

**Board of Education
Worth School District 127
Minutes of the Regular Board of Education Meeting
April 9, 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
Linda Esposito, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Robert Jeffers, Director of Technology
David Dvorchak, Director of Facilities and Grounds
Jason Tooth, Principal, Worth Junior High
Melissa Wills, 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

Jeff Pagano, WW
Peter Leggett, WE
Michelle Okrzesik, WE

1. MEETING OPENING

A. CALL TO ORDER

President Drew Sernus called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Drew Sernus, Danette Keeler, Meghan Sisk, Vince Flores, David Blanks
Michelle Egan arrived at 6:10 p.m.

Absent: Missy Sinclair

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President, Drew Sernus led the Pledge of Allegiance

2. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. WORTHWOODS/WORTH JUNIOR HIGH CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Dr. Fleming stated that construction at Worthwoods and Worth Junior High is progressing well with steel expected to be placed on the rooftop soon. The construction company and DLA Architect meet every Tuesday to discuss summer projects, including interior work at the junior high and additional space for staff. The current library and music area will be converted into a new conference room, and new floors will be installed throughout the building.

B. DECLAMATION TEAM UPDATE

Dr. Fleming introduced Principal Tooth to share an update regarding the Declamation Team. Mr. Tooth stated the Declamation Team won first place in the competition and out of 22 students, 15 earned medals. An honor roll breakfast was recently held with over 140 students recognized. The first soccer season is being piloted with two games scheduled and the team is excited about the new opportunity. On February 22nd, there was a job fair that was attended by myself and Dr. Eichstaedt and it was a great event to get our district name out there.

C. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMMITTEE

Dr. Fleming stated that the SEL Committee aims to implement interventions in August and work through the 2025-2026 school year to create a solid foundation for our schools. The committee will have their first meeting on Thursday, April 17th and will consist of teachers, social workers, nurses, paraprofessionals, administrators and two SEL Support Facilitators.

D. FOIA REQUESTS

Dr. Fleming stated that district has received and responded to 11 FOIA's, with one being from SmartProcure and rest being AI-generated.

Dr. Fleming discussed the possibility of moving the May 14th meeting to May 7th to be aligned with the timing of the Board Reorganization and 40-day certification period. The Board agreed to have the special Board Reorganization meeting on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 6 p.m.

3. ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

A. RFP FOR COPIERS/DIGITAL DUPLICATING MACHINES & MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

Cindy Dykas opened by giving the Board an update regarding the new copier maintenance agreement.

1. Request for Proposal (RFP) for Copiers

- a. Exempt from the formal Bid process because it falls under a technology provision, even though it is more than \$35,000
- b. Last time copiers were purchased was December 2018 – pushing 7 years old!
 - i. Typical life is 5 year; minimal usage during the Covid 19 pandemic allowed us to stretch it out a bit
 - ii. Original agreement with Xerox ended in December 2023
 - iii. Found another company for supplies and maintenance for short term, January 2024 – August 2025
- c. RFP released on 3/13/25
- d. Walk through with all potential vendors on 3/24 (8 companies attended)
- e. RFP's due 4/3 (5 submissions)
- f. RFP was very specific with specs for the machines.
- g. We wanted a total of 14 machines, district wide
 - i. NEW - included a large color copier for each office, equipped with software to track prints using staff key fob
- h. One Vendor was disqualified because basic speed specifications were not met in proposal
- i. Equipment pricing varied, ranged \$119k - \$148k
- j. 5-years of maintenance (B&W toner, rollers, drums, staples) ranged \$43k - \$81k
- k. Grand total \$163k - \$208k
 - i. Robert, Ben and I reviewed proposals in detail and used a comprehensive evaluation matrix.
 - i. Winner was Canon USA, Inc.
- m. FY26 cost will be all equipment and one-year maintenance, \$146k
- n. Only other costs will be paper and color toner based on usage
 - i. Annually for FY2027 – 2030 \$7,642 maintenance costs and color usage extra

4. DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

A. PRESCHOOL FOR ALL SCREENING UPDATE

- State-funded program serving students identified through DIAL-4 screenings as at risk of academic challenges.
- Low to moderate income families / DCFS care students automatically qualify for the program.
- Continues to be a highly sought-after program amongst Worth parents.
- The 2024-25 school year is close to maximum enrollment of 20 students per session (two sessions per day - 2.5 hours per day (General and Special Education).
- Led by a certified Early Childhood Teacher with the support of two paraprofessionals.
- Students are invited to attend all Worth Elementary's assemblies and have their own, such as a recent fashion show that the parents attended.
- The PFA program follows the Early Childhood Environmental Scale (ECERS)
- The recent ExcelRate monitoring visit awarded the program with a Bronze Award.
- Second Annual successful field trip to the Children's Museum in Oak Lawn. Two buses provided transportation for the students, staff, and parents.
- The program will continue to provide excellent services to our little ones during the 2025-26 school year in our new home at Worthwoods (the third home for this program -AC, WE, WW).

5. DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

A. WORTH JUNIOR HIGH MATH CURRICULUM UPDATE

Linda Esposito opened by stating that the district is currently piloting 2 new curriculum resources in the district this year.

This is so much more than just picking a new book with updated resources and more bells and whistles. Along with that came a huge shift in teaching practices based on the most current research.

This was hard work, and the teachers put in long hours learning and planning. We are almost at the end of year 1, and they are starting to see results. Tonight I am going to update you on the resources, the implementation, and the plan for next year.

MidSchool Math Presentation

Quick review

- Core Curriculum by MidSchool Math is being used in grades 6, 7, and 8 at WJH.
- Big Ideas Math vs MidSchool Math The WJH math teachers felt that their current math curriculum did not have the rigor required for students to be successful in meeting and exceeding CCSS for Math.
- Targeting Math Improvement. IAR math scores across the district have been very low partly due to the core curriculum resource. Another significant factor is the fact that the current WJH schedule inhibits teachers from meeting the recommended number of minutes for daily math instruction.
- What did we do? The WJH math teachers worked with our math consultant, Amanda Greene, to find a 6-8 math curriculum rooted in evidence-based and research-supported education approaches.

- School Year 2024-2025.
 - The decision was made to pilot Core Curriculum by MidSchool Math, a curriculum firmly rooted in mathematical rigor, with a balance of conceptual development, procedural fluency, and real-world application.
 - We purchased all of the necessary materials and provided support in the form of PD, coaching, modeling, co-teaching, observations, and feedback.

Year 1 Implementation

- Getting Ready
 - Know Your Resources
 - Learn the Lesson Structure
 - Plan Your Calendar
 - Set Up Your Classroom
 - Create the Learning Environment
- Setting the Tone
 - Explore Growth Mindset
 - Foster Collaboration
 - Build Perseverance
 - Emphasize the Practice of Revision
- Finding Your Rhythm
 - Make Sure You're On-Point - confident with the math you teach
 - Use the Pre- & Post-Assessments
 - Recall with the Domain Review
- Finishing Strong
 - Maintaining a Consistent Message
- MidSchool Math is anchored by 5 Growth Mindset Insights
 - Breaking through fixed mindsets is foremost.
 - Most students have a fixed mindset, thinking they are good or bad at math. Evidence shows that students with a fixed mindset are more likely to give up when concepts become challenging.
 - Student collaboration is at the center.
 - Students have an innate need to collaborate to learn most anything, including math. Humans are social creatures, and we need to have conversations with others to help us make sense of the world.
 - Story quadruples the longevity of mathematics recall.
 - Students need to learn math in a meaningful context. Story is the "unit" of human comprehension.
 - Visuals light up the mathematical part of the brain.
 - Research now shows us that visuals actually "light-up" the parietal lobe areas of the brain, those which are central to calculation and processing of numbers.
 - Visuals also facilitate higher-level thinking and enhance communication of mathematical ideas.
 - Failing safely is the key to success.
 - Failure is an integral part of the learning process. Failing in a safer environment will enhance learning and increase the likelihood of applying the learning at the moment of need, months or years later.
- Year 1 Struggles
 - Learning how to productive struggle. This was hard for students. They were waiting for the teacher to jump in and give them strategies and answers.
 - Productive struggle was also hard for the teachers. How long do I let them struggle before the struggle becomes counterproductive?
 - Learning how to ask the right questions to guide students in the right direction without giving them too much help.
- What Have We Noticed
 - Students are engaged in meaningful learning.
 - Kids that sat quietly at the beginning of the year are talking in their groups and leading discussions.
 - Students are working harder and longer without asking for help.
 - Students are more confident in their abilities to be mathematicians.
 - It's ok to make mistakes and try again.
 - There's more than one way to get to an answer.
- My Observations
 - There are only 3 math teachers at WJH. They bear the weight of all of this work on their shoulders. Every time I see them, they are working together as a team and smiling. They acknowledge the struggles, but they are up for the challenge. They believe in the program and the Growth Mindsets it is based upon. They go above and beyond, meeting together before and after school, and have even rearranged their Advisory classes so they have time to help and support students with math.

Closing Remarks

- If you recall, this has been a pilot year, and we are not ready to recommend a formal adoption to the Board.
- You may not see results in next year's IAR scores, but trust the process. I believe you will see noticeable increased growth in the next couple of years.
- Without a doubt, this has been a very successful year 1 implementation!

B. WORTH ELEMENTARY/WORTHWOODS ELA CURRICULUM UPDATE

Wit & Wisdom Presentation

Quick review

- Wit & Wisdom by Great Minds is being used in grades K-5 at WE and WW.
- Schoolwide vs Wit & Wisdom There were gaps in the Schoolwide curriculum in regards to CCSS for ELA. Additionally, the curriculum was not proving to be effective in building foundational reading skills. This particularly impacted young students who are learning to read and struggling readers.
- What did we do? We studied the newly released IL Comprehensive Literacy Plan to learn about the evidence-based supports and resources that are necessary to ensure that every student receives developmentally appropriate literacy instruction.
- School Year 2024-2025. The decision was made to go all-in with Wit & Wisdom. We purchased all of the necessary materials and provided support in the form of PD, coaching, modeling, co-teaching, observations, and feedback.

Implementation. Becoming a Wit & Wisdom teacher takes time and skill. Most teachers will follow a similar 3-phase progression of implementation. Learn, Deepen, Know. This year, all staff are in the **Learn** phase of implementation where teachers **learn** Wit & Wisdom by teaching the lesson as written.

- In the **LEARN** Phase. The teacher:
 - Follows the lesson with minimal or no adjustments,
 - Uses all of the elements of the curriculum,
 - Begins to show understanding of the purpose of the lesson's learning, sequence, and build.
- The teacher might:
 - Teach the lesson as written, but may take longer than the recommended 90 minutes,
 - Make low-stakes adjustments, such as switching a Think-Pair-Share to a Mix and Mingle to meet student needs for movement, and
 - Clearly connect and smoothly transition between lesson activities.
- Year 1 Struggles
 - Feeling a sense of loss of autonomy by being told to follow the lesson as written.
 - Feeling overwhelmed by all that needs to be learned and the time it takes to learn and plan it.
 - Learning the pacing of the lessons, units, and modules.
 - Allowing the students to struggle productively and only offer supports to individuals when needed.
- Year 1 Successes
 - The admin team, coaches, and trainers from Great Minds conducted several curriculum walk-through observations this year.
 - All teachers are using the curriculum and implementing the lessons as written.
 - They are using active student engagement strategies.
 - Teachers and students are using academic vocabulary.
- Most recent walkthrough observations
 - Teachers appear more comfortable and confident in using the curriculum.
 - Students are familiar with routines, instructional practices, and engagement strategies.
 - Students are engaged in active listening, speaking, and dialogue.
 - Scaffolding is provided only for those who need it.
 - Teachers are creating excitement with the delivery of the lesson.
 - Interactions are positive and supportive.
- What Have We Noticed?
 - The ELA curriculum integrates reading and writing very well.
 - Students are gaining a lot of knowledge in science and social studies.
 - The topics they are reading about expose them to rich vocabulary and teaches them how to speak using that vocabulary and then to write about the topics using those words.

Looking ahead

- Phase 2, **DEEPEN**, is Not Necessarily Year 2
 - In phase 2, teachers **deepen** their understanding of and their ability to implement Wit & Wisdom with a focus on meeting students needs.
 - Some teachers will be ready for the deepen phase, some will need more time to learn, and new teachers will be in the learn phase.
- In the **DEEPEN** Phase The teacher makes lesson adjustments that:
 - Consistently uphold the goals of the lesson, consistently uphold the rigor of the task,
 - Positively affect student learning, and
 - Address an evidence-based student need.
- The teacher might:
 - Plan and ask scaffolded questions that support higher-level lesson questions as students demonstrate they need such additional support,
 - Make strategic pacing decisions that allow students to complete a lesson in close to the time recommended, and
 - Use additional instructional time during the day to extend learning, such as of a vocabulary word explored in a core lesson.

Any new implementation takes at least 3-5 years. Our goal is for all teachers to reach and maintain phase 3. Teachers **know** the curriculum and have the skills to maximize the teaching and learning with it.

- In the **KNOW** Phase The teacher
 - Maximizes teacher and student actions that define a Wit & Wisdom classroom,

- Consistently and effectively uses data-informed instruction practices to assess student needs and to develop appropriate lesson adjustments, and
- Internalizes the knowledge and skill demands of assessments, maximizing associated learning opportunities.
- The teacher might
 - Analyze students' assessment products to determine needed scaffolds, extensions, or additional teaching,
 - Provide focused, actionable feedback to students, and
 - Facilitate academic conversations so that students engage in the type of thinking a lesson requires.

Closing Remarks

- If you recall, this has been a pilot year, and we are not ready to recommend a formal adoption to the Board.
- The teachers and coaches have worked extremely hard this year learning the curriculum, and they look forward to seeing how they can use their knowledge in year 2.
- Without a doubt, this has been a very successful year 1 implementation!

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

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 Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action (Consent): B. BOARD BILLS PAYABLE

Resolution: Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Accounts Payable for \$153,387.64 (EDUCATIONAL); \$48,791.90 (OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE); \$73,488.46 (TRANSPORTATION); and \$980,795.86 (CAPITAL PROJECTS) for a total of \$1,256,463.86."

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

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 \$777,856.41, the Building Fund in the amount of \$55,747.97, and the FICA/IMRF/Medicare in the amount of \$51,497.52."

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action (Consent): D. RESIGNATION OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - NERMINE KULAFOVSKI - STUDENT SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER - EFFECTIVE MARCH 29, 2025

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action (Consent): E. RESIGNATION OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - FRANNIE VANDORAN - PARAPROFESSIONAL - EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 14, 2025

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action (Consent): F. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - DANIELLE ROGERS - PART-TIME SCHOOL SECRETARY - EFFECTIVE FOR THE 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action (Consent): G. EMPLOYMENT OF CLASSIFIED STAFF - LISA SMITH - FULL-TIME SCHOOL SECRETARY - EFFECTIVE FOR THE 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR

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

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action (Consent): H. 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 Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

8. MOTIONS

Action: A. REGULAR BOARD MINUTES

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the March 12, 2025 regular meeting."

Motion by Danette Keeler, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Abstain: Drew Sernus

Action: B. CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the March 12, 2025 closed session meeting."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Danette Keeler.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Abstain: Drew Sernus, David Blanks

Action: C. APPROVAL OF LEASE AGREEMENT WITH R.I.S.E.

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the resolution authorizing a lease with the Governing Board of South Cook Intermediate Service Center for the 2025-2026 School Year."

Motion by Vince Flores, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action: D. APPROVAL OF LEASE AGREEMENT WITH EISENHOWER COOPERATIVE

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the resolution authorizing a lease with the Eisenhower Cooperative for the 2025-2026 School Year."

Motion by Danette Keeler, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action: E. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) SUPPORT FACILITATOR POSITION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the hiring of one new SEL Support Facilitator Position for FY26."

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action: F. TITLE ONE CONSOLIDATED DISTRICT PLAN

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Worth School District 127 Title One Consolidated District Plan for the 2025/2026 School Year."

Motion by Danette Keeler, second by Vince Flores.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action: G. APPROVAL OF SSBC REPRESENTATIVE

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education appoint Cynthia Dykas, Representative, and, as Alternate Representative, Dr. Mark T. Fleming, to represent Worth School District 127 in the South Suburban Benefit Cooperative Board of Directors for fiscal year 2025-2026".

Motion by Michelle Egan, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action: H. RFP FOR COPIERS/DIGITAL DUPLICATING MACHINES & MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education approve the Purchase of 14 Photocopiers/Digital Duplicating Machines and associated five (5) year Copier Maintenance Agreement with Canon USA, at a price not to exceed \$176,610."

Motion by Vince Flores, second by Danette Keeler.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

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

David Blanks will not be present for the May 14, 2025 Board of Education Meeting.

10. CITIZENS' REMARKS - AGENDA ITEMS

No Citizens' Remarks

11. CLOSED SESSION

Action: A. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

"Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education adjourn to closed session at 7:30 p.m. to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees; and Security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property; and student disciplinary cases."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by Michelle Egan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

Action: B. RECONVENE IN PUBLIC SESSION

Recommended Motion (roll call): "that the Board of Education upon completion of it's discussions in closed session reconvene in public session at 8:23 p.m."

Motion by Meghan Sisk, second by David Blanks.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yes: Drew Sernus, David Blanks, Meghan Sisk, Danette Keeler, Michelle Egan, Vince Flores

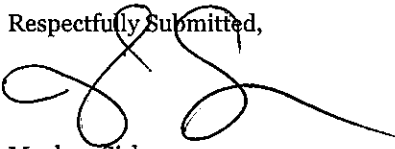
12. ADJOURNMENT

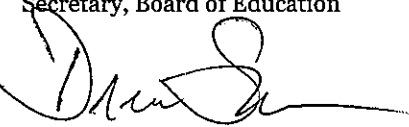
Recommended Motion (voice vote): "that the Board of Education motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m."

Voice Vote: All Yes

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Respectfully Submitted,


Meghan Sisk
Secretary, Board of Education


Drew Sernus
President, Board of Education