



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
SCHOOL DISTRICT 25, WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
December 8, 2025**

Call to Order

Board President Rogers called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. on December 8, 2025, in the Benjamin Middle School Small Gym, located at 28W300 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, Don Sutenbach, Eric Rogers and Gina Vlantis.

Absent: Dennis Peterson

Other attendees included Dr. Patrick McGill, Superintendent; Dr. Joel Filas, CSBO; Dr. Michael Fitzgerald, Assistant Superintendent of Learning and Teaching/Principal; Dr. Julie Salamone, Director of Student Services; Mrs. Sarah Smith, Evergreen Principal; Mrs. Allison Agres, 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 Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Approval of Draft Minutes (Roll Call Vote)

Approval of Draft Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting of November 10, 2025.

Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting of November 10, 2025. This motion, made by Andrew Drinnin and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Presentations

Tentative Tax Levy: Dr. Filas presented the 2025 Property Tax Levy for approval and shared that local property tax revenue is estimated to increase by 2.9%. He also noted that the District's Equalized Assessed Value is projected to increase by nearly \$2 million due to new property growth, which is expected to help lower the overall tax rate. Final tax extension values will not be available from the Assessor until March.

Reports

Learning and Teaching: Dr. Fitzgerald provided an update from the Teaching and Learning Department. He shared highlights from the November 14th Teacher Institute Day, where Evergreen staff participated in science training to support more efficient navigation of content, along with opportunities for collaboration and problem-solving across grade levels.

He also reported on the Language Rich Classrooms professional development session, which focused on practical strategies for embedding language throughout instruction. In addition, Mrs. DeChristopher and Mrs. Anthony introduced the Magic School AI platform and demonstrated how it can support lesson planning and student learning.

Dr. Fitzgerald noted continued articulation work with West Chicago High School. Monthly meetings will begin in January, with sessions scheduled for January 13th, 20th, and 27th. These meetings will bring together eighth-grade teachers from science, ELA, math, STEM, and art for classroom visits and discussions with high school department chairs.

Finally, he shared that Dr. McGill, Mrs. Smith, and he continue to conduct Learning Walks across the buildings to observe instruction, support teachers, and gather feedback to inform ongoing improvement efforts.

Operations Report: Dr. Filas shared that his report for the month was brief, with no major updates for December. He noted that the District Safety Committee met last month and is currently developing recommendations related to cardiac response procedures and protocols.

Superintendent Report : Dr. McGill provided an update on the District's strategic planning process. He shared that the Zoom orientation held on December 4 marked the first of five meetings. The data retreat is scheduled for December 9, 2025, and will include three brief presentations focused on student achievement, learning and working environments, and finance, facilities, and technology. Each presentation will be followed by a Q&A session. The committee will then begin developing a SWOT analysis, which will later be shared with the community for feedback.

He also noted that several Board members attended the Triple I Conference, which offered valuable learning related to effective board governance and leadership development.

Dr. McGill recognized Payroll Manager Marquita Camacho Hernandez for successfully completing a rigorous 35-hour IASBO program, noting her accomplishment as an example of the district office's commitment to ongoing professional learning.

Additionally, he highlighted upcoming GPS Parent Series events, including:

- December 10 – Dream School: Finding and Getting into the College That's Right for You
- December 16 – Mental Health 101: Supporting Your Teens' Mental Health Journey in High



School, College, and Beyond

- January 13 – Lighthouse Parenting: Guiding Teens to Develop Independence and Coping Skills to Navigate Their Own Journey

Board Committee Reports: Member Drinnin shared an update from the Facilities Committee. The group reviewed progress on the current capital plan and improvements completed since 2024. They also received an initial draft of the 10-year Health and Life Safety survey.

Member Engstrom reported from the Finance Committee, noting that the group reviewed funding options related to the upcoming Health and Life Safety work.

Member Sutenbach shared an update from the PTA. Recent activities included hot cocoa deliveries at both Benjamin and Evergreen. A kindergarten parent meeting was also held.

Upcoming events include a Chef's Night Out fundraiser at McAlister's, with 20% of proceeds donated to the PTA, the holiday bazaar this Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and ice cream days on December 17 and 18. He also noted that Girl Scout cookie season began Friday and that a recent cookie rally drew more than 100 attendees from the area.

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 Vince Engstrom and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Action Items (Roll Call Vote)

Approval of the 2025 Tax Levy

Motion to approve the 2025 Tax Levy, 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
Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Absent: Dennis Peterson

Nays: None

Approval of the Property Tax Appeals Board Resolution

Benjamin SCHOOL DISTRICT 25

Motion to approve the Property Tax Appeals Board Resolution, as presented. This motion, made by Andrew Drinnin and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach

Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Absent: Dennis Peterson

Nays: None

Approval of the School Maintenance Grant

Motion to approve the School Maintenance Grant, 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

Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Absent: Dennis Peterson

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.

First Reading of PRESS Plus Policy Issue 120

The Board reviewed the first reading of Press Plus 120, which includes language changes and updated references. One new item for consideration involves curriculum language related to the Irish famine and the famine genocide in Ukraine. The second reading is scheduled for January.

Adjournment (Voice Vote)

Motion to adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting at 7:32 p.m. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Respectfully submitted by:
Solly Garcia, Board Recorder

President, Board of Education

Recorded: December 8, 2025

Approved: January 12, 2025

Secretary, Board of Education