

The Board of Education, Downers Grove Grade School District 58, DuPage County, Illinois, met in regular session on Monday, January 8, 2024, at the Downers Grove Village Hall. The meeting was live-streamed to the public on the Village of Downers Grove YouTube channel.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

The President called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and announced that it was the regular monthly meeting of the District 58 Board of Education. Members present: President Darren Hughes; Vice President Gregory Harris; and Members Kirat Doshi, Melissa Ellis, Emily Hanus, Steve Olczyk and Tracy Weiner. Members absent: none. Also in attendance were Kevin Russell, Superintendent; Justin Sisul, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Staff Development; Elizabeth Ehrhart, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; James Eichmiller, Assistant Superintendent for Technology and Learning; Jessica Stewart, Assistant Superintendent for Special Services; Todd Drafall, Assistant Superintendent for Business/CSBO; Michelle Kovar, Manager of Business Services; Kevin Barto, Director of Buildings and Grounds; Faith Behr, Interim Community Relations Coordinator; and Melissa Jerves, Board Secretary.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND SCHOOL REPORT**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Hillcrest School Student Council officers Keira O'Donoghue, Audrina Tung, Jahni Kolavennu, Rachel Reynolds and Tommy Dussman. They highlighted the grade level buddies program and Hillcrest Families, where older students get to know younger students and serve as mentors. Hillcrest students earn paw slips for demonstrating the traits of "Be respectful, be responsible, be safe," and are recognized as the Hounddog of the Month. Students meet once a month for an all-school meeting on a topic such as "grit" and "growth mindset." Student Council service projects include the collection of travel-size personal items and 121 pounds of candy to donate to Operation Support Our Troops, a food drive for the FISH food pantry, and making Valentine's cards for seniors in the community.

PTA Co-Presidents Kelly Fallon-Wilson and Katie Wojciehowski shared that the Hillcrest PTA works hard to create a family atmosphere. This year they created a Celebrations Tree and assigned each grade level a different world holiday to explore and make decorations. A New Family mentoring program pairs new Hillcrest families with experienced families to help develop a community feel. Several free family events are planned each year, and parent volunteers teach the Partners in Art program in classrooms throughout the year.

Principal Michelle Rzepka reported that this year's school theme is "Anything is Pawsible" and focuses on establishing relationships with staff, students and the

larger community. She shared that spring 2022 writing benchmarks revealed a weakness in writing skills. After setting a school improvement goal to enhance writing instruction, Hillcrest students showed notable improvement, moving from 47% to 66% of students meeting the benchmark on the IAR. This year, Hillcrest staff examined assessment and observational data and determined students showed weakness specifically in written expression and writing fluency. They set a goal to enhance reading comprehension by improving students' ability to read multiple texts and orally respond to questioning, and work toward developing writing fluency while using technology. They have created a detailed plan that involves professional development, grade level progression, and assessment, with the ultimate goal that students enjoy reading and writing, and can read and demonstrate their knowledge.

### 3. COMMUNICATIONS

#### Email Communications

1. Email from Nicole Bernard regarding 2024 school calendar ~ *response from Superintendent Dr. Kevin Russell.*

#### Freedom of Information Act Requests

1. Freedom of Information Act request from Chelsea Foreman regarding employees certified in CPI ~ *response from Board Secretary Melissa Jerves.*
2. Freedom of Information Act request from Phillip Bolton regarding lawsuits filed by and against District 58 in the past 5 years ~ *response from Board Secretary Melissa Jerves.*
3. Freedom of Information Act request from Phillip Bolton regarding contracts for rental of property, real estate or office space in the past 5 years ~ *response from Board Secretary Melissa Jerves.*
4. Freedom of Information Act request from Phillip Bolton regarding bids related to the DG58 referendum spending on school upgrades and additions ~ *response from Board Secretary Melissa Jerves.*

### 4. SPOTLIGHT ON OUR SCHOOLS

#### A. Gifted Programming Update

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Liz Ehrhart introduced Curriculum Coordinator Eleni Gajewski, who presented an update on the work of the Gifted Committee. Some staff attended a workshop by Jan Kise regarding differentiation strategies for the classroom, which were shared with the rest of the committee. These strategies, which apply to students at any level, allow gifted students to be challenged within the structure of regular classroom instruction.

Dr. Gajewski reviewed the current gifted program model, which consists of one full day per week of project- and inquiry-based learning. Students are bussed to a single school. While they are excited and engaged in their learning, students are mindful of missing classroom and special events. The

committee continues to work on building change in the program based on current strengths, exploring how to meet the needs of gifted students five days a week. Future program recommendations will take into account the coming move of sixth graders to the middle school, how to support classroom teachers, and whether any adjustments to identification criteria are needed.

Ms. Ehrhart reported that the curriculum office is evaluating the process and assessment procedures for math acceleration, and establishing a timeline for identifying students that coordinates with benchmark assessment. They will review numbers, class lists, and transportation needs of students who qualify for math acceleration of one or two grade levels.

## 5. REPORTS TO THE BOARD

### A. Superintendent

Dr. Russell reported on the following topics:

- **Curriculum:** Winter benchmarking is underway. All students will take the NWEA MAP assessments in reading and math; many will also take AIMSWEB Plus. Reports will be sent home before the end of the month. Materials for the ELA resource pilot currently in progress will be on display at the public library and the District Office.
- **Technology:** The District is collaborating with the Downers Grove Public Library to provide all District 58 students with a library card, even if they live in unincorporated Downers Grove or are otherwise ineligible. An intergovernmental agreement is being drafted, and families can expect a question about sharing data as part of the registration process. Only those students whose parents/guardians opt in will receive cards.
- **Special Services:** Special education teams will be using the Facilitated IEP process for all meetings going forward. The pilot meetings were very successful and we will continue with facilitation as our standard approach.
- **Facilities:** Winter break work included asbestos abatement of some ceiling and floor tiles at the middle schools. All areas received air quality clearances by a third-party environmental testing company. Contractors also moved some exterior doors at O'Neill. The February board meeting will include a recommendation for approval of an agreement with a furniture dealer as part of the referendum construction process.
- **Public Relations:** District 58 is closely monitoring the winter weather forecast. Students and staff are prepared for potential e-learning days, and updates on social media and in Communicate 58 ask families to familiarize themselves with the e-learning plan and winter weather procedures.

### B. Monthly Business

Assistant Superintendent for Business Todd Drafall reported that the

December 2023 Year-to-Date and Treasurer’s reports are not yet available due to the timing of winter break. They will be shared with the Board as soon as possible.

Betsy Allen of Miller Cooper & Co. presented the FY2023 Audit Report. After reviewing the legal audit requirements, she noted that the increase in debt due to the issuance of referendum bonds moved the District down one level of recognition, as calculated by ISBE. Miller Cooper issued an unmodified clean opinion and found no material weaknesses in its management letter.

C. Policy Committee

Vice President Harris reported on the December 19, 2023, Policy Committee meeting. The committee reviewed the updates in PRESS Issue 113, which were presented to the Board for a first reading.

Member Doshi moved and Member Hanus seconded the motion to approve for first reading the policies in PRESS Issue 113 as presented by the Policy Committee.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Members Doshi, Ellis, Hanus, Harris, Hughes,  
Olczyk and Weiner  
NAYS: None Motion carried

D. Legislative Committee

Member Hanus reported on the December 20, 2023, Legislative Committee meeting. The committee met to plan and prepare for the annual Legislative Breakfast, which is scheduled for February 2. They brainstormed broad discussion topics and discussed current legislation in Springfield, including the upcoming Tier 2 pension fix for the Teacher’s Retirement System (TRS).

E. Financial Advisory Committee

The Financial Advisory Committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

F. District Leadership Team

Member Doshi reported on the December 18, 2023, District Leadership Team meeting. The committee reviewed the first progress update for the new strategic plan and focused on the logistics of reporting updates going forward. A website update is in progress to archive the previous strategic plan data and provide the information and dashboard for the new plan.

G. Health and Wellness Committee

The Health and Wellness Committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

H. SASED Report

Dr. Russell reported that a new Executive Director has been selected and a plan is being developed to transition from the interim directors.

6. **DISCUSSION**

There were no items for discussion.

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jennifer Schuh, Kingsley attendance area, commented that her son is still at home and has not been placed at Kingsley or SASSED. She stated that the District is willing to spend to send her child to a therapeutic day school rather than allow him to attend a District school.

8. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Approval of Minutes – December 11, 2023

Member Weiner moved and Member Olczyk seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023, regular meeting as presented.

VOICE VOTE

Motion carried

9. **CONSENT AGENDA**

The President stated that a motion would be in order relative to the items on the consent agenda, consisting of the Personnel Report and Financial Statements (consisting of the List of Bills and Summary). Member Doshi moved and Member Weiner seconded the motion to approve the following items:

A. Personnel

- The assignment of two support staff employees.
- The resignation of one support staff employee.
- Staff stipends.

B. Financial Reports

The list of bills and obligations prepared for payment on January 8, 2024, as well as the revolving and imprest issued in December 2023 as shown on the list submitted under the date of January 8, 2024, in the total amount of \$3,947,805.66 and direct that they be so entered in the minutes and orders drawn for their payment in accordance with the following summary and that the President and Secretary be authorized to certify the list to the School Treasurer.

BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT 58  
SUMMARY PAGE JANUARY 8, 2024  
LIST OF BILLS & EXPENDITURES

**EDUCATION FUND (Fund 10)**

**List of Bills – January 8, 2024**

**\$473,650.90**

Imprest Checks - December 2023	\$10,465.76
Revolving Fund - December 2023	\$21,848.66
District Credit Card - December 2023	\$11,103.28
<b><u>OPERATIONS &amp; MAINTENANCE FUND (Fund 20)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$106,784.45
Imprest Checks - December 2023	\$7,468.68
District Credit Card - December 2023	\$3,219.85
<b><u>DEBT SERVICE (Fund 30)</u></b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b><u>TRANSPORTATION FUND (Fund 40)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$773,564.19
Imprest Checks - December 2023	\$88.50
District Credit Card - December 2023	\$400.00
<b><u>IMRF (Fund 50)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$0.00
<b><u>FICA/MEDICARE (Fund 51)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$0.00
Revolving Fund - December 2023	\$0.00
<b><u>SITE &amp; CONSTRUCTION FUND (Fund 60)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$375,447.18
<b><u>CAPITAL - REFERENDUM (Fund 61)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$826,963.41
<b><u>WORKING CASH FUND (Fund 70)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$0.00
<b><u>FIRE &amp; LIFE SAFETY FUNDS (Fund 90)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$0.00
<b><u>MEDICAL INSURANCE RESERVE FUND (Fund 13)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$1,336,800.80
<b><u>SINKING FUND (Fund 21)</u></b>	
List of Bills - January 8, 2024	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,947,805.66</b>

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Members Doshi, Ellis, Hanus, Harris, Hughes,  
 Olczyk and Weiner  
 NAYS: None Motion carried

(Copy of Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements  
 attached to official minutes)

**10. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION**

A. FY 2023 Audit Report

Member Weiner moved and Member Doshi seconded the motion to accept the FY23 Audit Report as presented.

VOICE VOTE

Motion carried

B. 2024-25 School Fees

Member Weiner moved and Member Doshi seconded the motion to approve the 2024-2025 school fees as presented.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Members Doshi, Ellis, Hanus, Harris, Hughes, Olczyk and Weiner

NAYS: None Motion carried

C. Surplus Equipment: Computer Cart, Floor Machine, Mister

Member Weiner moved and Member Olczyk seconded the motion to designate as surplus the items listed in the attached memo.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Members Doshi, Ellis, Hanus, Harris, Hughes, Olczyk and Weiner

NAYS: None Motion carried

**11. CONSTRUCTION CONSENT AGENDA**

The President stated that a motion would be in order relative to the items on the construction consent agenda as presented in the packet materials. Member Weiner moved and Member Olczyk seconded the motion to approve the following item:

A. Bid Group #2: Phase 1 Elementary Schools

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Members Doshi, Ellis, Hanus, Harris, Hughes, Olczyk and Weiner

NAYS: None Motion carried

**12. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President Hughes announced the following dates:

Wednesday, January 10, 3:45 p.m. Legislative Committee  
O'Neill Middle School

Friday, January 12, 7 a.m. Financial Advisory Committee  
O'Neill Middle School

Wednesday, January 31, 3:45 p.m.

Legislative Committee  
O'Neill Middle School

Monday, February 12, 7 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting  
Downers Grove Village Hall

### 13. CLOSED SESSION

Member Weiner moved and Member Harris seconded the motion to move to closed session for the purpose of discussing matters relating to:

- A. The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District; 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)
- B. Consideration of student disciplinary matters; 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9)
- C. The placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students; 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10)
- D. Litigation...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; 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)
- E. Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06; 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21)

VOICE VOTE

Motion carried

Member Harris moved and Member Hanus seconded the motion to reconvene in open session.

VOICE VOTE

Motion carried

The Board convened to closed session at 8:37 p.m. and reconvened to open session at 9:25 p.m.

### 14. ACTION AS A RESULT OF CLOSED SESSION

#### A. Closed Session Minutes

Member Doshi moved and Member Weiner seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the December 11, 2023, closed session meeting and keep them permanently closed for reasons of confidentiality.

VOICE VOTE

Motion carried

### 15. ADJOURNMENT



Member Harris moved and Member Weiner seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

VOICE VOTE

Motion carried

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

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Darren Hughes, President

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Melissa Jerves, Secretary