



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
SCHOOL DISTRICT 25, WEST CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
August 10, 2026**

Call to Order

Board President Rogers called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education to order at 7:00 p.m. on August 10, 2026, at the Benjamin School District Administrative Center, located at 28W250 St. Charles Road, West Chicago, IL 60185.

Roll Call

Board Recorder Solly Garcia took a roll call vote of the members present: Andrew Drinnin, Vince Engstrom, Bridgette Pedersen (arrived at 7:07 PM), Dennis Peterson, Don Sutenbach, Eric Rogers, and Gina Vlantis

Other attendees included Dr. Patrick McGill, Superintendent; Dr. Joel Filas, CSBO; Dr. Julie Salamone, Director of Student Services; Mrs. Sarah Smith, Evergreen Principal.

Pledge of Allegiance

President Rogers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approve Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda as presented. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Don Sutenbach, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers

Absent: None

Nays: None

Approval of Draft Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting of June 8, 2026.

Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Regular Board of Education Meeting of June 8, 2026. This motion, made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Approval of the Draft Minutes from the Board of Education Retreat Meeting of July 13, 2026.

Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Board of Education Meeting of July 13, 2026. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Approval of the Draft Minutes from the Executive Session Board Retreat Meeting of July 13, 2026.

Motion to approve the Draft Minutes from the Board of Education Meeting of July 13, 2026. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

FY2027 Budget Hearing

Motion to enter into Public Hearing at 7:07 p.m. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.



Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers.

Absent: None

Nays: None

Presentation

Dr. Filas reviewed the budget requirements established by Public Acts 103-0394 and 102-0895. These include reporting fund balance ratios based on average expenditures over the past three years for each major operating fund, as well as sharing the District's budget and tax levy. The tentative budget will be available for public review for 30 days, with a public hearing and final approval scheduled for the September Board meeting.

The District's tentative FY27 budget includes approximately \$17.4 million in projected revenues, including a one-time insurance reimbursement related to flooding at Evergreen. Expenditures are expected to decrease following the completion of the Capital Plan. The District continues to receive most of its funding from local property taxes and is expected to end FY27 with cash reserves above the Board's 180-day policy requirement.

Additional Public Hearings

The Board opened and closed additional public hearings regarding the abatement of the Working Cash Fund, permanent interest income transfers, including the Operations and Maintenance Fund and the Capital Projects Fund. Dr. Filas explained that the hearings are a legal requirement before the District can transfer funds.

Public Comment Regarding the FY27 Budget Amendment and additional Public Hearings.

None

Board Discussion on Public Comment Regarding the FY26 Budget Amendment and additional Public Hearings.

None

Adjourn Public Hearing

Motion to adjourn Public Hearing and return to Open Session at 7:24 p.m. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers

Absent: None

Nays: None

Reports

Teaching and Learning Report

Dr. Fitzgerald shared updates from the Teaching and Learning Department. The District has worked hard to prepare for the first year of implementing the strategic plan. All staff will participate in structured committees, focused on student engagement, curriculum, instructional practices, and student support.



In addition, he has continued collaborating with the West Chicago Community High School regarding high school Spanish credit. Twenty recent 8th-grade graduates will be able to receive Spanish credit thanks to Mrs. Anderson's amazing work. These students will have the opportunity to begin Spanish 2 as freshmen. Over the past six years, Benjamin students have earned an average grade of 90.1% in Spanish 2. Kudos to Mrs. Anderson and our students for this outstanding achievement.

Operations Report

Dr. Filas highlighted several summer projects, including building refreshes, flooring, painting, and technology upgrades. Transportation routes are being finalized and will be shared with parents. The district is also working closely with Quest Management to ensure a smooth transition to our new food service provider.

Superintendent Report

Dr. McGill stated that the District leadership team has completed two and a half days of summer retreat and will hold two additional full-day sessions to prepare for the first day of school. He also gave an update regarding the summer programs: twenty-three students took part in the literacy and math program, and fifty-seven attended the STEAM camp. He thanked the staff for their dedication in offering these extra learning opportunities for students.

He also discussed Illinois' recently passed school cell phone law. This will not impact the District, as students are already prohibited from using their cell phones during school hours.

Dr. McGill shared that the District's community newsletter is finished. It includes student achievements, activities, the arts, finance, and much more. Kudos to Ms. Nicole Rosario for making this happen.

The district is also working to establish a Benjamin Alumni Network and an Alumni Hall of Fame. These will be part of the updates to the gym and lobby area. This will give students the opportunity to connect with alumni and learn about future career paths.

Finally, he shared the upcoming GPS Parent Series Events (gpsparentseries.org)

- Dr. David Yeager; Start the School Year Strong: The Science of Motivating Young People, Thu Aug, 20, 2026 @ Noon and 7 pm CST
- Dr. Meredith Elkins with Lynn Lyons; Parenting Anxiety: Breaking the Cycle of Worry and Raising Resilient Kids, Wed, Aug, 26, 2026 @ Noon and 7 PM CST
- Dr. Michaeleen Doucleff with Hunter Clarke-Fields; Dopamine Kids: Understand Addictive Triggers and Rewire Young Brains, Thu Aug, 27 2026 @ Noon and 7 pm CST
- Blaise Aguirre, MD with Ross Szabo; When Kids Say "I Hate Myself": How to Respond, Wed Sep, 23 2026 @ Noon and 7 pm CST

Board Committee Reports

PTA Update:

Member Sutenbach shared that the PTA has an executive board with several returning members. The first organizational meeting is scheduled for August 17 at 7 PM. He also mentioned that the PTA plans to



continue providing events for students and families, including the Fun Run, back-to-school activities, and ice cream days at both Benjamin and Evergreen.

Finance Committee

Member Engstrom provided an update from the finance committee. The committee met to review the FY27 tentative budget in detail, including each fund and its projections. He shared that the mandated categorical reimbursements continue to be prorated. Overall, the district continues to be in a sound financial position

Public Comment on Agenda Items

None.

Consent Agenda (Roll Call)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Gina Vlantis, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

Action Items (Roll Call Vote)

Approval of Semi-Annual Review of Closed Session Minutes and Audio Recordings

Motion to approve the Semi-Annual Review of Closed Session Minutes and Audio Recordings, as presented. This motion, made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Don Sutenbach, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

Approval of the Board Agreements

Motion to approve the Board Agreements, as presented. This motion, made by Andrew Drinnin and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

Approval of the SASSED Articles of Joint Agreement

Motion to approve the SASSED Articles of Joint Agreement, as presented. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None



Approval of the Resolution to Transfer Funds from the Educational Fund to the Operations and Maintenance Fund

Motion to approve the Resolution to Transfer Funds from the Educational Fund to the Operations and Maintenance Fund, as presented. This motion, made by Vince Engstrom and seconded by Dennis Peterson, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

Approval of the Resolution Abating the Working Cash Fund of Benjamin School District 25

Motion to approve the Resolution Abating the Working Cash Fund of Benjamin School District 25, as presented. This motion, made by Gina Vlantis and seconded by Andrew Drinnin, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

Approval of the Resolution to Permanently Transfer Funds Earned from Interest Income from Various Funds to the Operations and Maintenance Fund.

Motion to approve the Resolution to Permanently Transfer Funds Earned from Interest Income from Various Funds to the Operations and Maintenance Fund, as presented. This motion, made by Don Sutenbach and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

Approval of the Resolution to Transfer Funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Capital Projects Fund

Motion to approve the Resolution to Transfer Funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Capital Projects Fund, as presented. This motion, made by Andrew Drinnin and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

None

Discussion Items

Communication To and From the Board: As a reminder, per Board of Education Policy 2:140, during the Board's regular meetings, the Superintendent will report for the Board's consideration all questions or



communications submitted through the active electronic link, along with the status of the District's response.

Executive Session

Entered closed session for the purpose of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. Under Exemption #1, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

Motion to enter into Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. This motion, made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Bridgette Pedersen, passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

No action resulted from the Executive Session

Motion to Return to Open Session

Motion to return to open session at 8:39 p.m. This motion was made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Gina Vlantis. Passed.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas: Andrew Drinnin, Bridgette Pedersen, Don Sutenbach, Dennis Peterson
Vince Engstrom, Gina Vlantis, and Eric Rogers
Absent: None
Nays: None

Adjournment (Voice Vote)

Motion to adjourn the Regular Board of Education Meeting at 8:40 p.m. This motion was made by Dennis Peterson and seconded by Gina Vlantis. Passed.

Voice Vote: Unanimously Passed

Respectfully submitted by:
Solly Garcia, Board Recorder

President, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education

Recorded: August 10, 2026
Approved: September 14, 2026