

**Board of Education
Worth School District 127
Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
April 8, 2026
Dr. Rosemary Lucas Administration Building
11218 S. Ridgeland Ave, Worth, Illinois**

Administrators:

Dr. Mark Fleming, Superintendent
Cindy Dykas, Assistant Superintendent, Business Manager/CSBO
Dr. Sinead Chambers, Director of Student Services
Dr. Maureen Eichstaedt, Assistant Director of Student Services
Dr. Lisa Lyke, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Robert Jeffers, Director of Technology
David Dvorchak, Director of Facilities and Grounds
Jason Tooth, Principal, Worth Junior High
Brittan Russell, Assistant Principal, Worth Junior High
Ashley Toms Bonnstetter, Principal, Worthwoods Elementary
Elizabeth D'Andrea, Principal, Worth Elementary
Alyse Koehler, Assistant Principal, Worth Elementary & Worthwoods Elementary

Board Recording Secretary

Jill Moore

Others Present

Sara Beaulieu, WW
Gunnar Bettenhause, WW
Tiffany-Alexander-Harris, WE
Colleen DeGonia, WJH
Chris Gawel, WJH
Kelly Gansauer, WJH
Michelle Okrzesik, WE
Shannon Fisher, WE
Mary Zirngibl, WE
Alyssa Zirngibl, WE
Amy Vazquez
Inshirah Dana
Esra Mahmoud
Mirvat A. Abas
Maria Ibumim
Zoyad Zayed
Areejal Mahedan
Habem Alshwayit
Candy D. Pichardo
Leslie Blanks
Kaitlyn Blanks
Monu Alawi
Fadia Hamed
Nedae Jahen
Mohamed El-Meghallawy, Sara, Salma

1. MEETING OPENING

- A. CALL TO ORDER by the President, Drew Sernus
President Drew Sernus called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM
- B. ROLL CALL
Members Present: Drew Sernus, Danette Keeler, Meghan Sisk, David Blanks, Missy Sinclair

Michelle Egan: Arrived at 6:32 PM

Absent: Vince Flores

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President, Drew Sernus led the Pledge of Allegiance

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. WORTH JUNIOR HIGH DECLAMATION TEAM

Dr. Fleming introduced Jason Tooth and Colleen DeGonia to give an update on the accomplishments of the Declamation Team. Students in multiple areas won awards for their performances. Mr. Tooth stated that each student should be very proud of their accomplishments and the medals they earned.

The Worth Junior High Band was recognized for their second division win at Band Fest at Arbor Park.

B. WORTH JUNIOR HIGH GRADUATION - MAY 28th AT 7PM

Dr. Fleming stated that the Worth Junior High Graduation will take place on May 28, 2026 at 7:00 PM

C. WORTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHEDULE UPDATE

Dr. Fleming noted that Mr. Tooth and his team have dedicated many hours to implementing a new junior high schedule, with Linda Esposito attending many of the meetings. The goal is to improve math scores and support students in various areas, including tier three and tier two instruction, multilingual services, special education, and SEL.

D. JUNE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING - JUNE 3rd

Dr. Fleming reminded Board Members that the June Board Meeting will take place a week earlier June 3, 2026.

E. FOIA REQUESTS

The district received six (6) FOIA requests and they were responded to in a timely manner.

3. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

A. QUEST FOOD MANAGEMENT

- Quest has been our food partner for well over 10 years
- Our current agreement is a renewal from the RFP done in Spring 2023, and we are proposing renewal for year 3 of our agreement
 - The maximum number of renewals on the same contract is 4 years
 - The next required RFP process will take place in Spring 2028
- The increase for 2026-2027 follows the CPI for "Food Away from Home" rate, which is 4.1%, set in December 2025
 - The new meal rates will be \$2.29 per breakfast and \$4.21 per lunch under these rates
- Breakfast plus milk cost for 2026-2027 will be \$2.636 (reimbursement rate is \$2.94 = \$0.30 greater than cost)
- Lunch plus milk cost for 2026-2027 will be \$4.5646 (reimbursement rate is \$4.71 = \$0.1454 greater than cost)
 - All our milk expenses are covered with our per meal reimbursement from the National School Lunch Program
 - Other costs are also covered, such as Lunchroom Supervision

B. PRAIRIE FARMS

- Bid/RFP not required because annual spend is well under \$150,000 threshold
- Costs for 2026-2027 are increasing, as every grocery expense has increased
 - White milk half pint will be \$0.346 each
 - Chocolate milk half pint will be \$0.3546 each
 - This is an increase of 1 1/2 cents each half pint

C. ALPHA BUS TRANSPORTATION

- Our prior agreement with Alpha Transportation was for years FY25 and FY26, and the increases were 11% and 7%, respectively.
- Alpha School Bus was acquired by First Student a few months ago
- The renewal for FY27 and beyond is with First Student
- During renewal discussions, First Student presented several transportation safety and communication enhancements
 - Main enhancement is the implementation of the HALO System
 - This platform will provide parents and the district with real-time updates on vehicle locations, trip changes and other important route information
- Proposal for renewal is for a three-year agreement:
 - 6% for FY27, 4.5% for FY28 and 3.5% for FY29.
- Our 8-year average is much lower than most districts in our area.
- This agreement allows the district to maintain continuity in service while benefitting from enhanced technology and operational support under First Student, alongside continued collaboration with familiar Alpha personnel.

D. FINANCE REPORTS

1. With an early board meeting this month, many revenues were not yet recorded at the time of the reports being posted.
2. After property taxes and state revenue posted over the last two days, the Districts Fund Balance has increased by \$1.7 million, now at \$12.2 million, up from \$10.5 million in your board pack

4. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. No Report

5. DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

A. No Report

6. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

A Citizens' Remarks

Esra Mahmoud – EID Holiday
Areej Almahadeen – EID Holiday
Mirvat Abas – EID Holiday
Inshirah Dana – EID Holiday

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the following Consent Agenda Items as presented."

Moved by: Missy Sinclair; seconded by: Danette Keeler

Motion Carried

A. BOARD BILLS PAYABLE

\$149,719.80 (EDUCATIONAL); \$55,388.26 (OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE); \$88,302.23 (TRANSPORTATION FUND); \$21,850.50 (CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND); for a total of \$315,260.79."

B. PAYROLL SUMMARY

Education Fund in the amount of \$840,244.89, the Building Fund in the amount of \$60, 144.27, and the FICA/IMRF/Medicare in the amount of \$54,100.00."

C. RESIGNATION OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - IRMA GARCIA - WORTHWOODS ELEMENTARY - LUNCH SUPERVISOR - EFFECTIVE MARCH 25, 2026

- D. RESIGNATION OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - PATRICIA GRIFFIN - PARAPROFESSIONAL - WORTH JUNIOR HIGH - EFFECTIVE APRIL 8, 2026
- E. RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED STAFF - AMANE SBITAN - EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER - WORTHWOODS ELEMENTARY - EFFECTIVE JUNE 5, 2026
- F. RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED STAFF - TINA OGDRODNIK - SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - WORTH JUNIOR HIGH - EFFECTIVE JUNE 5, 2026
- G. RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED STAFF - LISA STRZEMPA - SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER - WORTH ELEMENTARY - EFFECTIVE JUNE 5, 2026
- H. RESIGNATION OF CERTIFIED STAFF - MOLLY O'SHEA - 3RD GRADE TEACHER - WORTHWOODS ELEMENTARY - EFFECTIVE JUNE 5, 2026

8. MOTIONS

A. REGULAR BOARD MINUTES

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the regular minutes from the March 11, 2026 meeting."

Moved by: Danette Keeler; seconded by: Missy Sinclair

Motion Carried

B. CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the closed session minutes from the March 11, 2026 meeting."

Moved by: Missy Sinclair; seconded by: David Blanks

Motion Carried

C. PRAIRIE FARMS DAIRY CONTRACT

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the contract with Prairie Farms for milk delivery for the 2026/2027 school year."

Moved by: Michelle Egan; seconded by: Danette Keeler

Motion Carried

D. QUEST FOOD MANAGEMENT SERVICES CONTRACT RENEWAL

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the food contract year 3 renewal with Quest Food Management Services for the 2026-2027 school year."

Moved by: Danette Keeler; seconded by: Missy Sinclair

Motion Carried

E. ALPHA BUS TRANSPORTATION RENEWAL

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Alpha School Bus Company, Inc. renewal for the 2026/2027 school year".

Moved by: Missy Sinclair; seconded by: Danette Keeler

Motion Carried

F. APPROVAL OF SALARIES FOR SUPPORT STAFF EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the salaries for the support staff for the 2026/2027 school year".

Moved by: Missy Sinclair; seconded by: Michelle Egan

Motion Carried

G. APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACTS FOR PRINCIPALS EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026

Recommended Motion (roll call): "That the Board of Education approve the administrative contracts for the Principals effective July 1, 2026."

Moved by: Missy Sinclair; seconded by: Danette Keeler

Motion Carried

H. **APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACT - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES - EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the contract for the Assistant Director of Student Services effective July 1, 2026."

Moved by: Michelle Egan; seconded by: Danette Keeler

Motion Carried

I. **APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACT - DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES - EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the administrative contract for the Director of Student Services, effective July 1, 2026".

Moved by: Danette Keeler; seconded by: David Blanks

Motion Carried

J. **APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACT - DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION - EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the administrative contract for the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, effective July 1, 2026".

Moved by: Missy Sinclair; seconded by: Meghan Sisk

Motion Carried

K. **APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACT - ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF BUSINESS SERVICES/CSBO**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the administrative contract for the Assistant Superintendent of Business Services/CSBO effective July 1, 2026".

Moved by: Danette Keeler; seconded by: Missy Sinclair

Motion Carried

9. BOARD DISCUSSION/ACTION AND/OR REPORTS/REQUESTS

A. **Board Discussion/Action**

- Board Member thanked the parents that came to present public comments on EID holiday.
- Board Member stated she will not be able to attend the June 3rd Board of Education Meeting.
- Board Members congratulated the Declamation Team on their achievements and recent wins.
- Board Members shared comments on the new Worth Junior High schedule and acknowledged the effort and planning that went into its development.

10. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA ITEMS

A. **Citizens' Remarks**

There were no Citizens' Remarks

11. CLOSED SESSION

A. **ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session at 7:22 PM to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees; collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees; and Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court

or administrative tribunal, or when the public body finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting."

Motion Carried

B. RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education reconvene in public session 8:02 PM."

Motion Carried

EID Holiday and Attendance Issues

Dr. Fleming shared concerns about the high number of students absent on EID holidays.

The Board discussed:

- The need to address the attendance issue and the potential impact on the district.
- Discussions raised on the importance of considering the local community and other school districts' practices.
- The need to follow the lead of other high school districts in the area.
- It's suggested that a meeting be held with the calendar committee to address the issue and make a recommendation to the Board for the 2026/2027 school year.

A. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

The Board of Education adjourn to closed session at 8:24 PM

B. RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education reconvene in public session 10:00 PM."

Motion Carried

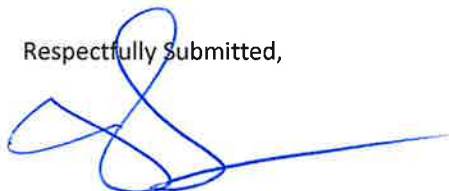
12. ADJOURNMENT

Recommended Motion (voice vote): "that the Board of Education motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 PM".

Voice Vote: All Yes

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,



Meghan Sisk
Secretary, Board of Education



Drew Sernus
President, Board of Education