

Minutes of Special Board Meeting for Building Closures for the Purpose of District Consolidation

The Board of Education Harlem Consolidated School District # 122

A Special Board Meeting for Building Closures for the Purpose of District Consolidation of the Board of Education of Harlem Consolidated School District was held Tuesday, January 27, 2026, beginning at 5:00 PM in the Harlem Administration Center - Board Room 8605 North Second St Machesney Park, Illinois 61115.

1. Call to Order of Special Board meeting at 5:00 p.m. by Mike Sterling
2. Roll Call—Mike Sterling, Kurt Thompson, Aaron McKnight, Diane McKinney, Rebecca Carlson, Diana Johnson, Evelyn Meeks
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
3. Pledge of Allegiance led by Mike Sterling
4. Approval of Agenda
1st Thompson 2nd McKnight
Thompson, McKnight, McKinney, Carlson, Johnson, Meeks, Sterling- 7 ayes
Motion Carried
5. Harlem School District Mission Statement:
The Mission of the Harlem Consolidated School District, as a vital part of the community, is to help diverse learners realize their unlimited potential by providing an educational program dedicated to academic excellence and the development of strong character in a safe and respectful learning environment.
6. Comments from the Community
 - Mr. Don Campbell expressed his concern about the \$3M debt and the number of households in the District and offers help to brainstorm how to keep schools open; a lack of comprehensive surveys and communication about the options being considered; emphasized the importance of community involvement
 - Ms. Caitlin MacRoy advocates for the site school option citing its benefits for students and resources for the building; highlights the importance of communication and the district's mission to provide a safe and respectful learning environment; she urges the board to consider the best interest of the student in their decision making.
 - Mr. Jeremy Hissong concerned about a bus incident and the lack of communication to parents; emphasized the importance of communication for the safety of students and the community; points out potential risks of longer bus rides and younger children being alone on buses; reiterates the need for better communication and transparency from the District; asking the board to make the right decision when choosing the consolidation plan

-Ms. Lynnette Hofmann asked the board to speak louder and clearer when having conversations.

7. Administrative Reports

A. Recommendation to approve building closure of Maple Elementary School and Olson Park Elementary School for the purpose of District Consolidation

-Rebecca Carlson inquired about the reasons for choosing Maple over Windsor, noting was it the proximity and the traffic concerns. Dr. Yarbrough explained the decision-making process and the goal of dispersing student more evenly across the district.

-Diana Johnson clarified that closing of Maple and Olson Park is the only thing that is being voted on. Mike Sterling agreed and a consensus will be on the option.

8. Action Items

A. Approve the building closure of Maple Elementary School and Olson Park Elementary School for the purpose of District Consolidation

1st Johnson 2nd Sterling

Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, McKinney, Carlson, Johnson, Meeks- 7 ayes
Motion Carried

9. Announcements and Discussion:

Mike Sterling asked for a consensus on a consolidation plan

Aaron McKnight chose option one

Diane McKinney chose option four

Rebecca Carlson chose option one

Diana Johnson chose option four

Evelyn Meeks chose option one

Kurt Thompson chose option four

Mike Sterling chose option one

Consensus is for Option One- Neighborhood Schools

Mike Sterling reflected on all the changes that have happened in the District, and suggested a need for longer lasting future plan.

Kurt Thompson and Mike Sterling expressed their support for the decisions made, and acknowledging the difficulty and importance of the choices.

10. Motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Employment of Personnel (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1),

1st Thompson 2nd McKnight

Johnson, Meeks, Sterling, Thompson, McKnight, McKinney, Carlson- 7 ayes
Motion Carried

The Board took a brief recess at 5:20PM and went into Closed Session at 5:24PM; returned to Open Session at 5:55PM

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 5:55PM

1st McKinney 2nd McKnight

Thompson, McKnight, McKinney, Carlson, Johnson, Meeks, Sterling -7 ayes
Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 5:55PM

Respectfully Submitted by,

Pam Cook

Recording Secretary

ATTEST

President

Date: _____

Secretary