



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

February 9, 2026

Call to Order

Board President Rogers called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. on February 9, 2026, at the Benjamin School District Administrative Center, located at 28W250 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, Dennis Peterson, Don Sutenbach, Eric Rogers and Gina Vlantis.

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.

Pledge of Allegiance

President Rogers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approve Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as presented. This motion, made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None

Approval of Draft Minutes (Roll Call Vote)

Approval of Draft Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting of January 12, 2026.

Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting of January 12, 2026. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Don Sutenbach, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Approval of Draft Minutes from the Executive Session Meeting of January 12, 2026.

Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Executive Session Meeting of January 12, 2025. This motion, made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Presentations

Student Theater Performance: Prior to conducting board business, board members made their way to the Benjamin Multipurpose room, where they enjoyed a preview of this year's theater production, Matilda. The cast and crew delivered a phenomenal performance.



Reports

Learning and Teaching

Dr. Fitzgerald provided an update on Teaching and Learning, highlighting professional learning, assessment preparation, and instructional planning. Preparations are complete for the February 27 countywide Institute Day, during which staff will participate in both in-district and out-of-district professional development activities.

The district is preparing for spring state assessments. Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) testing will begin March 16, and Illinois Science Assessment (ISA) testing will begin April 14, following spring break. Staff have also completed high school articulation meetings with West Chicago Community High School to support a smooth transition for eighth-grade students.

The district continues to review statewide guidance to strengthen mathematics instruction and encourages families to participate in the 5Essentials Survey. Learning Walks across grade levels remain ongoing to support continuous improvement.

Operations Report

Dr. Filas provided an update on the Business and Operations Department, including an overview of the FY27 budget outlook. The preliminary projection reflects modest revenue growth alongside anticipated cost increases in transportation, custodial services, and food service. Staffing costs continue to be managed within established salary structures to maintain fiscal responsibility.

Operational priorities remain focused on school safety planning, transportation funding advocacy, and continued infrastructure and security enhancements. Work orders remain on schedule, and two-step authentication has been implemented districtwide to further strengthen digital security systems.

Superintendent Report

Dr. McGill shared an update on the district's strategic planning efforts, highlighting progress toward defining a clear Profile of a Graduate and refining the district's mission and vision to reflect the transferable skills students need for long-term success. During the January 22 Vision Retreat, stakeholders worked collaboratively to revise these statements, with particular emphasis on essential skills such as effective communication.

The district also celebrated several recent community highlights, including a Benjamin Choir performance at a Chicago Steel hockey game, strong attendance at the "Every Hand Has a Voice" Art Show, and record sales at the Bengal Café.

Dr. McGill concluded by highlighting upcoming GPS Parent Series events designed to support families:

- **February 10:** You Are Not Alone: Navigating Your Child's Mental Health with Wisdom from Experts and Real Families
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- **February 19:** Bright Kids Who Can't Keep Up: Strategies to Improve Academic Performance and Processing

Board Committee Reports

PTA

Member Sutenbach provided a PTA update, recognizing PTA President Molley for her outstanding leadership and dedication. Recent PTA-sponsored events experienced strong participation, including more than 100 tickets sold for the Chicago Steel hockey game and 88 tickets sold for the roller skating event. Upcoming events include the first-ever Evergreen "Glow Night" on February 20 and the eighth-grade dance on February 13.

LEND

Member Peterson provided a LEND update, sharing information regarding a new two-year high school world language requirement scheduled to begin in the 2028–2029 school year. The requirement will include options for students to demonstrate proficiency. He also shared updates on proposed legislation related to a statewide school cell phone ban and potential 4% funding reductions to non-K–12 state departments.

Finance Committee

Member Engstrom provided an update on the Finance Committee, including the impact of state funding prorations on mandated categorical funding. An update was also shared on the District's capital plan, noting completion of the Evergreen addition, with the final invoice coming in \$1.2 million under budget.

The Committee reviewed two facilities items: asbestos abatement in three classrooms and replacement of the gymnasium audio system. In addition, members discussed the influence of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) on both District revenues and expenditures, followed by recommendations related to licensed and support staff compensation.

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 Dennis Peterson and seconded by Don Sutenbach, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Nays: None



Action Items (Roll Call Vote)

Approval of the 2026-2027 School Calendar

Motion to approve the 2026-2027 School Calendar, as presented. This motion made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Vince Engstrom, passed

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Approval of the Resolution to Transfer Funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Capital Projects Fund.

Motion to approve the Resolution to transfer funds from the Operations & Maintenance Fund to the Capital Projects Fund, as presented. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Don Sutenbach, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Approval of the Midwest Environmental Consulting Services Asbestos Bid

Motion to approve the Midwest Environmental Consulting Services Asbestos Bid, as presented. This motion, made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

The Board acknowledges public testimony as an important component of transparency and community engagement.

Ms. Moore addressed student privacy considerations related to board communications and concerns regarding educational equity, including class-size disparities and transparency in advanced-class placement criteria.

Mr. Corro provided public testimony regarding a student safety incident, expressing concerns related to supervision, communication, and the urgency of the response. He requested the Board consider additional safety measures to improve student monitoring and security.

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.



Student Enrollment

Dr. McGill discussed an email regarding a new family moving into the district and inquiring about the district's enrollment process.

Retirement

Dr. McGill also recognized Ms. Tina Quealy, preschool teacher, for her 18 years of dedicated service to Benjamin School District 25. Ms. Quealy will be retiring at the end of the school year.

Motion to Enter Executive Session

Motion to enter into Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. This motion, made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Gina Vlantis.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Motion to Return to Open Session

Motion to return to open session at 9:18 p.m. This motion was made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Dennis Peterson. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach
Dennis Peterson, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis
Nays: None

Adjournment (Voice Vote)

Motion to adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting at 9:20 p.m. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Respectfully submitted by:
Solly Garcia, Board Recorder

President, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education

Recorded: February 9, 2026
Approved: March 9, 2026