



**WEST CHICAGO ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL DISTRICT 33**

Kristina Davis Ed.S., Superintendent
February 20, 2025, Board Briefs

Rita Balgeman, Board President
Morgan Banasiak, Board Vice President
Tom Doyle, Board Secretary
Chad McLean, Board Treasurer

Felicia Gills, Board Member
Sandra Garcia, Board Member
Janette Hernandez, Board Member

The Board of Education's regular meeting was held at Lemay Middle School on Thursday, February 20, 2025, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance

Mrs. Rita Balgeman, Mrs. Morgan Banasiak, Mr. Tom Doyle, and Mr. Chad McLean were present. Absent: Mrs. Felicia Gills, Mrs. Sandra Garcia, and Mrs. Janette Hernandez.

Changes or Additions

An addition of Board Salute for Gina Steinbrecher was made under Recognition.
An addition of Litigation was made to close session.

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 Secretary Tom Doyle shared his statement: “On behalf of the board, I would like to thank the Academic Leadership Council for all of their work toward providing the best learning opportunities for all D33 students. As we will see in tonight’s presentation, the ALC uses the “Plan Do Study Act” model to analyze data for the next steps. The council is tasked with evaluating our programs, resources, strategies, etc. After going through some of the data that will be shared with us tonight, I noticed a lot of reasons to celebrate. We see a lot of academic improvement and success. There are also some opportunities for growth. We appreciate the Academic Leadership Team for coming together to analyze data and do the research needed to continuously improve our teaching and learning in all of our buildings. The data from the math scores, the reading scores (English and Spanish), the Culture Goals, and the Amplify pilot are just a few of the areas of focus for this committee. We understand the amount of time and effort that is required of this very important work.

Most of our book study chapters have emphasized trust. As a board, we need to trust in order to make informed decisions when voting. Thank you to the Academic Leadership Council for helping us all be prepared to make decisions according to what is best for all D33 students.”

Recognition/Showcase/Presentation

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: Karoline Giza, Teacher, Leman Middle School

Submitted by: Hazaiah Arellano, a 7th Student at Leman Middle School

"She is so nice. Also, she is polite and willing to help. Also, she takes care of any bad situations in classrooms. She wants to be a principal, and I believe she can do it."

Salute to: Syrena Rivera, Teacher, Leman Middle School

Submitted by: Ed Schell, Substitute Teacher, Leman Middle School

“Syrena does a great job with the students. Her ability to speak fluent Spanish allows her to teach detailed and complex topics to Spanish and English-speaking students. She is also very professional and helpful with teachers who need it. Lastly, she is always on the move at a quick pace to be where she needs to be all over the building. Watching the way she acts motivates others to improve their performance.”

Salute to: Gina Steinbrecher

Retirement Recognition

The board and administration are proud to salute Gina Steinbrecher, Assistant Director of Communication and Community Relations. As Gina Steinbrecher prepares to retire at the end of this month, we proudly reflect on her remarkable journey with District 33. With nearly two decades of dedicated service, Gina has made an indelible impact, first as an engaged parent, then as a reading aide, and later as our Assistant Director of Communication and Community Relations. In her role, Gina quickly became the trusted

voice of District 33, recording district-wide calls, including the much-anticipated announcements for emergency learning days. Throughout the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gina worked tirelessly to ensure that timely, accurate updates were shared with our community, keeping everyone informed and safe. Gina's contributions have been instrumental in transforming our communication efforts. She introduced social media to the district, revitalized our branding, enhanced our website, and spearheaded numerous newsletters that streamlined our outreach to families and staff. Her commitment to clear, effective communication has forever changed the way we connect with our community. Beyond her professional achievements, Gina has built countless meaningful relationships with parents, staff, and community members. Her connection to District 33 runs deep—she raised her children here, with both attending Gary School's dual language program. Even her husband is a familiar face at the local Subway, always ready to chat with any District 33 staff member who walks through the door. Gina, thank you for your service to our schools and community. As you move on to this exciting new chapter, we extend our deepest gratitude for your unwavering dedication, hard work, and lasting impact on our district. We wish you the best as you move into retirement, filled with joy, relaxation, and a well-deserved time to enjoy all that life has to offer. You will be missed but never forgotten!"

Presentation - School Goals, Winter Benchmark Results, & AAPPL Scores

Cathy Park, Director of Assessment and Accountability, shared the 24-25 district academic goals. Principals provided the winter 2024 scores for literacy and math and compared them with the winter 2023 results. They also provided the Spring 2025 goals and action plans. Cathy Park reviewed the AAPPL results for 2023 and 2024. This marks the second year students in grades 3rd through 8th take the AAPPL test. AAPPL (Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) assesses the Spanish language that students have acquired and practiced within a classroom setting, providing evidence that points toward learners proficiency level. Students in High School take the AAPPL test to obtain the Seal of Biliteracy upon graduation. Last year, 48 students received the Seal of Biliteracy at West Chicago Community High School, and 32 of those students were former D33 students. Principals will come back in June to present the spring results.

Presentation - K-5 Literacy Resource Recommendation

Lea DeLuca, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, and Jenny Brunke, Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning, updated the board with the Amplify pilot and provided the ALC recommendation. ALC (Academic Leadership Council) is a representative group of stakeholders that advises and makes recommendations to the Board of Education on matters concerning curriculum and instruction through the approved decision-making process. In August 2024, the Amplify literacy pilot began. 54 teachers in grades K-5 at all 5 elementary schools participated. Piloting teachers were surveyed in different areas, such as selecting a core resource (Amplify vs. ARC); English foundational skills resource (Amplify Skills, UFLI, or Blend of UFLI with Amplify skills); and Spanish foundational skills resource (Amplify Lectoescritura vs Avanza). A breakdown of MAP reading data comparing Amplify and American Reading Company from Kinder to 5th grade was also provided. The Literacy Subject Area Committee met on February 7th to review all data and agreed on recommendations to the Academic Leadership Council, with 16 in favor and 0 opposed. The Academic Leadership Council met on February 11th and agreed on a recommendation to the Board of Education, with 13 in favor and 1 opposed. The final recommendation is as follows: Amplify English Knowledge for Kindergarten through 5th grade; Amplify Lectoescritura for K-2 Spanish Foundation Skills, Spanish

Grammar for 3-5 grade, Amplify English Knowledge and Spanish Conocimiento for Kindergarten through 5th grade at Gary; UFLI for K-2 English Foundational Skills; and Fastbridge for English/Spanish progress monitoring.

E.T.A.W.C. Statement

Deb Taylor, E.T.A.W.C. President, shared a statement. “ETAWC would like to thank District 33 administrators for their willingness to come to the table and listen to us as we work together to help our students, teachers, and district grow. Numerous times throughout the year, ETAWC leadership has requested meetings with district administrators - above and beyond our regularly scheduled meetings - and those requests have been granted. Discussions have been had for such purposes as clarification on issues, tightening up communication and expectations, and problem-solving in response to inconsistent implementation of policies and procedures. Recently, district administrators sat with us as we shared feedback and concerns brought to us by some of our members in response to a curricular decision made at a district-level SAC committee meeting. ETAWC appreciates the time and the platform given to us by the district, allowing us to provide information from teachers’ perspectives that may impact the decision. We look forward to continuing open dialogues and honest communication as we work together for our students, schools, and community.”

Public Comment

No public comment at this time.

Consent Agenda

The Board of Education conducted the following business on a consent agenda as follows:

- Approved the board meeting minutes of January 9, 2025, January 23, 2025, and February 6, 2025;
- Approved the list of bills dated February 10, 2025, through February 20, 2025, in the amount of \$2,115,041.16;
- Approved payrolls of January 15, 2025, in the amount of \$1,836,706.23, and January 31, 2025, in the amount of \$1,852,177.53;
- Approved the disposition of the audio tape of the Board of Education’s regular closed session dated August 3, 2023, and August 17, 2023. Meetings that are at least 18 months old and meet the State criteria are disposed of;
- Approved the personnel report;
 - 1 Administration: Janet Gruenwald, Principal at Wegner, effective July 1, 2025;
 - 0 Certified:
 - 3 Classified: Odalys Alcantar, Family Liaison at Pioneer Preschool, effective February 24, 2025; Cristal Guevara, Clerical Aide at Indian Knoll, effective February 11, 2025; Jonathan Antonio, Utility Custodian at ESC, effective February 18, 2025;
 - 1 Resignations: Brittany Smith, Assistant Principal at Wegner, effective June 17, 2025;
 - 0 Leaves:
 - 0 Retirements:

Financial Reports

- The Board of Education reviewed the Treasurers’ Report and Budget Report as of January 31, 2025, along with the financial charts;
- The Board of Education received a financial report from Karen Apostoli, Executive Director of Business and Operations, stating that the district received

\$1,205,673.00 in Evidence-Based Funding, \$108,379.00 in Early Childhood -PreK for ALL, \$107,724.00 in Early Childhood-Prevention Initiative 0-3, \$2,316.60 in State Free Lunch & Breakfast, \$16,853.00 in Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program, and \$153,674.00 in Community Partnerships since the last meeting.

- The Board of Education received a summary of each school's monthly activity accounts for January 31, 2025.

Discussion of New /Ongoing Business with Possible Action

- *Elementary Literacy Resource Recommendations* - The Board of Education will review the information provided during the presentation and vote at the March 6, 2025, board meeting.
- *Staff Conference Attendance*- The Board received information on two upcoming national conferences for staff and administrators to attend for professional development. The first is the AVID Conference, which will be hosted from July 23 to July 25 in Chicago, IL, and will include 45 staff members for the training. This includes elementary principals and the T&L Department. The second is the 2025 National Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference hosted from May 28th - 30th in Minneapolis, MN, for 10 staff and administrators. The board will review the information and vote at the March 6, 2025, board meeting.
- *STEM Fair MOU* - The Board received the Memorandum of Understanding between ETAWC and District 33 for the first annual STEM Fair related to the collective bargaining agreement and compensation. The board will review the information and vote at the March 6, 2025, board meeting.

Action Items

- *Staffing Proposal* - The Board voted to approve the addition of five reading interventionists (one at each elementary school).
- *Staff/Student iPads and Staff Laptops* - The Board of Education voted to approve leasing new iPads for students and teachers and replacing all certified staff laptops with MacBooks.

Information Items

The Board of Education received/reviewed/discussed the following informational items:

- Board Book Study;
- Most current posting of available job positions in School District 33;
- Freedom of Information Report;
- Out of District placements;
- Short-term leave report was shared;
- Student Chronic Absentee Report;
- Student Suspension Report;
- Truancy Referral Report;
- School Newsletters;
- There are no suggested items for the next board meeting.
- No Board outreach at this time.
- No new items for the Parking lot.

Report of District Committee Meetings

- No open comments at this time.

Upcoming Meetings/Events

The Board of Education members reviewed upcoming meetings and events.

Adjournment

The above review of action taken by the Board of Education at their regular meeting is provided in an attempt to keep you informed. If you have any questions regarding any of the information provided or wish to discuss any of the items, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully,

Kristina Davis, Ed. S.

Kristina Davis,
Superintendent of Schools

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