

**GENEVA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 304  
227 NORTH FOURTH STREET, GENEVA, ILLINOIS  
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF A REGULAR SESSION  
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Board of Education of Community Unit School District Number 304 met in a board retreat on Friday, May 16, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. at Coultrap Educational Services Center, 227 North Fourth Street, Geneva, Illinois.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

- 1.1 Roll Call
- 1.2 Welcome
- 1.3 Pledge
- 1.4 Reminder to Sign Attendance Record

Board members present: Policy Committee Chair Stephanie Bellino, President Larry Cabeen, Dan Choi, Willard Hooks, Paul Radlinski. Late: Molly Ansari. Absent: Vice President/Finance Committee Chair Jackie Forbes.

The President welcomed everyone and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

District staff present: Dr. Andy Barrett, Superintendent.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**3. BOARD DIALOGUE TOPICS**

- 1. Review Board Norms & Working Agreements

Dr. Barrett shared that these were just reviewed in January, and he thought everything was going well in this area. The communication and team have been working well.

Board comments, questions, concerns: Last year you shared with us that you would give us some more insight in terms of the suspension list. The parent teacher advisory committee that you are on is where that conversation starts. Anne and Mike have been working to disaggregate some of that data.) That committee is only meeting once a year, but is that enough? (It might need to be more.) In the last meeting, some of the concerns were with children with special needs because they can have issues that are misinterpreted. This year it was noted that you had expressed to the teachers that the board members would like to get into the schools more and they did reach out more. It would be nice if we could do that again. (We can remind them to do this.) We get many invitations to celebrations, but it might be more beneficial to see actual class progress. Have all the schools done presentations? (No, there are a couple more scheduled for next year.) It might be better not to have these presentations at the end of the school year when we are doing so many awards. With the monthly expenditure report, it would be interesting if you could put a clicker on those to see just how many people open that. I do not look at the p-card expenditures, because that should be the department manager that is looking at those. The change we made this year, where we decided to not vote on something the first time it is presented, should it go on here somewhere? (We should add that under "board meetings.")

Dr. Barrett also shared the liaison committees. He took two groups off this list. One was the Joint PTO. This group does not meet on a regular basis. If there is something that we need feedback on, he can send out an email to all board members to see who would like to attend. The second one was the Mental Health Advisory Committee. This committee does not exist anymore. This has happened over the years with other groups. The only other one that really does not exist is the Boundary Task Force. We will talk about this later to determine if maybe this does need to exist formally.

Board comments, questions, concerns: Dr. Hooks was unsure how these groups worked, if they rotate or if you are on them for a specific number of years. As a citizen who does not work in the school setting there are some things that might not be as obvious to someone who has. (The last time we had a considerable number of new board members, so that would have been the last time we had a rotation of committees.) You can be on any committee you

want, but we cannot have too many on each. What is the PRIDE Committee? (This is the group of volunteers that comes in to help in the schools.) There has never been a meeting with this committee. Are we still doing this? (Yes, and this group is active. We can look into whether they have meetings.) They might want to change the name of their committee as it is confusing as to what it really is. Some of these are actually board or district organized groups, like the Policy Committee and some are community organizations that board members serve as a liaison. If it has the work "Committee," don't we have to follow the Open Meetings Act? (That is correct.) That is confusing, because the Parent Teacher Advisory Committee does not? (No, we do follow the Open Meetings Act.) If someone is interested in being on a specific committee or Task Force, could they reach out to you? (That is fine with me.) Do committees have to have a certain number of people on them? (You must have at least three board members to have a quorum.) How does that work then when you need to pass something onto the whole board? (This would be a problem.) Is there only one legislative liaison? (Yes, but there can be more than one. There can only be one voting member.) How would this look if there were two liaisons? (There would have to be some coordinating.)

## 2. Strategic Plan Updates, Discussion, & Next Steps

Dr. Barrett discussed parts of the Strategic Plan. The first one was the enrollment and staffing at the elementary level. We need to look at our next steps. He shared that the current enrollment, average number of sections at each school, and the current class size capacity is high at Harrison Street Elementary and Williamsburg Elementary. Mill Creek Elementary, Heartland Elementary, and Western Avenue Elementary are in that 70ish percent range and at Fabyan Elementary you have this anomaly where if you include the Geneva Early Learning Program (GELP), we are using that building efficiently. If you excluded GELP, then Fabyan would not be efficient. If we were formally going to look at elementary school boundaries, the idea would be to have this number be consistent across all our buildings. He shared the current enrollment numbers for the 2025-26 school year. At one time we were around 500 kids per cohort, but now we are more like 400 kids per cohort. As you get down to the middle and elementary schools we are more like 350 kids per cohort and lower. If you took all our elementary students and divided them by six, you would have about 330 students per school. If you take 330 and divide by eighteen you would have about three sections per grade level and you will average eighteen kids per class. Only a couple of our elementary schools have 330 students, so if all schools were 330 students, then all schools would be at about 75% capacity. The next thing you look at is, if you take that same number of students and divide by five you get around 400 students per building. You would still have three sections per grade level, but the average class size would be more like twenty-two. We have built a robust preschool program, but the reality is that Fabyan is maxed because they house GELP.

At 7:38 p.m., Molly Ansari joined the meeting.

If we want to talk about boundaries, the school that needs to be discussed is Fabyan. He pulled up the boundaries to show where Fabyan is and the number of streets that surround it. Some of the other schools have many more streets than Fabyan. To have three sections per grade level at Fabyan you would need to move GELP. We currently have no space in any other buildings to relocate GELP. What will require more attention in the future is Geneva Middle School South where Friendship Station Preschool is housed. When this program first started, it was a joint program that we ran together and there was no GELP. The Park District paid the school district a flat sum of money that would allow the Park District and Friendship Station to use that space for twenty years.

Board comments, questions, concerns: Have we heard anymore about the land that Shodeen was going to develop? (No.) Is there any reason we would not have GELP at Fabyan? (These are things we need to talk about.) How would you even out enrollment at the elementary schools? (We would have to change the boundaries.) Would you be moving students from other schools? (If we did this you could not just go to the school that has more students and say you are going here. It does not work like that.) What about grade levels, because you only divided the total? (This is rough cut. What happens is you would go through with a demographer, look at the neighborhoods, look at the projections, and look at where you could cut things.) What is our average size per classroom now? (It is around eighteen.) The driver, if you do not include GELP, would be financial. (Yes.) With the capital spending, we are going to see a trend down over the next few years. We peaked with our capital spending, so that puts less pressure on

the financial. The EAV continues to go up, so we do not need to raise the levy because everyone's values are higher. The only cost savings would be personnel if you only had five buildings. If the economics change and we are running at a deficit, then this might make sense. If I were a parent with a kindergarten student, wouldn't I want to look at Fabyan because it has smaller class sizes? The students that live in Mill Creek, but attend Batavia, is that written in stone forever? (They pay taxes to Batavia school district.) Is Friendship Station run by the Park District? (Yes.) Do they lease to us? (No.) Would we want that space or need that space? (The only way to even out the elementary schools is to put GELP somewhere else and the only place to put GELP is Friendship Station.) Would that force us to change our boundaries? (Yes.) If we do not do this does that mean we need to sign that space away for another twenty years? (No.) Is Friendship Station a money maker for the Park District? (Hard to say.) Why don't we take it over in 2026? (Because it is a community partner and their program.) Is there a way that we could combine the two preschools into one? (There would be issues between our board and theirs. This program is particularly important to them and the community and also these are two large groups of students, and the programs serve different purposes and needs.) Would there be enough room at Friendship Station to house both programs? (No.) We get revenue from the Friendship Station students. (No.) We could reconsider what we charge for rent. Geographically, where GELP is located, there is a high percentage of Mill Creek and Fabyan students attending. I do hear that Friendship Station is more conveniently located. We rent space to Mid Valley, so is that an acceptable compensation for the facility today because I think we are under charging them? (This is different because our kids go to Mid Valley, and it is a formal cooperative.). What if you moved GELP into Heartland to be more centralized and then rearrange the borders of Mill Creek, Heartland, and Fabyan? Could this be a consideration? (There are a wide variety of potential approaches that could be taken when shifting boundaries) What about just switching locations with Friendship Station? (Theoretically, you could do that, but then they are passing through our school, and it does not solve our other problem.) This seems like one of those situations in which the current arrangement might be better than potential alternatives. What we need to do is live with what we have for now and slowly try to improve it by starting conversations with the Park District about the rent and a long-term runway for them. We could then come back and talk about a boundary study. Have we thought about changing our program at GELP by maybe offering full-day childcare like Friendship Station does? (While we might want full day for select kids this would not be a long term plan for GELP...we provide education, not childcare.) Is GELP two sessions a day? (Yes.) So, if we went to full day, we would not have space? (Correct.) If you did go to full day for the four-year-olds, could you spread them out by putting them in different buildings? (That is something that we could look at but would have different barriers.) Has anyone looked at the students academically coming out of GELP and Friendship Station? (We have looked at it, but the curriculum is different.) We need to tell people there will be no boundary change in the immediate future. Andy will prepare a presentation to the Board/community for the fall.

He touched briefly on right sizing enrollment at the middle and high schools.

At 8:20 p.m., the board took a short break.

At 8:25 p.m., the board returned from their break.

We have talked a little about the staffing structure and we will begin with some of our support staff next year. Instead of saying here is this band and here are the jobs that go in this band, we want to align our positions to a pay standard and have a matrix that we can compare that to that gives ranges for each position. We do not want to shoehorn to try to figure out which positions go together. We want a standard transparent standard for each role that we have. We want to map every position to this standard occupational classification system and there is data from the federal government that we can look at to figure out where a position fits in. We can look to see what the pay range is for that position in the business sector or the education sector. Once we do that, we can determine pay ranges for each or those positions and then that becomes the framework or handbook for those roles. When we have that information, then we can determine the Geneva pay range for this job based on all this data, as well as potential increases and if the supervisor has potential for additional increases if we were to do that.

Board comments, questions, concerns: What you are going to find is that it is harder to pair the sectors, but it will be easier with the regional sector. (We have looked at these sector ranges that are based regionally.) Is there a known matrix where these salaries are? (Yes.) Have we started to look at any of this data, and are we going to be way behind? (I think there will be some positions where we see we are behind. This will help us standardize something we have been piece meal together. What some staff envision with us fixing this is that their role is more important.) The government data is great for a snapshot in time to start your process. It is too slow when it comes to looking at this data yearly. My fear is that this data could end up going away, but you could hire a consultant.

George Petmezas has done an excellent job taking the lead on cultural competency and identifying what needs to be fixed. The group started with the elementary to identify a myriad of things we do and have started to produce that common list. We are doing excellent work in this area, but we just need to look at it and systematize it. Next year we are looking to start with common reading materials, common experiences, and a district-wide culture fair with the Geneva Public Library.

Board comments, questions, concerns: Have you had any negative feedback with cultural competency? No. There was some discomfort at the last meeting during the AE presentation, and the ELL students came in and had to stand against the wall. Are we sticking with the basement as our home base for meetings? (Yes, and we need to get better about limiting how many presentations we have in one evening.)

Mrs. Sims is leading a lot of excellent work being done with College and Career Pathways. The Fox Valley Career Center (FVCC) has a new director starting soon. We are looking to expand some formal career pathway courses. Some will be in partnership with FVCC, and some will be in partnership with Waubesa Community College. Education is the first pathway, and we will be offering this very soon. We are also exploring an opportunity for a Certified Nurse Assistant Program (CNA). This program is extremely popular at the FVCC. There is no reason we could not host a CNA program here in Geneva and include students from Batavia and St. Charles. The last thing we are looking at is transitioning the budget model to start improving and expanding some of these programs. Any funds leftover from tuition, are being reimbursed to the district instead of planning ahead to build new things.

Board comments, questions, concerns: Have we ever considered, for the 20% of our students that are not going to college or not furthering their education, having a job fair at GHS? (One thing we should have next year is a presentation from the career counselor on some of the things that they do.)

Dr. Barrett has been trying to get out to different events to be visible by the community. It can be challenging as some folks are realizing that he is accessible and coming to him with issues he probably would not have heard about. This is something that needs to be worked on. There has been improvement with our calendar practices by having events on the calendar where the community and parents can access them. Sandy Riley has been collaborating with the team at GHS on their communication practices.

Board comments, questions, concerns: How do we make our building administrators more accessible? (Some are better at it than others, but we are working on it.)

### 3. Retreat Planning & Scheduling for 2025-26

Dr. Barrett mentioned the retreats that are scheduled for the 2025-26 school year. He is wondering if they are what the board wants. Is Friday a good day, is the time okay, and is it the right time of year to have them? He asked the board to think about this. He also asked about having topics for each retreat meeting.

Board comments, questions, concerns: I was not aware that it would appropriate to have an outside speaker come in to speak on a specific topic. (That is what is usually done.) I am not referring to an IASB person coming out. We should consider outside speakers, as well as internal speakers. Maybe an option would be to look at the topics that are offered at the November conference and then pair those down for a one hour discussion. (We can absolutely do that.) May is not the best month, because there is a lot going on and we have

two board meetings scheduled. (This is also a busy time as the superintendent. A month earlier or later might be better.) June would work. Are we good with Friday? (Yes.) Leave it as two days and if we need to cancel one we can. One topic that I think we should talk about is succession planning and what our administrative team looks like for the next couple of years. What are we looking for in our administrators? Do we want someone from the outside? Do we want a better mix of diversity? These are just a few questions to consider. I would hope for any administrative position that we have at least one outside person being interviewed.

4. **EXECUTIVE SESSION TO CONSIDER MATTERS PERTAINING TO APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, OR DISCIPLINE, PERFORMANCE, OR DISMISSAL OF SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVE AS INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS IN A PARK, RECREATIONAL, OR EDUCATIONAL SETTING, OR SPECIFIC VOLUNTEERS OF THE PUBLIC BODY OR LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE PUBLIC BODY, INCLUDING HEARING TESTIMONY ON A COMPLAINT LODGED AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE, A SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL WHO SERVES AS AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR IN A PARK, RECREATIONAL, OR EDUCATIONAL SETTING, OR A VOLUNTEER OF THE PUBLIC BODY OR AGAINST LEGAL COUNSEL FOR THE PUBLIC BODY TO DETERMINE ITS VALIDITY. HOWEVER, A MEETING TO CONSIDER AN INCREASE IN COMPENSATION TO A SPECIFIC EMPLOYEE THAT IS SUBJECT TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WAGE INCREASE TRANSPARENCY ACT MAY NOT BE CLOSED AND MUST BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC [5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)].**

At 9:04 p.m., motion by Cabeen, second by Radlinski, to go into executive session to consider matters pertaining to appointment, employment, compensation, or discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine validity. However, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee that is subject to the local government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and must be open to the public body.

At 9:12 p.m., the Board returned to open session.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:15 p.m., motion by Ansari second by Choi and with unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ PRESIDENT  
(Date)

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_