



Board of Education Meeting Cass School District 63

**District Community Room, 8502 Bailey Road, Darien,
Illinois 60561**

**Tuesday, August 18, 2026
7:00 PM**

Agenda

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Our Mission, Beliefs, and Values

Board Agreements and Protocols

Vision 2025 Strategic Plan

IASB Code of Conduct

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Roll Call

C. Recognition of Audience, Announcements and Correspondence

This is an opportunity to welcome guests, make announcements, and share Board correspondence.

The Board received FOIA requests from the following:

Norah Newell, The Data Branch

Judiciary Series 2

Troy Kingbury, The Data Branch

Crawford Farrington, The Data Branch

Deborah Laughlin, The Data Branch

Frank MacKenzie, The Data Branch

Sophia Price, The Data Branch

Mitchell Vaughn, The Data Branch

Gavin Sanchez, The Data Branch

Sawyer Keaton, The Data Branch

Owen Collins, The Data Branch

D. Student and Staff Spotlight - Introduction of New Faculty and Staff

We would like to recognize our new staff members:

Cheryl Allaire, Concord Elementary Teacher Assistant

Katelyn Finley, Cass Junior High Teacher Assistant
Ryan Kuhlman, Cass Junior High STEAM Teacher (mentor Kristina Patrey)
Toni Lawson, Concord Special Education Teacher (mentor Krista Jamrose)
Sarah Mueller, Concord Speech Pathologist (mentor Sara Zimmerman)
Maddie Ross, Concord Music Teacher (mentor Jessica Ruiz)
Meredith Spiegel, Concord Special Education Teacher (mentor Katie Summers)
Marykate Trabulsy, Concord and Cass Speech Pathologist (mentor Scott Kondraschow)
John Williams, Cass Junior High Evening Custodian

E. Public Comments

This is the first opportunity for any guests to comment, per Board Policy 2:230.

II. **Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda allows for approval of routine action items together in one motion when discussion is typically unnecessary. Upon the request of any Board member, a consent agenda item can be withdrawn and placed on the regular agenda for independent consideration. Questions in advance of the meeting are appreciated in the event any background information needs to be obtained.

- A. Approval of the August 18, 2026 Regular Meeting Agenda
- B. Approval of the June 16, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes
- C. Approval of the July 16, 2026 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
- D. Approval of Personnel Recommendations

The following positions are brought forth as recommendations. I fully support the approval of the personnel recommendations:

Hires

- Julie Bartell, Concord Elementary Long-term Administrative Substitute, at a pay rate of \$700 per day with an estimated timeframe from October 26, 2026, through January 25, 2027.
 - Long-term Administrative Substitute - Megan Conlin's expected maternity leave is from 10.26.26-1.25.27. Last May, Mark Cross started working with Julie Bartell to secure her for this needed leave coverage. If you don't remember, Julie filled Katie's maternity leave at Concord back in the Spring of 2025. Seeing that she did a great job, has familiarity with Concord, and has a desire to fill this needed coverage, we are recommending her for Board approval at a rate of \$700 per day. FYI...
 - This rate was previously shared with Julie by Mark

- Almost two years ago, she was paid \$650 per day. This year's per diem is about a 7.7% increase. While this is above the CPI-U during this same time period, I believe the familiarity and impact she had while here previously warrants this increase. (December 2025 CPI-Urban Consumers was 2.7% and December 2024 was 2.9%).
- Julie has all of the needed paperwork ready to go and I will be meeting with her in the month of September as we discuss expectations while working with us.
- Teacher Assistant - As mentioned in my July 31st communication, we are recommending the approval of Cheryl Allaire as a Teaching Assistant at Concord Elementary. Considering her experience, her hourly rate will be \$25.72.
- Custodian - As mentioned in my July 31st communication, we are recommending the approval of John Williams as a Custodian at Cass Junior High. Considering his experience, his hourly rate will be \$22.50.

- Teacher Assistant - We are recommending the approval of Katelyn Finley as a Teaching Assistant at Cass Junior High at an hourly rate of \$19.00/hour.

Resignations

- Teacher Assistant - On July 13th, we received a resignation email from Maria Raush. Her family has moved and she will be looking for employment closer to her new home. The hiring of Cheryl Allaire will fill this position.
- Teacher Assistant - As shared in the Board update on July 31st, we received a letter of resignation from Danielle Moring. She was a TA at Concord. Danielle shared her gratitude for the opportunities that she had with us during the previous school year. The reason she provided for her resignation is the need to make more money. In talking with Katie Doyle, student needs during the first semester do not necessitate a rush to fill this position. We will likely bring a recommendation in the future to fill the void of this resignation.
- Teacher Assistant - On August 17th, we received a resignation email from Elona Hitaj. Her family has moved and has secured other employment closer to her new home. Katelyn Finley is her recommended replacement.

Future Personnel Needs

On a related note, Christine met with Scott Kondraschow and it was determined that there is a need to fill in some Teacher Assistant coverage that is lacking due to Colette Kaufmann's coverage of Djola Jemin's approved maternity leave to start the school year. Colette is a Teacher Assistant who is also a retired teacher from SASSED. Christine is looking at candidates to bring in a Teacher Assistant for the first

semester to help with the needed coverage. That being said, if we find a strong candidate before our September Board meeting, we will offer them a position, pending official Board approval, and will get them started as soon as we receive the background check and physical documentation. If you have any questions/concerns with this approach, please reach out.

E. Approval of Financial Reports

Following are the financial reports for both July and August, including the addition of the treasurer's report provided by Mike McLean to reconcile the end of month balances, and the inclusion of activity fund reports for each school.

If you have any questions about the financial reports or the district bills, please contact me no later than Monday. I want to make sure I have time to find the needed answers for your questions.

F. Approval of the District Bills

Included are the July invoices that were paid with prior Board authorization, and the August invoices. Additional bills may be added prior to the Board meeting on Tuesday.

If you have any questions about the financial reports or the district bills, please contact me no later than Monday. I want to make sure I have time to find the needed answers for your questions.

III. **Reports, Updates, and Informational Items**

A. Administrative Reports

Aligned to Lead Summit

As a reminder, here is part of the message that was shared in the welcome back email to staff on August 3rd:

This summer, our Leadership Team had the valuable opportunity to attend a Leadership Summit focused on Stephen Covey's *4 Essential Roles of Leadership*: Inspiring Trust, Creating Vision, Executing Strategy, and Coaching Potential. Grounded in these principles, our team collaborated to craft a shared vision and commitment for the 2026-2027 school year.

Our Leadership Vision: Leading with one voice, we maximize our resources to clear the path for learning, empower collaborative problem solvers, and celebrate excellence across our inclusive community.

Driven by our slogan, "**One Voice. Endless Possibilities.**", our

leadership team is united in a shared commitment to you and our students:

- **Our Leadership Team Commitment:** Our team is committed to leading with honesty, grace, and a student-first perspective by actively listening to understand diverse viewpoints, setting clear expectations, and dedicating time and effort to support and empower our staff.

On July 23rd and 24th, our Leadership Team headed to Lake Forest to engage in this 2 day summit. The summit was constructed in such a way that we learned about the 4 essential roles and had time to work as a team on aligning our leadership. Words can't express how important this time was for our early development as a team. The bonus was our time outside of the summit where we continued our discussions and got to know each other better. As a result of our time together, we have decided to focus on our leadership vision as a district for this year while I work on listening, learning, and building relationships. I have aligned our leadership team meetings, which are happening every two weeks, to reinforce our slogan and drive our commitments to each other and to all of our stakeholders. We are already seeing the fruits of our labor in this work. The synergy in our team is palpable.

As discussed at many, if not all, of our one-on-one meetings, the ultimate goal is to have clarity on district goals in the Spring of 2027 that will guide our work in the 27-28 school year. Christine and Katie will report out on their building goals during their update to the Board during the August 18th Board meeting.

SOPPA

We are actively maintaining district-wide compliance with Illinois' Student Online Personal Protection Act (SOPPA - 105 ILCS 85/), which mandates that educational technology companies strictly protect all student data.

Data privacy is a growing concern for families. Should a parent or community member ask how we safeguard our children online, you can confidently assure them that District 63 enforces strict vetting protocols for every digital tool used in our classrooms.

Under SOPPA, any software or online resource requiring a student login or collecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII) must have a signed data privacy agreement in place. Our leadership team is

currently auditing all applications in use across the district to guarantee complete compliance. Furthermore, staff have clear directives not to introduce new digital tools without verifying agreement status through building administrators or the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC) site. For full transparency, our community can review these resources anytime on District 63's Student Data & Privacy page.

Opening Day Welcome

In addition to these two topics above, that were also shared with the staff, I also discussed the importance of Professional Development and how we will handle creditable hours, ISBE's AI guidance and our use, as well as a Google Form asking for staff to identify something to

- Start - An idea to help us grow and stretch
- Stop - A barrier we can clear out of the way to enhance student learning
- Continue - Something that is going great that we shouldn't touch

I will expand on our professional development focus, and how I am challenging the staff to explore and use Gemini to enhance the "doing", not replace the "thinking" as we continue to learn and prepare for the best use of this resource in our teaching and learning.

B. Presentation of Fiscal Year 2027 Tentative Budget

As noted in previous communications, the Finance Committee met on July 16th and reviewed the draft of the FY27 Tentative Budget. Since that time, we have adjusted the draft budget, primarily with changes to revenue from the known transportation reimbursement and EBF funding amounts, to reduce the deficit in the Transportation Fund by 45.5%. Here are some key highlights:

- Revenue
 - Overall revenue increase of \$80,341
 - \$181,694 (without Capital Projects Fund (60))
 - Corporate Personal Property Replacement Taxes (CPPRT) estimate to come out by mid-August.
- Expenditures
 - Overall expenditure increase of \$211,079
 - \$1,748,620 (without Capital Projects Fund (60))
 - Known larger expense items in FY27
 - Ed Fund (10) - Board approved primary source purchases
 - O&M Fund (20) - Board approved Phase III project as well as Cass parking lot work
 - Moved salary and benefits of Director of Buildings, Grounds & Transportation completely out of Transportation Fund (40) into O&M Fund (20).
- Tentative Budget results

- Overall budget
 - FY27 tentative budget deficit of \$1,801,186
 - Ed Fund (10) - (\$99,922)
 - O&M Fund (20) - (\$605,078)
 - Debt Service Fund (30) - \$15,520
 - Transportation Fund (40) - (\$46,747)
 - IMRF and Social Security Fund (50) - \$9,336
 - Capital Projects Fund (60) - (\$1,074,450)
 - FY27 tentative budget deficit of \$726,891 (without Capital Projects Fund (60))
- Operating budget
 - FY27 tentative budget operating fund deficit of \$751,747
 - Ed Fund (10) - (\$99,922)
 - O&M Fund (20) - (\$605,078)
 - Transportation Fund (40) - (\$46,747)
- Thanks to strong financial stewardship and strategic spending in FY27, our estimated ending reserves remain healthy at \$10,028,845, the second highest only to FY26 in more than 9 years.

C. First Reading of Recommended Board Policy Updates

This round of Board Policy updates are fairly straightforward and largely five year reviews and date changes. The few changes that are included are not of great consequence. Please review and let us know if you have any questions about what is contained within. If anyone feels we should have a Board Committee meeting between the August and September meetings to discuss further, please let me know that as well.

In addition to the recommended policy updates, we have decided to make a minor change to Policy 5:30 Hiring Process and Criteria to address the district practice of hiring individuals on a short term basis before the Board is able to approve. A redlined version of the policy is at the back of the attachment for your review.

D. Annual Report of Contracts Exceeding \$25,000

In accordance with statutory requirements, a school district must list on its website a report of all contracts exceeding \$25,000, as well as any contract that the Board of Education enters into with an exclusive bargaining representative. This report includes all vendors who earned or were paid more than \$25,000 during the previous fiscal year, regardless of whether or not a formal contract was executed. Our only collective bargaining agreement with the Cass Education Association is provided separately on our website. Both the Contracts Exceeding

\$25,000 and the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Cass Education Association, are linked on our Business and Finance website. The FY26 Contracts Exceeding \$25,000 will be posted on our website after Board approval.

E. Annual Report of Salary, Compensation, and Benefits

In accordance with the state statute, a school district must list on its website all administrator, teacher, and certain IMRF employee salaries and benefits. In the name of transparency, we include all regular full-time and part-time employees. This salary report will be posted in compliance with this requirement on our [Business and Finance website](#) after Board approval.

F. Update Regarding Summer 2026 Phase Three Facility Projects

All 14 spaces at Concord look great. The updated floors, ceiling tiles, and LED lighting in the classrooms really make a difference to the learning environment. The carpeting, lighting, and reconfiguration of the space in the library looks amazing. Nicole Linarez, Teacher Assistant in the Library, is doing a great job getting all the shelves loaded with books. A couple of hanging items to be resolved:

- Just a reminder that there was a delay in the specialty ceiling tiles and lighting in part of the library and in part of room 109 (STEM room). Regular ceiling tiles and LED panels are in place and if you didn't know it, you wouldn't even know it wasn't finished. Reed Construction will come in outside of school hours to install the specialty ceiling tiles and lights. Through this process, Healy, Bender, Patton, and Been are working on our behalf to mitigate any associated change order due to the delay in Reed Construction's ordering process for the specialty ceiling tiles and lighting. I have given permission that we are willing to pay for the 12 LED panel lights that were ordered as a result of the delay. We can use these to replace one additional classroom's old bulb lighting.
- We were just notified on Thursday, August 13th, that the whiteboards for Concord won't be installed until next week. This affects two rooms, the new STEM room and the old STEM room that is now a classroom. We are not sure of the timing of the installation. If they are not installed before August 18th, we will make sure that teachers have access to at minimum, a portable whiteboard for Parent-Student Orientation.

The operable partition wall at Cass JH is scheduled to be finished this Friday, 8.14.26. This will cause us to need to bring in staff to work on Saturday to prepare for our Institute Day on Monday. I am working with Healy, Bender, Patton, & Been to try to recoup the associated costs as a result of their delayed installation. Staff have done an amazing job remaining flexible and getting ready to go for the start of the year.

IV. **Closed Session - Review and Consideration of Release of Closed Session Minutes from January 20, 2026, February 17, 2026, and March 24, 2026 with Exceptions Noted When the Need for Confidentiality Remains**

In our review of the closed session minutes, it is recommended that the minutes from January 20, 2026 and February 17, 2026 be approved for release without redaction and the minutes from March 24, 2026 be approved for release with the redactions as noted.

V. **Recommended Action Items**

- A. Approval of Fiscal Year 2027 Tentative Budget
- B. Approval of Date, Time, and Location for the FY26 Public Budget Hearing
- C. Approval of Behavioral Threat Risk Assessment Procedures and Team
There are no substantive changes to the Behavioral Threat Assessment Procedures from last year's assessment, but it is something we take seriously and it is required to be approved annually by the Board.
- D. Approval to Move the March, 2027 Board of Education Meeting
As part of my transition to take over the Impact Aid responsibilities, I plan to attend the FLISA conference along with Mark Cross in March and the current board meeting date falls during the time I will need to be at the conference. As a result, I would like to move the March, 2027 Board meeting from March 16 to March 23, 2027.
- E. Approval to Release Closed Session Minutes with Exceptions as Noted
- F. Authorization of Destruction of Verbatim Audio Records from Closed Sessions Held Prior to January 1, 2025 per the Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120

VI. **Conclusion**

- A. Public Comments
This is the second opportunity for any guests in the audience to share public comments, per Board Policy 2:230.
- B. Board Member Comments
This is the opportunity for Board members to share any comments, as well as to announce the next meeting date, time, and location.
- C. Adjournment