

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 33, DUPAGE COUNTY, WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS  
December 5, 2024

The regular meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Rita Balgeman at 7:02 p.m. at Lemay Middle School, 238 E. Hazel St., West Chicago, Illinois. On roll call, the following members were present: Mrs. Rita Balgeman, Mr. Chad McLean, Mr. Tom Doyle, Mrs. Felicia Gills, and Mrs. Sandra Garcia. Absent: Mrs. Morgan Banasiak and Mrs. Janette Hernandez.

**ALSO PRESENT**

Kristina Davis, Superintendent; Lea DeLuca, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; Karen Apostoli, Executive Director of Business and Operations; Sarah Burnett, Director of Human Resources; Fred Cadena, Director of Facilities and Grounds; Catherine Park, Director of Assessment and Accountability; Matt Ryan, Director of Technology; Gina Steinbrecher, Assistant Director of Communications; Jenny Brunke, Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning; Brena Vishanoff, Principal at Pioneer Preschool; and Leah Nelson, Assistant Principal at Pioneer Preschool.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Rita Balgeman led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ADDITIONS/CHANGES  
TO THE AGENDA**

Item XVI Reason 2-Student discipline was removed from the agenda.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

*Tax Levy*

The Board of Education held a public hearing on the 2024 tax levy. Mrs. Karen Apostoli, Executive Director of Business and Operations, reviewed the levy process, mentioning that at its November 21, 2024 meeting, the Board of Education approved the intent to levy taxes for the upcoming fiscal year. Notice of this public hearing was published in a local West Chicago newspaper on November 24, 2024, per State law, and posted on the District 33 website. On December 19, 2024, the Board of Education will vote to approve an aggregate Tax Levy for the upcoming fiscal year. If any community member would like to comment publicly on the 2024 Property Tax levy, please do so now. No public comment was made. This concludes the Public Hearing on the 2024 Property Tax levy.

**SHARED AGREEMENTS**

1. *Make decisions according to what is best for ALL District 33 students.*
2. *Respect staff and other board members and their opinions.*
3. *Be willing to see things from the eyes of seven (7) people, not just one (1).*
4. *Allow everyone to complete their thoughts.*
5. *Commit to shared leadership.*
6. *Respect confidentiality.*
7. *Adhere to our belief in our students' full potential and successful future.*

**Strategic Plan Goals***Goal #1 – Student Growth and Achievement**Goal #2 – Learning Culture of Equity, Engagement & Agency**Goal #3 – Professional Culture of Teamwork & Continuous Improvement**Goal #4 – Family Engagement & Community Partnerships**Goal #5 - Effective and Innovative Use of Resources***SHARED AGREEMENTS****REFLECTION**

At the July 18, 2013, meeting, the Board of Education finalized their “shared agreements” and agreed to begin each regular board meeting by reflecting on one agreement. The Board revised the shared agreements on November 6, 2014. The agreement's purpose is to help maintain a positive environment in which to conduct board work. Board member Felicia Gills shared her statement: “Simon Sinek said, ‘Our need to belong is not always rational, but it is a constant that exists across all people and all cultures.’”

The need to be loved and to belong is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, and spiritually wired to love, be loved, and belong. When those needs are not met, we don’t function as we are meant to. Some kids break. Fall apart, numb, ache, hurt, ache, or even get sick. Here at D33, we commit to ensuring that in our efforts to uphold and adhere to our belief in all students and their full potential and successful future, they know they belong. Families that move into our district and those born here will know and respond to a sense of belonging in all our schools.

We have made great achievements over the last decade in our bilingual programs and Middle School Clubs. Let's keep the momentum going and continue to build a great community with phenomenal family engagement with all.”

**RECOGNITION/SHOWCASE PRESENTATION**

## Recognition

*Pioneer Preschool Superintendent for the Day*

Preschoolers participated in Superintendent for the day for the first time with boundless energy and emerging leadership skills. On November 13, 2024, students Jahyr, Henry, Charlotte, and Maizy were superintendents for the Day at Pioneer Preschool. The students met with Mrs. Davis and observed several classrooms. Jahyr and Henry attended the board meeting and agreed with Mrs. Leah Nelson, Assistant Principal, that their peers follow the “we are safe, we are kind, and we work together” expectations. Superintendent Davis thanked the students and their parents and looks forward to seeing what great leaders they will become.

## Showcase

*Showcase - Pioneer Preschool - Developmentally Appropriate Play*

Leah Nelson, Assistant Principal, presented a video examining student play on a regular school day. Appropriate self-directed play can be a powerful tool in teaching academic concepts in preschool. “When children engage in self-directed play, educators and parents see huge growth in the students' creativity and imagination and see explosions in language development,” said Principal Brenda Vishanoff. Growth is also seen in social-emotional

skills, such as playing well with others and building relationships. Students are free to choose where to play and what to play. While playing, children learn about emotions, problem-solving, strengthening friendships, sharing, taking turns, and being kind.

Board Salutes

The Board Salutes will be a standing item on the agenda starting with the February 3, 2022, board meeting. The Board of Education would like to recognize individuals of the District 33 community - which includes all staff members, students, bus drivers, parents/guardians, and guardians - for actions that build a positive culture and climate in District 33. This “shout-out” will become part of the official Board minutes under Board Salutes on the bi-weekly agendas.

**Salute to:** Emily Prowell, Teacher, Pioneer Preschool  
**Submitted by:** JoBeth Wilson, Social Worker, Pioneer Preschool  
“Emily has jumped into our preschool program as a first-year self-contained teacher. Her positive attitude and effortless flexibility have been so amazing to watch and see how much progress our students are making. She takes on new challenges with the confidence most veteran teachers strive for. She works collaboratively with her team, where everyone feels confident in their role within the class. She's a delight to work with and is going to be a leader in our program!”

Presentation

Presentation - Literacy Pilot Update

Lea DeLuca, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, provided the Board with an update on the piloting of Amplify. All of the schools have teachers who volunteered to pilot the program. Indian Knoll has a complete school piloting and Currier school with all except for 3 teachers. A timeline and next steps were also provided. A final recommendation will be brought to the Board in early February.

**E.T.A.W.C. STATEMENT**

No E.T.A.W.C statement at this time.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment at this time.

**SUPERINTENDENT NEWS**

Pioneer Preschool Superintendent News

The Superintendent News is to update the board and community on some of the many programs and activities occurring in the schools and the departments determined to help us accomplish the goals of the District Strategic Plan.

**Goal #3: Professional Culture of Teamwork & Continuous Improvement**

- Preschool is focusing on increasing collaboration and teamwork among the staff.
- Their full-day, half-day, and self-contained teachers can plan together, visit each other’s classrooms in learning walks, and collaborate in PLCs.
- Preschool now has office space for all SSTs to have job-like offices as well as collaboration spaces.
- Knowing that the paraprofessionals take the 5 Essentials Survey and their experience can be different than the certified

staff, we have created specific ways to engage them in discussion on improving specific areas of the 5 Essentials survey.

**APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Doyle, second by Garcia, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

Approve Current Expenditures

...approved the list of bills dated November 25, 2024, through December 5, 2024, in the amount of \$970,587.91;

Approve Personnel Items

...approve the personnel report as follows:

0 Administration:

0 Certified:

3 Classified: Julissa Bustamante, Family Liaison at Pioneer Preschool, effective December 4, 2024; Viviana Armas, Lunch Supervisor at Pioneer Preschool, effective December 2, 2024; Mia Smith, Paraprofessional at Wegner, effective December 4, 2024;

1 Resignations: Rocio Recendez, Clerical Aide at Wegner, effective November 30, 2024;

2 Retirement: Eric Godoy, Orchestra Teacher at LMS, effective June 12, 2025; Gina Steinbrecher, Assistant Director of Communication and Community Relations at ESC, effective February 28, 2025;

1 Leave: Audrina Hernandez, at Gary, effective December 2, 2024-January 6, 2024.

On roll call, the following members voted aye: Doyle, Garcia, Balgeman, McLean, and Gills. Nays: None.

Motion carried: 5 ayes, 0 nays.

**DISCUSSION OF NEW / ONGOING BUSINESS WITH POSSIBLE ACTION**

Collective Liability Insurance Cooperative (CLIC)

The Board of Education received information to confirm the intent to renew the contract with Collective Liability Insurance Cooperative (CLIC) for the 2025-26 school year, which begins July 1, 2025. The board will review the information and vote at the December 19, 2024, board meeting.

Director/Assistant Director of Marketing, Communications, and Public Relations  
Job Description

The administrator in this position is retiring at the end of February. A recommendation of flexibility to keep the post as Assistant Director or advance to Director level, depending on the candidates' experience and Education. The Board will vote at the December 19, 2024 board meeting.

Finance/Facilities

Karen Apostoli, Executive Director of Business and Operations, stated that the district has received \$108,379.00 in the Early Childhood Block Grant, \$16,853.00 in Other State Programs, \$244,592.65 in the National School Lunch Program, \$100,260.19 in School Breakfast Program, \$11,401.00 in Federal Special Education PreK IDEA Flow Through, and \$5,942.00 in Title II-Teacher Quality since the last board meeting.

Board Listening Posts Kristina Davis, Superintendent, continued the discussion of the listening posts that will start in January. The Board will vote on amending the locations for the Board of Education meetings at the December 19, 2024, board meeting.

Recap of the Joint Annual Conference Kristina Davis led the discussion on recapping the different sessions board members and administrators attended during the Joint Annual Conference.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Birth to 3 Family Liaison Job Description Motioned by McLean, seconded by Garica to approve the new job title of Family Engagement Specialist and updated job description. On roll call, the following members voted aye: McLean, Garcia, Gills, Doyle, and Banasiak. Nays: None. Motion carried: 5 ayes, 0 nays.

Data Backup System Motioned by Doyle, seconded by Gills to approve the purchase of a complete backup solution provided by Abtech Technologies/Dell. On roll call, the following members voted aye: Doyle, Gills, Garcia, Balgeman, and McLean. Nays: None. Motion carried: 5 ayes, 0 nays.

December 2024 Levy The Board of Education will vote on the 2024 Levy at the December 19, 2024, board meeting.

Property Tax Abatement The Board of Education will vote on the property tax abatement at the December 19, 2024, board meeting.

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

Parent Participation at the Parent-Teacher Conferences The Board of Education received information on the parent participation in the district per school during the November parent/teacher conferences. The district's overall average attendance was 83%.

Wegner Principal Search Sarah Burnet, Director of Human Resources, provided information regarding the Wegner Elementary Principal search process. The search process will be collaborative and include the voices of staff, parents, and students in the Wegner community.

Current Job Listing The Board received the most recent posting of available job positions in School District 33.

Suggested Items for Next Board Meeting No suggested items at this time.

Board Outreach No Board outreach at this time.

Parking Lot No parking lot at this time.

**REPORT OF DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

SASED

Kristina Davis, Superintendent, shared that SASED is engaging in the process of a utilization study. They are looking to find a way to consolidate locations or minimize the ride time for the students. They are still in the beginning stages and as they move forward more information will be provided.

Open Comments

No open comments at this time.

**REVIEW OF UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

The Board of Education members reviewed upcoming meetings.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Motion by McLean, second by Garcia, to go into closed session at 8:21 p.m. to discuss (1) the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of a specific employee(s), specific independent contractors, specific volunteers, or District legal counsel: however, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee of a public body that is subject to the Local Government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and shall be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with the Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/2c) (1), amended by P.A. 101-459. On roll call, the following members voted aye: McLean, Garcia, Gills, Doyle, and Balgeman. Nays: None. Motion carried: 5 ayes, 0 nays.

ROLL CALL

On roll call at 8:37 p.m., the following members were present: Balgeman, Doyle, McLean, Gills, and Garcia.  
Absent: Banasiak and Hernandez

ALSO PRESENT

Kristina Davis, Superintendent.

Out of Closed Session

Motion by McLean, second by Gills, to reconvene to open session at 9:08 p.m. The President took a voice vote and declared the motion passed.

**ACTION ITEMS FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION**

Approve Closed Session Minutes

Motion by McLean, second by Gills, to approve closed session minutes as read. The President took a voice vote and declared the motion passed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by McLean, second by Gills, to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m. The President took a voice vote and declared the motion passed.