Education of Harlem Consolidated School District was held Tuesday, December 9, 2025, beginning at 5:00 PM in the Harlem High School, Auditorium, One Huskie Circle, Machesney Park, IL 61115

1. Call to Order of Public Hearing at 5:10 PM by Michael Sterling (audio trouble)
2. Roll Call- Michael Sterling, Kurt Thompson, Aaron McKnight, Diane McKinney, Rebecca Carlson, Diana Johnson, Evelyn Meeks  
Other Attendees: Pam Cook- Recording Secretary, Dr. Terrell Yarbrough-Superintendent, Dr. Shelley Wagner-Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Dr. Michelle Erb- Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, Dr. Jason Blume-Assistant Superintendent for Communications & Community Relations, Josh Aurand-Assistant Superintendent for Business & Operations
3. Pledge of Allegiance led by Aaron McKnight
4. Statement from Board President-Mike Sterling introduced the hearing and Section 10-22.13 of the Illinois School Code for this meeting. Guidelines for public comments were outlined: each speaker will have three minutes to share their comment, Spanish interpretation will have an extended time limit of six minutes, comments should be directed to the board as a whole not individually, shouting and personal attacks will not be tolerated. Mike then introduced Dr. Yarbrough for a statement from administration.
5. Statement from Administration- Dr. Yarbrough thanked everyone who came out to the 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing. Dr. Michelle Erb addressed some concerns like class sizes. Class size limits are set by the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Building supports, including interventionists and social workers, are discussed with scenario six and seven showing similar amounts of support.
  - Heidi Lange and Shannon Rice discussed the current state of the special education programs including the STP program at Windsor and the Learning Lab at Machesney. Scenario one is criticized for not solving the core issue. Scenario two requires grades K-5 to be housed together creating a higher need within the building. Scenario six offers more equitable access to specialized programs but does not expand EC gen ed access. Scenario seven builds on scenario six offering potential to expand EC gen ed access in the future.
  - Dr. Yarbrough commented to the community that we would like to hear more from the community and recommended to pause on the third public hearing to gather more feedback. -President Sterling asked the Board for a consensus to pause the third public hearing to gather more feedback.
  - Kurt Thompson agreed to pause to review new information.
  - Diana Johnson agreed to pause and make tweaks to scenario 7, not a long pause. There is a way to compromise and get things done that will work for everyone, asking for patience.

-Evelyn Meeks agreed to pause to get a better understanding of what the community is saying and asking the community to trust the Board.

-Consensus was to postpone the public hearing to January.

6. Input and Comments from the Community

7. Comment were heard from 26 members of the public

Ms. Ellis expressed concerns on the impact of scenario seven on support staff and EC

Mr. Coletta criticized the boards approach to budget cuts; shared ALP successes with his students

Mr. Heneks expressed concern on the closing of Olson Park

Ms. Messner noted staff perspective on scenario seven; concerns with students with social/emotional needs

Ms. Tuneberg emphasized the importance of early childhood; impact of reducing EC seats

Ms. Barre noted the long-term impact on early childhood education on students' development

Ms. Campbell expressed concerns of scenario seven will have on her and her peers

Mr. Campbell expressed concern closing of neighborhood schools and multiple transitions

Mr. Johnson questioned the cause root cause of the budget issue and explore other avenues to address deficit

Ms. Fowler expressed concerns of the impact of reducing EC program

Ms. Blunt expressed concerns of multiple transitions and the need for stability for students with IEPs

Ms. Riddle expressed concern over the closing of Maple Elementary and neighborhood schools

Ms. Taft expressed concern about multiple transitions on vulnerable students

Mr. Fowler expressed concern closing of neighborhood schools and reducing EC program

Ms. Cesna criticized the District of mismanaging of funds

Ms. Redner expressed concern the impact on the ALP students with the proposal

Ms. Bragg expressed concern on closing Maple school and neighborhood schools

Ms. Anderson expressed concern with the reduction of the EC program

Ms. Lourash expressed concerns on scenario seven, multiple transitions, and grade bands

Ms. Arensdorp disapproval with the scenario, multiple transitions, grade bands, district financial spending

Ms. Gazinski expressed concern with grade bands, transitions, and reduction of EC program.

Ms. Polhill expressed concern with reduction of EC, transitions, and scenario seven

Mr. Morris expressed his concern of his love for his school and teachers

Mr. Cesna expressed concern with specialized programs support, financial stability, and scenario 7

Ms. Way expressed concern about closing neighborhood schools, EC program, and mismanagement of funds

Ms. Delaluz expressed the importance of social emotional readiness for students, questioned the allocation of school funds

Ms. Hyde emphasized the importance of elementary art and music and the dedicated space for those programs; disapproval of scenario seven

Aaron McKnight commented on the community concerns and the pause in the decision-making process to reevaluate. He reassures that the community concerns are being heard and appreciated.

Adjournment

**Motion to adjourn at 6:49PM**

**1<sup>st</sup> Thompson 2<sup>nd</sup> McKnight**

**All aye: Motion Carried**

ATTEST:

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President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Secretary