

**Board of Education  
Worth School District 127  
Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting  
November 12, 2025  
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**

Scott Duenser Wipfli LLP  
Michelle Cedergren  
Charlotte Cedergren  
Jeff Pagano, WW  
Lisa Strzempa  
Mary Zirngibl, WE

**1. MEETING OPENING**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

President Drew Sernus called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**B. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Drew Sernus, Danette Keeler, Meghan Sisk, Missy Sinclair

Michelle Egan entered Public Session at 6:28 p.m.

Absent: David Blanks, Vince Flores

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President, Drew Sernus led the Pledge of Allegiance

**2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**A. VETERANS DAY - HONORING OUR VETERANS**

Dr. Fleming thanked the principals for honoring veterans and pays tribute to Vince Flores, a former Air Force member, who is not present but is greatly appreciated for his dedication and service.

**B. NATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS DAY - NOVEMBER 15, 2025**

Dr. Fleming recognized National Board Members Day on November 15, 2025, and expressed appreciation for each Board Member's dedicated service to Worth School District #127. Board Members were thanked for their commitment and hard work, and each received a gift in recognition of their service.

**C. RECOGNITION OF CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISOR**

Dr. Fleming honored David Dvorchak for earning a certificate as a Certified Professional Supervisor.

**D. WORTH LIONS FOOD DRIVE**

Dr. Fleming highlighted the upcoming food drive on November 22, coordinated in partnership with the Boy Scouts and the Lions Club, and emphasized the need for students to help collect donated items from the elementary schools to the junior high building.

**E. FEBRUARY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING DATE**

Dr. Fleming discusses the February 11, 2025 Board of Education meeting and suggests moving it to February 4, 2025 due to some conflicts. The Board agreed to move the meeting to February 4, 2025.

**F. METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT (MWRD) UPDATE**

Dr. Fleming stated that he emailed MWRD and communicated that the Worthwoods project is finished so they can come out and do a survey. They will be going out to bid in the fall of 2026 and plan to start the project in 2027.

### G. AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR FY2025

Dr. Fleming introduced Scott Duenser, from Wipfli LLP to give a brief overview of the results of the FY25 Audit. Mr. Duenser highlighted the district's financial statements and stated the district has fulfilled the annual financial report requirement.

### H. IASB 2025 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Fleming reviewed the 2025 Resolutions Committee Report and recommended adoption of all 10 revisions to the constitution.

### I. FOIA REQUESTS

The district has received two FOIA requests since the last Board Meeting and they have been responded to in a timely manner.

## 3. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

### A. ESTIMATED TAX LEVY PRESENTATION

#### 1. Estimated 2025 Tax Levy

##### **Slide 2 - Review basic terms of the tax levy process**

- Second year in a row with CPI below 5%, so PTELL is not in effect for this Levy.
- Not planning on Levying more than 5% this year, so the Truth in Taxation is not going to be necessary this year.

##### **Slide 3 - P.A. 102-0895**

- Newer section of the School Code, effective May 23, 2022
- Each School District now must publicly disclose the cash reserve balance of all funds held by the school district related to its operational levy
- Disclosures must occur at the public hearing at which the district certifies its budget and levy for the taxable year
- Worth School District 127 has complied with this by posting this information in Board Docs each month
- As of June 30, 2025, the Operational Cash Reserve Balances (all funds except Debt Service) was \$17,840,522

##### **Slide 4 & 5 - P.A. 103-0394**

- Another newer addition to School Code, effective August 2023, requiring districts to calculate the Operational Cash reserves
- The goal is to discourage districts from carrying excessively high fund balances, specifically as much as 2.5 times of annual average expenditures over a 3-year period
- If it exceeds this threshold, the board would have to file an Operational Funds Reserve Reduction Plan
- We are at 43%, so no need to file such plan

##### **Slide 6 - Revenues**

- Both Property Tax collections and Evidence Based Funding made up 42% of total revenue in Fiscal Year 2025
- Six years ago, before any Property Tax Relief grants were received, EBF was significantly less. This squeezed the pie and Property Tax collections made up 58% of total revenue. EBF in that year was 30% and Federal programs was 6%

##### **Slide 7 & 8 - 10-Year History of Revenue Collected**

- Property taxes have remained very constant over a 10-year period, in fact see the significant reduction in 2021 due to Property Tax Relief Grant AND EAV increase, which gives an overall relief to all taxpayers
- In 10 years', our total revenue has increased significantly, from about \$15 M in 2016 to just over \$25 M in 2025
- Evidence Based Funding (formerly General State Aid) increased over 200% from 2016, helping Property Taxes stay constant
- The large increase of Federal Programs from 2021 – 2023 was directly related to funds received for ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) from ARP (American Rescue Plan)
- Another visual showing how much both revenue and expenditures have grown over 10 years.
- 2022 was the first year of deficit spending in over 15 years.
- This shows a \$4.8 million loss over ten years' time, as a result of the large loss this past year with the construction commitment – all part of the plan!

##### **Slide 10 – EAV & Tax Rates**

- 2023 was \$242.6 million (all-time high) due to the triennial reassessment. It was expected to yield increases of 10-15% but ended up being a 27% increase. 2024 held steady at \$241.9 million
- The 2024 Tax Rate of 4.492 was one of the lowest rates in 14 years, thanks to the sixth consecutive years of Property Tax Relief Grant; and the first year it was a double award.
- Also, Tax Rate and EAV have an inverse relationship, so when one goes up, the other goes down.
- Tax Rate will likely increase once the PTRG expires or Worth 127 no longer qualifies, but we have at least another year before that occurs.

##### **Slide 11 - CPI (Inflation)**

- 2024 CPI which affects the 2025 Levy was 2.9% (significantly lower than 2021 & 2022, at 6.5% and 7.0%, respectively)
  - PTELL (Property Tax Extension Limitation Law) is the tax cap which limits the increase in property tax extensions to 5%

- CPI in December 2025 is expected to continue leveling off (announcement in January 2026). PTELL is not in effect for this tax levy and likely not for levies in the near future

#### **Slide 12 - Tax Levy vs. Tax Extension**

- Blue Line is the Levy (ask); Red Bar is Extension (granted); Green Bar is Prop Tax Relief Grant portion
- Doesn't matter what is levied, the district only receives CPI increase plus extra for new property growth.
  - New Property from 2024 was \$6 million – highest amount in over 20 years
- Years 2015-2018 balloon levied, but with receiving the PTRG in 2019, it leveled off under 5%
- 2019 was a slight decline because it was the first opportunity for the Property Tax Relief Grant
- 2020 and 2021 were low increases due to low CPI and continuing to receive PTRG
- 2022 was up as a result of CPI being at 7.0% (again, capped at 5.0%)
- 2023 was just 1.09% increase over the prior year extension, despite the 6.5% CPI

#### **Slide 13 - SO...just because you levy (ask) you don't receive (extension)**

- Same information as prior slide, just with more data figures supporting the bar graph

#### **Slide 14 - A community wide mailer was last sent out in November 2022**

- We want to remind our community that our tax rates are lower than past years due to the PTRG.
- We didn't send this out recently, but like to show this slide
  - It's because of the support of you, the Board of Education, that we continue to qualify for the Property Tax Relief grant and your desire to secure low tax rates for the community AND gain as much funding as possible for our district!

#### **Slide 16 - Now the hard part – Creating the 2024 Property Tax Levy!**

- How much do we need in each fund to pay current bills?
- Have to guess at how much the 2025 EAV will be valued at? Won't know until next year, so it's a guess. This is a challenge each year (last reassessment year 2023 was very difficult) as we "guessed 10-20%" but it was higher. For next year, will it go down?
- Have to guess at how much new property will be incurring taxes in 2
- It is not necessary to publish the Proposed Property Tax Levy in the local newspaper; however, we will publish it on the district website.
- The board will approve the 2025 Tax Levy in December
- Documents will be filed with the Cook County Clerk's office by the last Tuesday in December.

### **B. TRANSFER ABATEMENT RESOLUTION**

#### **Cindy Dykas gave an update regarding the Transfer Abatement Resolution:**

- In the attachment is a sheet created by Raymond James to illustrate the amount of payments from the last bond issue Series 2023 and the corresponding amounts we will abate each year (how much the district will transfer and pay towards bond payments in order to keep the debt amounts flat for our taxpayers).
- We plan to move the funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Bond and Interest Fund
- This year's transfer and abatement is \$498,200
- You will vote on the resolution under Motions, item E

### **C. HEALTH SCREENING UPDATE**

#### **Cindy Dykas gave an update regarding the Health Screening for all employees:**

- A full panel blood test can detect the potential for many illnesses and early detection is key!
- Continuing with the Wellness Initiatives offered by the school district and thanks to the Board of education for the additional financial incentive for those who participate in the Health Savings Account/High Deductible Health Plan, this year's Wellness Screenings were a huge success.
- This year H.S.A. participants will receive \$700 (single coverage) or \$900 (family coverage) if screenings are completed, per the requirements of the communications sent by the business office.
- We brought in Empower Health Services, on Institute Day on Friday, October 10th.
- About 60 people were screened in one day, followed up with individualized confidential and comprehensive reports sent directly to the participant
- Also, staff and their family members who are members in our health plan could go to any LabCorp location for the Wellness Screenings, which serviced an additional 31 participants to date and likely more before the November 29<sup>th</sup> deadline!
- In addition, Osco Pharmacists were on site during Institute Day in October to offer flu, tetanus and/or COVID booster shots.

### **D. FINANCE REPORTS**

Attached in Board Agenda.

### **4. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES**

#### **A. ILLINOIS STATE REPORT CARD**

### **5. DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

#### **A. STATE TESTING RESULTS AND DESIGNATION PRESENTATION**

Lisa Lyke opened by stating the administrative team will be sharing a snapshot of the district's performance based on state testing results and designations. The administrative team covered areas in:

- Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR)
- Illinois Proficiency Benchmarks
- Student Performance in Illinois
- Proficiency Results in Math and Reading - the district is outperforming the state in ELA and falling a bit short in Math. Math is a more rigorous test and districts across the state will see the discrepancy between ELA and Math. ISBE has reported that math scores are low throughout the state and there is a draft plan of the Illinois Comprehensive Math Plan. ISBE is currently touring the state to gather feedback from educators on this plan. The final plan should be ready by the 2026/2027 school year.

Principals shared with the Board the breakdown of ELA proficiency scores from each school by grade level, state averages and the percentage of students who reached proficiency.

Dr. Eichstaedt stated the ML population of Worth School District is 9% higher than the state average, yet our exit rate is 4% higher than the state average, meaning we are able to grow our student's ELD faster than the state average even though we have so many more students. ML students show growth in IAR ELA and Math just below the district average. Students are learning English and able to perform well on our rigorous state tests.

Dr. Chambers gave a brief overview and shared information relating to the district's students with IEP's. In terms of proficiency, 25% of our students with IEPs reached proficiency or above and the data indicates that our students are growing at a nice rate in spite of their disabilities.

Chronic absenteeism is defined as a student missing 10% or more of a school year whether the absence is excused or unexcused. Worth is slightly above the state's average; however, we have a 2% decrease from 2024-2025 school year.

Lisa Lyke shared with the Board that we are excited to report that all three of our schools received a commendable designation. Exemplary designation is given to schools who have an overall performance in the top 10% of all schools in the state. We are proud of how our students are performing and we know there is always room for improvement. The district will be focusing on areas to help increase student performance.

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

There were no Citizens' Remarks

## **7. CONSENT AGENDA**

### **Action (Consent): A. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

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

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

### **Action (Consent): B. BOARD BILLS PAYABLE**

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Accounts Payable for \$1,084,774.48 (EDUCATIONAL); \$103,966.05 (OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE); \$27,779.63 (TRANSPORTATION); and \$343,989.31 (CAPITAL PROJECTS) for a total of \$1,560,509.47."

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

### **Action (Consent): C. PAYROLL SUMMARY**

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Payroll Summary for the Education Fund in the amount of \$1,216,347.80, the Building Fund in the amount of \$90,191.65, and the FICA/IMRF/Medicare in the amount of \$79,128.49."

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

### **Action (Consent): D. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - SAMANTHA BEAKLEY - PARAPROFESSIONAL - EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 23, 2025**

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried  
Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

**Action (Consent): E. CALL LIST OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF**

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.  
Final Resolution: Motion Carried  
Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

**Action (Consent): F. FIRST READING OF BOARD POLICY #120**

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the first reading of the policies as listed in the attached."

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Missy Sinclair.  
Final Resolution: Motion Carried  
Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

**8. MOTIONS**

**Action: A. REGULAR BOARD MINUTES**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the October 8, 2025 regular meeting."

Motion by Missy Sinclair, second by Danette Keeler.  
Final Resolution: Motion Carried  
Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

**Action: B. CLOSED SESSION MINUTES**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the October 8, 2025 closed session meeting."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Meghan Sisk.  
Final Resolution: Motion Carried  
Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

**Action: C. ESTIMATED 2025 TAX LEVY**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adopt the Resolution determining the estimated amount of money to be raised by taxation for 2025 and establish the Board meeting of December 10, 2025, as the time for the public hearing regarding the levy, as recommended by the Assistant Superintendent for Business Services/CSBO and the Superintendent, as presented in the attached documents in 3 A.

Motion by Danette Keeler, second by Missy Sinclair.  
Final Resolution: Motion Carried  
Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

**Action: D. ACCEPTANCE OF AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR FY2025**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education accept the Auditor's Report, as recommended by the Assistant Superintendent/CSBO and the Superintendent".

Motion by Missy Sinclair, second by Drew Sernus.  
Final Resolution: Motion Carried  
Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

**Action: E. TRANSFER ABATEMENT RESOLUTION**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adopt the Resolution (i) transferring funds from the Operations and Maintenance Fund to the Bond and Interest fund of the District and (ii) abating a portion of the tax heretofore levied for the year 2025 to pay debt service on the General Obligation Limited Tax School Bonds, Series 2023, of the District."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Drew Sernus.  
Final Resolution: Motion Carried  
Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

**Action: F. NAGLIERI ASSESSMENT TEST**

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the purchase of the Naglieri Assessment Test for grades 2nd and 5th to begin assessments in the spring of 2026".

Motion by Danette Keeler, second by Missy Sinclair.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Missy Sinclair

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

Board Member Keeler stated that she has a conflict and will not be attendance for the December 10, 2025 Board of Education Meeting.

**10. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no Citizens' Remarks

**11. CLOSED SESSION**

There was no Closed Session.

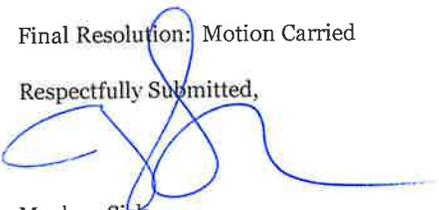
**12. ADJOURNMENT**

Recommended Motion (voice vote): "that the Board of Education motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m."

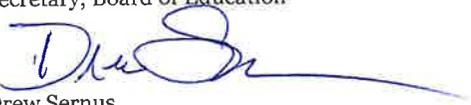
Voice Vote: All Yes

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,



Meghan Sisk  
Secretary, Board of Education



Drew Sernus  
President, Board of Education