

MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING  
Of the Board of Education  
School District No. 96  
Held on Wednesday, January 21, 2026  
Hauser Jr. High School  
Riverside, IL

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

20-584 A. President Wesley Muirheid called the Regular Business Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and on roll call, the following members were recorded as being present:

	Mr. Barsotti
	Ms. Gunn
	Ms. Kachlic
	Mr. Olech
	Mr. Hunt
	Ms. Claps
	Mr. Muirheid
Absent:	None

Also in attendance were Superintendent Martha Ryan-Toye, Interim Director of Finance and Operations Mark Kuzniewski, Director of Technology Molly Marquardt, Director of Teaching and Learning Angela Dolezal, Director of Special Education and Student Services Nora Geraghty, Director of Facilities and Maintenance Zachary Pros, Central Principal Pete Gatz, Central teachers Allison King and Aarti Govani, several Central students involved in the Best Buddies program, the student presenters' parents and families, Hauser teacher Lena Mackley, her family, the recording clerk to the Board of Education, a videographer from Riverside TV and several staff members.

B. Public Comment/Response.

There was no public comment.

C. Changes to the Agenda.

There are no changes to tonight's meeting agenda.

D. Superintendent's Report.

1. Student Presenters - Central Elementary School.

- Central Principal Pete Gatz introduced Ms. Allison King, Ms. Aarti Govani, and their students, who presented on Central's Best Buddies program.
- Best Buddies participants introduced themselves to the board of education and shared their rationale for participating in this program.
- The presentation closed with the board members asking the students and teachers a few questions.

2. National Board Certification - Hauser Teacher, Lena Mackley.

- Superintendent Ryan-Toye shared with the board that Hauser Teacher Lena Mackley received National Board certification. National Board Certification is the most respected professional certification available in education and provides numerous benefits to teachers, students, and schools. It was designed to develop, retain, and recognize accomplished teachers and to generate

ongoing improvement in schools nationwide. The board presented Ms. Mackley with a certificate, and she received a round of applause. She shared a brief speech regarding this accomplishment.

20-585 E. Approval of Consent Agenda.

The Secretary to the Board of Education read the Consent Agenda items aloud.

A motion was made by Mr. Barsotti and supported by Mr. Hunt to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion carried the following roll call vote:

Ayes:	Ms. Claps Mr. Olech Mr. Barsotti Mr. Hunt Ms. Gunn Ms. Kachlic Mr. Muirheid
Absent:	None
Nays:	None
Abstain:	None

F. Riverside Education Council.

- There were no comments from the Riverside Education Council.

G. Board Member Comments.

- There were no Board member comments.

20-586 H. Old Business.

1. Approval of Blythe Park Playground Bid - Action Item.

A motion was made by Mr. Barsotti and supported by Mr. Hunt to accept Vistara's recommendation to award a contract of \$386,785 to D & J Landscaping as presented.

It was noted that the value of the playground equipment to be purchased from the Cooperative will be added to this contract at a later date.

The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes:	Mr. Olech Mr. Barsotti Mr. Hunt Ms. Gunn Ms. Kachlic Ms. Claps Mr. Muirheid
Absent:	None
Nays:	None
Abstain:	None

2. Approval of Hauser Jr. High School's Windows Bid - Action Item.

A motion was made by Ms. Gunn and supported by Mr. Barsotti to accept Vistara's recommendation to award a contract of \$1,129,519 to Krull Windows, as presented.

The general allowance was clarified for this summer project. The Central/Hauser campus will be off limits for summer school this year.

The motion carried on the following roll call vote:

Ayes:	Mr. Hunt Ms. Gunn Ms. Kachlic Ms. Claps Mr. Olech Ms. Barsotti Mr. Muirheid
Absent:	None
Nays:	None
Abstain:	None

I. New Business/Discussion.

1. Strategic Plan Proposed Overview.

- District 96 has partnered with Educational Leadership Solutions to facilitate the development of our 2026–2031 Strategic Plan. This collaborative process will define our district's growth and priorities for the next five years.
- Developing the core team was discussed. A diverse core team of approximately 45 members will lead this effort, ensuring a comprehensive range of perspectives.
- The team includes:
  - Dan Hunt, Marlowe Kachlic, and Matt Olech will be the Board of Education members.
  - District Leadership - TBD.
  - Certified staff members from Early Childhood, EL, Special Education, and all school buildings - TBD.
  - Parents, community members - TBD.
  - Hauser students (grades 6 & 7) - TBD.
- Timeline & Process - The Core Team will meet three times to synthesize feedback from a broad-based family and staff survey with their own professional insights to draft the final plan.
- **Session 1:** February 24, 2026
- **Session 2:** March 11, 2026
- **Session 3:** April 8, 2026
- **Time:** 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM
- **Location:** Hauser Library
- Next Steps - The Board of Education will review the draft of the strategic plan in late spring, with final approval anticipated by the end of the 2025–2026 school year.
- Implementation of this new plan will begin in **August 2026**.
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- 2. Proposed Draft Public School Calendar 2026-2027.
  - Director of Teaching and Learning Angela Dolezal shared highlights of the draft 2026-2027 school calendar.
  - Each year, when drafting the D96 calendar, the goal is to align winter and spring breaks with those of Riverside Brookfield High School (RBHS). The dates on this draft calendar reflect the breaks submitted on the RBHS proposed 2026-2027 calendar. These dates were also discussed with the district leadership team and the REC co-presidents, who also consulted their executive board.

- The recommended student start date is Thursday, August 27, 2026, with an end date of Tuesday, June 8, 2027. Two Institute days, Tuesday, August 25, 2026, and Wednesday, August 26, 2026, would mark the start of the school year for the District 96 staff members.
  - As part of the calendar planning process, summer school dates were also established. Summer school 2026 would run from Monday, July 13, 2026, through Thursday, August 6, 2026.
  - The board held a lengthy discussion about this calendar and concluded that it would best support student learning.
  - The district will communicate this calendar with Riverside Parks & Rec and will highlight the four half-day student attendance days.
  - The draft calendar will be posted on the district's website.
  - This matter will be returned to the board at the February 18th board meeting.
3. PRESS Plus #120 Policies - First Reading.
- Policy chair Stephanie Gunn highlighted this policy bundle according to the bundle's categories:
  - Immigration and Law Enforcement
    - Policy 7:150 – Agency and Law Enforcement Requests. This policy is renamed and rewritten in response to 105 ILCS 5/22-105, added by P.A. 104-288, eff. 1-1-26, requiring districts to establish a policy by 7-1-26 regarding agency and law enforcement requests at school, and for continuous improvement.
  - District Operations and Safety
    - Policy 4:30 – Revenue and Investments. The policy and footnotes are updated in response to the Public Funds Investment Act, 30 ILCS 235/8, amended by P.A. 104-92, eff. 1-1-26, addressing deposit requirements for financial institutions subject to the Ill Community Reinvestment Act.
    - Policy 4:80 – Accounting and Audits. The policy and footnotes are updated in response to 105 ILCS 5/3-7, amended by P.A. 104-261, eff. 1-1-26, requiring school districts to submit copies of their Annual Financial Report (AFR) and audits to their regional superintendent of schools by Oct. 15 each year, and further requiring district audit firms to annually file district AFRs and audits with ISBE by Oct. 15, for continuous improvement.
    - Policy 5:220 – Substitute Teachers. The Legal References are updated in response to 105 ILCS 128/22, added by P.A. 104-198, eff. 1-1-26, requiring districts to provide all substitute personnel with: (1) training on school evacuation drills and law enforcement lockdown drills, and (2) support that includes, at a minimum, the information packet given to employees with district-approved materials outlining evacuation and lockdown procedures.
  - Personnel Issues
    - Policy 2:270- Discrimination and Harassment on the Basis of Race, Color, and National Origin Prohibited. The policy is updated for continuous improvement.
  - Curriculum
    - Policy 6:60 –Curriculum Content. This policy had a question whereby the Board answered “No (Default). Does the Board provide instruction studying the causes and effects of the Irish Famine?”
    - Policy 6:210 – Instructional Materials - This policy had a question whereby the Board answered “YES”. IASB will include the underlined language. The Superintendent shall recommend to the Board for consideration and adoption all textbooks and primary instructional materials and shall include the following information: (1) title, publisher, copyright dates, number of copies desired, and cost; (2) any texts being replaced; and (3) rationale for recommendation. The Superintendent shall approve the selection of all other instructional materials.
    - Policy 6:260 – Complaints about Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs. The policy is updated for continuous improvement in response to Mahmoud v. Taylor, 145 S.Ct. 2332 (2025).

- Student Behavior, Mental Health, and Attendance
  - Policy 7:180 - Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment. The policy, Legal References, and footnotes are updated in response to 105 ILCS 5/22-110, amended by P.A. 104-338, eff. 7-1-26, and renumbered by P.A. 104-391, expanding the bullying definition to prohibit posting or distributing sexually explicit images and, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, expanding the cyberbullying definition to prohibit posting or distributing an unauthorized digital replica.
  - Policy 7:190 - Student Behavior. The policy and footnotes are updated in response to 105 ILCS 5/10-27.1A(b), amended by P.A. 104-174, requiring parent/guardian notification when a student allegedly threatens firearm violence.
  - Policy 7:290 – Suicide and Depression Awareness and Prevention. The policy, Legal References, and footnotes are updated in response to: 1. 105 ILCS 5/27-215, added by P.A. 104-391, requiring education for students on mental health and illness; 2. 105 ILCS 5/27-215, added by P.A. 104-391, adding student protocols for administering youth suicide awareness and prevention education; 3. 105 ILCS 5/10-20.81, amended by P.A. 104-264, eff. 1-1-26, requiring districts to insert the same contact information for suicide prevention helplines required for student ID cards on employee ID cards for employees serving any of grades 6 through 12.
- Progress Report
- Ms. Gunn referenced three topics to look out for: 1) New Law Requires Districts to Offer Mental Health Screenings to Students, 2) New Law Provides Neonatal Intensive Care Leave, and 3) General Assembly Passes OMA/FOIA Bill During Veto Session.
- D96 Edits
  - Policy 2:230 – Public Comments at Board of Education Meeting – After a brief discussion, the board decided to make no changes to this policy.
  - Policy 3:30 - Chain of Command. A new organizational chart was created.
- Additional policies in this bundle include: Policy 2:120, Policy 2:150, Policy 4:10, Policy 4:140, Policy 5:10, Policy 5:90, Policy 5:100, Policy 5:190, Policy 5:200, Policy 5:280, Policy 5:300, Policy 6:20, Policy 6:130, Policy 6:160, Policy 6:280, Policy 6:315, Policy 7:10, Policy 7:70, Policy, Policy 7:310, Policy 7:340, and Policy 8:30.
- This matter will be returned to the board for second reading and approval at the February 18th board meeting.

J. Public Comment/Response.

There was no public comment.

K. Future Meeting Dates.

- February 4, 2026 - Committee of the Whole, 7:00 p.m. - multi-purpose room at Hollywood Elementary School.
- February 18, 2026 - Regular Business Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the Hauser Auditorium (The Board will enter into Closed Session at 6:15 p.m., if necessary, and return to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.).
- March 4, 2026 - Committee of the Whole, 7:00 p.m. - multi-purpose room at Ames Elementary School.
- March 18, 2026 - Regular Business Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the Hauser Learning Resource Center (The Board will enter into Closed Session at 6:15 p.m., if necessary, and return to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.).
- April 1, 2026 - Committee of the Whole Meeting - **Cancelled**.

L. Information Items.

The Board received updates and information on the following monthly reports:

1. District 96 Student Enrollment Report.

2. District 96 Absence Report.
3. District 96 Substitute Usage Report.
4. FOIA Requests.
5. Financial Statements.
6. Legal Bills
7. Architect Bills.
8. School Lunches Served Report.

M. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

January 21, 2026

Date Recorded

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Date Approved

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President, Board of Education

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Secretary, Board of Education