Achieve Excellence and Empower Students to Succeed

Educate and prepare students with the KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, and PERSONAL QUALITIES to be productive citizens.

GENEVA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 304
227 NORTH FOURTH STREET, GENEVA, ILLINOIS
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF A REGULAR SESSION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Board of Education of Community Unit School District Number 304 met in a regular session on Monday, September 14, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at Coultrap Educational Services Center, 227 North Fourth Street, Geneva, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER (Policy 2:220)

1. Roll Call
2. Welcome
3. Pledge
4. Reminder to sign attendance sheet

Board members present: Policy Committee Chair Stephanie Bellino, President Larry Cabeen, Willard Hooks, Paul Radlinski. Late: Vice President/Finance Committee Chair Jackie Forbes, Dan Choi (by phone). Absent: Molly Ansari.

The President welcomed everyone, and Stephanie Bellino led the Pledge of Allegiance.

District staff present: Todd Latham, Assistant Superintendent Business Services; Dr. George Petmezas, Assistant Superintendent Learning & Teaching; Dr. Adam Law, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel Services; Dr. Andy Barrett, Superintendent.

Others present: Cathy Fuller, Jo Hogan, Ame Kazmer, Jason Lesatz, Mila Kournetas, Leah Benshoof, Tena Pyfer, Liam Maloney, Erin Cosky, Emma Cole, Matthew Karras, Amanda Balsan, Luke Benshoof, Easton Pyfer, Marilee Ruiz, David Vesga, Ken Wilson.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Policy 2:220)

1. Regular Session, August 24, 2026
2. Executive Session, August 24, 2026

Motion by Radlinski second by Hooks, to approve the above-listed minutes, items 2.1-2.2. On roll call, Ayes, four (4), Bellino, Cabeen, Hooks, Radlinski. Nays, none (0). Absent, three (3), Ansari, Choi, Forbes. Abstained, none (0).

Motion by Radlinski second by Hooks, to approve the Dan Choi to join the meeting by phone. On roll call, Ayes, four (4), Bellino, Cabeen, Hooks, Radlinski. Nays, none (0). Absent, two (2), Ansari, Forbes. Abstained, none (0).

At 7:02 p.m., Dan Choi joined the meeting.

3. RECOGNITION, AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Tradition of Excellence: GHS Students (Policy 6:330)
   Robotics Team

State Qualifiers

Luke Benshoff	Eli Hayes	Michael Rice

Oak DeFrenza	Noah Jackson	Marilee Ruiz
Gwen Fronczak	Jacob Jones	Henry Totman
Aiden Garafola	Kaylin Kusak	Logan VanDerMolen
Daniel Godfrey	Liam Maloney	David Vesga
Aiden Grogan	Liam Pott	Finn Wilson
Lou Hawkins	Easton Pyfer	Hunter Witt

2. GHS Outdoor Classroom & Biodiversity Project – GHS Staff
Geneva High School staff presented an overview of an Outdoor Classroom and Biodiversity Project designed to increase biodiversity across the GHS campus by transforming underutilized green space into an outdoor learning environment. The proposed site is located east of the water tower and will feature native flora and fauna as well as an outdoor classroom. The project has been designed to avoid interference with any foreseeable campus expansions while maintaining a minimal financial impact on the district. Project implementation will occur in phases with ongoing maintenance supported through multiple resources.

Future expansion opportunities may include a larger wildflower meadow, a rain garden, and community garden plots. Staff noted that the project would provide numerous benefits, including enhanced student mental health, increased opportunities for outdoor and experiential learning, stronger connections between nature and classroom instruction, and improved environmental literacy.

Board comments, questions, concerns: How close is this learning area to the street? (It is around 150 feet. There are trees and ground cover that provide some protection.) How are you going to protect the native species from rabbits? (We are not sure, but we will address this if it becomes an issue.)

At 7:27 p.m., Jackie Forbes joined the meeting.

3. Annual Title Grants Update – Dr. George Petmezas
Dr. George Petmezas presented an update on the district's Title Grants and related federal funding programs. He explained that the goals of the Illinois State Board of Education for these grants are to improve student learning, enhance learning conditions, and elevate educators.

For Fiscal Year 2026, the district will receive funding through Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV programs. Title I funding is designated to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students. Title II funding supports the preparation, training, and recruitment of high-quality teachers, principals, and other school leaders. Title III funding provides resources for the district's Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP) to support English learners. Title IV funding is intended to enhance student support services and promote academic achievement.

In addition to Title grant funding, the district receives Career and Technical Education (CTE) grants, which support the State of Illinois' vision for career and technical education by providing students with opportunities to develop workforce-ready skills and explore career pathways.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

(PRESS Policy 2:230) *Per Board Policy 2:230, attendees wishing to formally address the Board must register their intention to participate in the public portion(s) of the meeting upon their arrival at the meeting. Complete the form in the Welcome to Our Meeting brochure (print legibly) and give it to the Presiding Officer or the Recording Secretary before the meeting is called to order.*

A Geneva High School student addressed the Board to share concerns about the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in classrooms. The student expressed that, particularly in art classes, AI can diminish student creativity and may negatively impact future opportunities for students interested in pursuing careers in the arts. The student also stated that many of their peers share similar concerns and do not support the use of AI in classroom settings. Additionally, the student noted that the AI tools available through the school are the same tools that students can access independently outside of the classroom.

A community member with children enrolled in the district's preschool program addressed the Board regarding the use of technology and screen time in classrooms. The speaker clarified that they are not advocating for the elimination of technology in schools but rather encouraging the district to consider delaying significant technology exposure for students in kindergarten through second grade. They expressed concerns about the potential impact of extensive screen use on student learning and brain development, as well as possible physical effects. They also emphasized the importance of providing teachers with the resources and support needed to accommodate families who choose to opt their children out of certain technology-based activities or curriculum components.

Additionally, the speaker noted that some parents have encountered resistance when raising concerns or requesting alternatives to technology-based instruction. They suggested that the district does not appear to have a consistently understood or universally applied policy regarding parental opt-out requests, and encouraged clearer guidance to ensure teachers feel supported in responding to such requests.

A community member addressed the Board to express concerns regarding bullying within the district. The speaker inquired whether the Board has discussed bullying in the past and asked what resolutions, policies, or procedures have resulted from those conversations. They also emphasized the importance of bringing attention to the issue and encouraged the district to continue examining ways to address and prevent bullying. The speaker expressed hope that the district can identify effective strategies and solutions to support students and create a safe and positive learning environment for all.

5. LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Board Member Code of Conduct #8 - "I will be sufficiently informed about and prepared to act on the specific issues before the Board, and remain reasonably knowledgeable about local, state, national, and global education issues."

Board member Jackie Forbes shared information regarding a recent call to action from the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) concerning the federal E-Rate program. The E-Rate program helps school districts secure funding for technology infrastructure and computer equipment that support student learning.

Ms. Forbes explained that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is considering changes to the program that may negatively impact school districts. As a result, she encouraged Board members and community stakeholders to contact federal legislators and advocate for the continuation of the program in a manner that supports school districts' technology needs. Additional information regarding this advocacy effort is available through the IASB website.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (Policy 3:40)

The Superintendent provided an update on the district's bond refunding efforts, noting that the refinancing transaction is expected to close by October 6. Upon closing, the district will pay off the Series 2017 bonds, resulting in savings of more than 3 percent.

He also shared an update regarding the district's increasingly diverse and growing student needs, particularly as they relate to student support services. The district continues to evaluate and respond to these evolving needs to ensure appropriate supports are available for students.

Additionally, the Superintendent reported that he recently attended a meeting of the Geneva High School Student Advisory Board. He described the experience as a valuable opportunity to engage directly with students and receive meaningful feedback and insights from their perspectives. He expressed appreciation for the partnership and hopes to continue meeting with students through this forum in the future.

As part of his report, the Superintendent highlighted several facts about new staff for the 2026-27 school year. The district welcomed twenty-eight new certified staff members, twenty-nine new support staff members, and eleven student teachers. The first teacher for the 2026-27 school year was hired on February 3, 2026, and the final teacher hire occurred on August 3, 2026. He also noted that the district currently has eighteen support staff positions that remain open.

7. **BOARD DIALOGUE TOPICS & PENDING ACTION CONSIDERATION**

1. Policy Updates: Second Reading – **Updated, Reviewed & New** (Policy 2:240)
    1. Policy 2:30, School District Elections – Review & Monitor
    2. Exhibit 2:70-E, Checklist for Filling Board Vacancies by Appointment – Rewritten
    3. Exhibit 2:120-E3, Resolution to Appoint a Delegate to the Illinois Association of School Boards Delegate Assembly – New
    4. Exhibit 2:220-E1, Board Treatment of Closed Meeting Verbatim Recordings & Minutes – Rewritten
    5. Exhibit 2:220-E3, Closed Meeting Minutes – Rewritten
    6. Exhibit 2:220-E5, Semi-Annual Review of Closed Meeting Minutes – Rewritten
    7. Exhibit 2:220-E8, Board of Education Records Maintenance Requirements & FAQ's - Rewritten
    8. Policy 2:230, Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings and Petitions to the Board - Updated
    9. Policy 3:40, Superintendent - Review & Monitor
    10. Policy 3:50, Administrative Personnel Other Than the Superintendent - Review & Monitor
    11. Policy 3:60, Administrative Responsibility of the Building Principal - Review & Monitor
    12. Policy 3:70, Succession of Authority - Review & Monitor
    13. Policy 4:120, Food Services - Review & Monitor
    14. Policy 4:175, Convicted Child Sex Offender; Screening; Notifications - Review & Monitor
    15. Policy 5:40, Communicable and Chronic Infectious Disease - Updated
    16. Policy 5:70, Religious Holidays - Updated
    17. Policy 5:110, Recognition for Service - Review & Monitor
    18. Policy 5:140, Solicitations By or From Staff - Review & Monitor
    19. Policy 5:185, Family and Medical Leave - Review & Monitor
    20. Policy 5:240, Suspension – Updated
    21. Policy 6:70, Teaching About Religions - Updated
    22. Policy 6:80, Teaching About Controversial Issues - Updated
    23. Policy 6:190, Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities - Updated
    24. Policy 7:30, Student Assignment and Intra-District Transfer - Review & Monitor
    25. Policy 7:40, Nonpublic School Students, Including Parochial and Home-Schooled Students - Updated
    26. Policy 7:80, Release Time for Religious Instruction/Observance - Review & Monitor

27. Policy 7:130, Student Rights & Responsibilities – Updated
28. Policy 7:330, Student Use of Buildings – Equal Access - Rewritten
29. Policy 7:345, Use of Educational Technologies; Student Data Privacy and Security - Review & Monitor
30. Policy 8:70, Accommodating Individuals with Disabilities - Updated
31. Policy 8:100, Relations with Other Organizations and Agencies - Review & Monitor

Motion by Hooks second by Forbes, to approve the above-listed policies, items 7.1.1-7.1.31. On roll call, Ayes, six (6), Bellino, Cabeen, Choi, Forbes, Hooks, Radlinski. Nays, none (0). Absent, one (1), Ansari. Abstained, none (0).

8. WORK-STUDY TOPICS & FUTURE ACTION CONSIDERATION

9. INFORMATION

1. Board Meeting/Presentation Schedule (Policy 2:220)
2. FOIA Requests & Board Correspondence (Policy 2:250)
3. IASB Board Governance Recognition
4. Out of State Trip Request

10. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Personnel Report: Resignations, Retirements, Leave Requests, Changes in Assignment/FTE, New Hires (Policies 3:50, 5:200, 5:280)
2. Gifts, Grants, Bequests: $13,500, Raising Cane's ($1,500), Borter Heating & Air Conditioning ($1,500), Linda Bergemann Baird & Warner ($1,500), Vantell Group ($1,500), Pure Barre Geneva ($2,500), Viking Eyecare ($1,500), Midwest Waste Consultants ($2,500), Track Surface Company ($2,500), for GHS athletics team supplies/uniforms purchases/needs (Policy 8:80)
3. Gifts, Grants, Bequests: $25,300.34, Geneva All Sports Boosters, for GHS tennis & track spring state patches, all sports annual Hudl subscription
4. Gifts, Grants, Bequests: $1,000, Ken's Auto Center, for GHS VocEx 2026 Car Wash (Policy 8:80)
5. Gifts, Grants, Bequests: $20,582, Harrison Street PTO, for Outdoor Education ($13,582) and field trips ($7,000) (Policy 8:80)
6. Technology Asset Disposal
7. Monthly Financials - July (Policy 4:40, 4:55)
8. Request to Purchase: $209,779, Johnson Controls, for air cooled water chiller at GHS

Motion by Bellino second by Forbes, to approve the above-listed, items 10.1-10.8. On roll call, Ayes, six (6), Bellino, Cabeen, Choi, Forbes, Hooks, Radlinski. Nays, none (0). Absent, one (1), Ansari. Abstained, none (0).

11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Board members shared that the Facilities Task Force met earlier in the day and were pleased to report that all planned 2026 facilities projects have been completed. The committee has already begun planning for summer 2027 projects and expects to bring recommendations to the Board for consideration in October. The task force also received an update regarding a potential solar project at the Keslinger Bus Garage. Discussion has expanded beyond the original proposal of twenty-four solar panels, and members noted that the project could provide a significant financial benefit to the district.

One Board member shared positive feedback from a newly hired teacher who reported having a smooth and welcoming transition into the Geneva school community.

Board members also highlighted their attendance at various school and community events, including football games, soccer matches, and the VocEx car wash. Members remarked on the strong community support for these events and noted that Mayor Burns enthusiastically assisted with drying vehicles at the car wash.

The Board expressed appreciation to the donors whose generous contributions continue to support Geneva students and district programs. Members also thanked Dr. Barrett for his diligence and recognized district administrators for identifying qualified leaders to provide administrative coverage when needed.

Additionally, Board members shared that they have been attending curriculum nights across the district and appreciated the opportunity to connect with families and staff. The Board concluded its comments by thanking the evening's presenters for providing informative and meaningful updates on their respective programs and initiatives.

12. NOTICES / ANNOUNCEMENTS

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION TO CONSIDER MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, OR DISCIPLINE, PERFORMANCE, OR DISMISSAL OF 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. HOWEVER, A MEETING TO CONSIDER AN INCREASE IN COMPENSATION TO A SPECIFIC EMPLOYEE THAT IS SUBJECT TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WAGE INCREASE TRANSPARENCY ACT MAY NOT BE CLOSED AND MUST BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC [5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)]. [5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)] (Policy 2:220)

At 8:25 p.m., motion by Bellino, second by Forbes, to go into executive session to consider matters pertaining to the appointment, employment, compensation, or discipline, performance, or dismissal of 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 public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine validity. However, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee that is subject to the local government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and must be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with this Act.

At 9:00 p.m., the Board returned to open session.

14. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:01 p.m., motion by Forbes second by Radlinski and with unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED ______________________________ (Date) ______________________________ PRESIDENT

SECRETARY______________________________