

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

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 Monday, January 26, 2026, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Harlem High School, Auditorium, One Huskie Circle, Machesney Park, IL 61115

Call to Order of Public Hearing at 5:30 PM by Mike Sterling

1. Roll Call Kurt Thompson, Aaron McKnight, Diane McKinney, Rebecca Carlson, Diana Johnson, Evelyn Meeks Absent: Mike Sterling
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 Communication & Community Relations
2. Pledge of Allegiance led by Kurt Thompson
3. Statement from Board President- Kurt outlined the meetings purpose, guidelines for public comments and time limits for speakers
4. Statement from Administration-no statement made
5. Input and Comments from the Community
 - Mr. Jake Hubert discussed the banding system in the Kinnikinnick school district and it benefits for his daughter's academic success; conducted a survey of six teachers and parents, none of whom preferred a neighborhood schools or disliked the grade band system; he support option four.
 - Ms. Mary Hunter expressed her concern about the proposed changed to the curriculum and academic expectations for kindergarten teachers; discusses the logistic issues of managing young students' needs such as toileting and clothing changes and the impact of losing classroom bathrooms. She urges the board to preserve Parker Center for the younger students.
 - Mr. Don Campbell expressed his opposition to the closure of Maple and the lack of alternatives presented by the Board; he emphasized the emotional and the community impact of closing of Maple, loss of familiar environment for students and the potential for increase anxiety and behavioral issues.
 - Ms. Piper Campbell reiterated her opposition to the school's closure and the lack of community support the decision; highlighted unique features at Maple; she urged the board reconsider the closure of Maple
 - Ms. Sophia O'Rourke addressed the potential disruption to the busing is Olson Park and Maple are closed; concerned about the increase number of buses needed and inefficiency this may cause; asked for more thoughtful approach for the consolidation.
 - Ms. Cecilia Jones shared her positive experiences she received for the Olson Park staff; along with the personal struggles and how effective the interventions were; she asked the board to preserve the community of Olson Park

-Ms. Jennifer Hartmann expressed her deep gratitude for the supportive environment provided by the school; she emphasized the importance of the relationships and the community built at Olson Park; called for transparency with the community throughout the consolidation process.

-Ms. Megan Schulz requested better communication from the board and more transparency in the decision-making process; lack of communication from the board and the need for regular updates; calls for a clear explanation of the challenges faced by the District and specific steps being taken to address them; emphasized the importance of opportunities for advocacy and support for the District

-Ms. Millie Schulz shared her love for Olson Park; shared a story about the school, being a good friend and the desire to stay at the school

-Mr. Miles Schulz shared that he likes his teachers and his friends and asked the Board not to take that away from him

-Ms. Jaime Richart addressed the proposed changes to the ALP program, the unique needs of the ALP students how it requires a different curriculum and structure than honors classes. She calls for the preservation of the program and emphasized the impact of eliminating the program.

-Ms. Christine Franklin addressed the concern about the safety and open concept of the school; the lack of exploring other options; emphasized the importance of maintaining a consistent and familiar environment for students, especially special needs students; calls for a more thoughtful approach during the consolidated process

-Ms. Sara Redner expressed her sadness over the proposed closure of Olson Park; emphasized the importance of the ALP; calls for a more equitable consolidated plan

-Ms. Katie Fowler is concerned about the impact of the proposed consolidation plan on self-contained programs and early childhood; the challenges of transitioning students with special needs; calls for a more equitable consolidation plan.

-Mr. Tyler Fowler highlighted the need for a transparent approach with the consolidation plan; calls for the board to consider option one and prioritize the needs of students and families.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

1st Johnson 2nd McKnight

All voted aye; Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 6:10PM

Respectfully Submitted

Pam Cook

Recording Secretary

ATTEST

President

Date: _____

Secretary