

MINUTES FOR A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205, HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2021, AT THORNRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL, 15000 COTTAGE GROVE AVENUE, DOLTON, IL 60419 AND VIA WEBEX CONFERENCING, BEGINNING AT 6:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 6:36p.m. President Graham made the following announcement: Call to Order. Tonight's meeting is being streamed live via videoconferencing on WebEx and is video recorded. The Board President declares that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of the current Disaster Proclamation issued by the Governor. Physical presence for the meeting is not feasible due to the disaster.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY
BOARD PRESIDENT

On roll call, Members Banks, Brown Graham, Lawrence, Moody, and Whittington answered. Members Butler was absent. Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Superintendent, Dr. Jerry B. Doss, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources; Mr. Toriano Horton, Assistant Superintendent of Business; Mr. Brett Fickes, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Mr. Thomas Porter, Executive Director of Special Services; and Mr. Adam Dauksas, legal counsel, were also present.

ROLL
CALL

Report from Curriculum Committee: Mr. Fickes reported that the last meeting was held on 09/02/21 at 4:00pm. Introduced Student Board of Education members that serve as chairs on Curriculum Committee and Director of College and Careers, Dr. Ratliff was introduced who shared his initiative for this year. Reviewed semester 2 2021 grade distribution data. E-Learning plan in lieu of snow/emergency was reviewed and will be presented to the board in October. Talked about extended learning plan which will be implemented later in the month.

COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE

Report from Finance Committee: Mr. Horton reported that the last meeting was held on 08/31/21 at 4:00pm via WebEx. There were two (2) action items approved and will be presented at tonight's meeting for board approval. The next meeting will be held on 10/5/21 at 4:00pm via WebEx

Report from Policy Committee: None.

Report from Discipline Committee: None.

Report from Facilities Committee: Mr. Garrett reported that the next meeting will be held on 09/23/21 at 4:00pm via WebEx.

Dr. Cunningham stated the following:

SUPERINTENDENT
REPORT

Start up for District 205

Despite our schools' challenges with reopening for in-person learning this fall, it has been wonderful to see students returning ready to learn. The schools we left are not the schools we entered. We have changes in requirements and expectations. It seems that as fast as we learn the new expectations - things change. For that purpose, we are sending a link to our FAQ page for our website and social media. The district will keep students, parents, teachers, and staff up to date with the many rapid changes required during the new normal.

The district is aware that many are challenged by the new normal. A little less than a year ago, the uptick in COVID-19 cases helped the district decide remote learning was the safest option for the school. At that time, there were no treatments or vaccines, and the district could decide the safest option for our students. Today, treatments and vaccines are available for COVID-19. However, according to the Illinois

State Board of Education (ISBE), “In-person learning with the appropriate protective measures should be both safe and essential to students’ mental health and academic growth. The majority of students need full-time in-person access to their teachers and support network at school to stay engaged, to learn effectively, and to maintain social-emotional wellness.”

Although many see the new guidelines as relaxed, they are considered safe. The district is following those measures. It is our purpose to educate students. Currently, in person learning is required with the mitigations for safety. The school system currently does not have the option to institute remote learning for all, as we had last year. Remote learning is only available for quarantined students. Once the quarantine is over, students must return to in-person learning.

The newest mitigation is vaccination or testing. All district personnel are required to be vaccinated or tested for COVID-19. If they choose to test, personnel will be tested weekly. This system goes into place on September 19, 2021.

The school system comprises both local and state governments; it includes local control of state requirements. We must follow state requirements for recognition. Recognition includes certification of diplomas and state funding. We will follow the requirements and do all we can to keep our students and staff safe. It will not be easy with the challenges we face, but we will educate our students safely.

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded, to **Approve the Consent Agenda**, which includes the following:

CONSENT AGENDA

- Minutes of the Regular Meeting dated Regular Meeting dated August 11, 2021
- The District 205 bills as presented for payment dated August 12, 2021, through September 8, 2021
- Personnel dated September 8, 2021 (Resignations, Leave of Absence, New Hires and Terminations)
 - **Administrative Employment (1):** Nakeisha Knight, Thornwood, Assistant Principal, effective August 12, 2021
 - **Certified Employment (6):** Ladesta Skulark, Peace Center, Science, Master’s, Step I, effective August 12, 2021; Fredrick Gandy, Thornton, Attendance Counselor, Master’s +60, Step B, effective August 23, 2021; Steven Flores, Thornton, Special Education, Master’s, Step F, effective August 23, 2021; Adrian Vargas-Ibarra, Thornwood, Math, Bachelor’s, Step A, effective August 23, 2021; Lauren Clawson, Thornton, At-Risk Counselor, Master’s, Step B, effective August 26, 2021; Charles Slagle, Thornton, Special Education, Master’s +60, Step C, effective August 30, 2021
 - **Non-Certified Employment (7):** Gabrielle Perkins, Thornton, Permanent Substitute, effective August 12, 2021; Willard Cotton, Thornridge/Floater, Permanent Substitute, effective August 12, 2021; Alesha Evans, Thornwood, Administrative Assistant-Attendance Office, effective August 23, 2021; Alexandria Reed, Thornwood, Administrative Assistant- Substitute Office, effective August 25, 2021; Joel Diaz, Thornwood, Maintenance, effective August 30, 2021; Loribeth Brower, Outlook, Executive Administrative Assistant, effective September 13, 2021; Pamela Linton, Thornridge, Administrative Assistant-Assistant Principal, effective September 7, 2021

MINUTES

BILLS

PERSONNEL

- **Termination (1):** Alexander LaFrano, Thornridge, Groundsman, effective date September 8, 2021
- **Resignation (5):** Anesha Fultz, Thornton, French, effective August 13, 2021; Adrian Vargas-Ibarra, Thornwood, Paraprofessional, effective August 20, 2021; Alexandria Reed, Thornwood, Administrative Assistant-Substitute Office, effective August 26, 2021; Audra Walker, Thornridge, Administrative Assistant, effective September 15, 2021; Gabrielle Perkins, Thornridge, Administrative Assistant, effective August 11, 2021

On roll call, Lawrence, Banks, Brown, Graham, Moody and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

The following individual sent comments in via email during Public Participation:

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Hello. My name is Kim Hunt, and I am a concerned parent of a senior student attending Thornridge High School. I received a call last week from a staff member at Thornridge advising that a student has tested positive in my son's class. When I inquired about Covid testing for all of the students in that class, to ensure that none of the other students were infected, I was advised that if I wanted to have my child tested, I could. At that time, there were 5 known cases and a school team of 14 children that tested positive for Covid-19. But, without testing, temperature checks and someone volunteering that information, you really have no idea how many children are infected throughout District 205.

As a concerned parent, I would like to understand what is the school's and district's threshold for the number of students that have to be infected by Corona Virus, before a quarantine is put in place? I have seen pictures of the classrooms and they do not reflect 6 ft. social distancing between the students. Temperature checks are not being conducted on the students when they enter the school, however, when I enter as a visitor, my temperature is checked.

I spoke with the Principle who advised me that he doesn't feel that there is a threat and wearing masks at this time is enough. However, he could not advise if when a threat is known, if the school is then sanitized and disinfected to remove any barriers so that our children are protected. He did advise, however, that there are ion air cleaning machines that help. These children who are infected, have been all over the school and touching a variety of surfaces that can become a hot spot. The Principle advised that surfaces are not contagious. However, per the CDC, Disinfection is recommended in indoor community settings where there has been a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 24 hours. The risk of fomite transmission can be reduced by wearing masks consistently and correctly, practicing hand hygiene, cleaning, and taking other measures to maintain healthy facilities.

So, if a child (or children) has been infected with the Corona Virus, at what point do you ensure that the class and school is thoroughly sanitized and disinfected, since the kids are pretty much all over the school, everyday? What is the school/district doing to ensure that my son (or any kid) does not contract this virus and that they do not bring it home to their family, whereby they can get infected and possibly spread it to others? The Delta variant is deadlier than the original reported variant. As you are aware, this disease is not only severely effecting people, it is killing people. When I send my child to school, I (as most parents do), leave him in your care and keeping and I do not expect to receive him home, from you, with a deadly virus that not only he can contract, but that can spread to our entire family. You have many parents that are very concerned, and some have start to withdraw their children from school. Is this a matter

for the Media to get involved in or is the School District and Board ready to step in and protect our children more effectively?

Dr. Cunningham replied that he has recently spoke with this parent and understands that she wants her student safe as possible, and the district does not want to lose any student and have provided PPE and are following all CDC guidelines. He will look into other suggestions made by Ms. Hunt.

The following individuals spoke during Public Participation:

- David Etheridge, resident, alumni, and district education – commented as to why board meetings are virtual when students and staff are in-person.

Public Hearing on the 2021-2022 District 205 Budget – Mr. Horton

PUBLIC HEARING

- There were no questions from the board or public

- None

FOIA

Mr. Fickes presented the following information:

COMMUNICATIONS

- Thornridge High School:
 - Welcomes everyone back to school
- Thornton Township High School
 - Welcome everyone back to school
- Thornwood High School
 - 50 PCs for People CPU Giveaway to commemorate 50 years of Thunderbird excellence
 - Virtual back-to-school night was shared with the parents and takes place 09/09/21
 - Varsity volleyball girls 2-0!

Faculty Association, Mr. Bearden:

PRESENTATION(S)

There are a number of concerns the association feels that the administration helps to meet the needs of students and staff.

- What type of programs will be put in place throughout the year at the schools and a true, well-structured summer program that would be in-person. We are missing a great opportunity of offering summer school this past summer. Credit recovery is not the answer when it comes to in-person instruction throughout the school year and summer.
- Offering better help services for support (social emotional, mental health, etc.).
- Technology concerns have been a challenge (inventory of chrome books and internet).
- Updated COVID chart on district website has been very helpful but there is an inconsistency between schools on contact tracing protocol.
- Slow turnaround on problems that need to be repaired in classrooms. Teachers have been directed to address issues directly with administration instead of school dude for a quick turnaround.
- Many students who have one-to-one bus service have not yet attended school.
- In-person board meeting going forward is recommended to give the right message to the community.

Mr. Fickes introduced:

- IB Diploma Programme as presented by Jason Curl (Thornridge High School), Brad Ablin (Thornton Township High School) and Jennifer Merwald (Thornwood High School)

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mrs. Whittington seconded the **Approval of Second Reading of PRESS Recommended Updates (Issue 107)** as presented by Dr. Doss. On roll call, Members Lawrence, Whittington, Banks, Brown, and Moody voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE SECOND READING OF PRESS RECOMMENDED UPDATES (ISSUE 107)

Mr. Banks moved, Ms. Moody seconded the **Approval of 2021-2022 District Budget and Resolution; Budget Hearing** as presented by Mr. Horton. On roll call, Members Banks, Moody, Brown, Graham, Lawrence, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE 2021-2022 DISTRICT BUDGET AND RESOLUTION; BUDGET HEARING

Mr. Banks moved, Ms. Moody seconded the **Approval of Resolution Authorizing FY2022 General Procurement Plan** as presented by Mr. Horton. On roll call, Members Banks, Moody, Brown, Graham, Lawrence, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING FY2022 GENERAL PROCUREMENT PLAN

At 7:40 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Brown seconded, to go into **Executive Session** pursuant to Section 2C of the Illinois Open Meetings Act to consider:

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees;
- Student discipline;
- Collective negotiating matters, and
- Pending, probable or imminent litigation.

On roll call, Members Lawrence, Brown, Banks, Graham, Moody, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

At 8:45p.m., Ms. Moody moved, Mr. Brown, seconded to **Reconvene Regular Session**. On roll call, Members Moody, Brown, Banks, Graham, Lawrence, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

RECONVENE REGULAR SESSION

Ms. Moody moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Approve the Semi-Annual Review of unreleased closed meeting minutes for public inspection**. The need for confidentiality still exists as to all remaining closed meeting minutes to protect an individual's privacy or the District's interests. The closed meeting minutes, or portions thereof, from the following dates require confidential treatment:

APPROVAL OF SEMI-ANNUAL REVIEW OF UNRELEASED CLOSED MEETING MINUTES FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| December 2019 | March 2020 | April 2020 | June 2020 |
| September 2020 | November 2020 | February 2021 | March 2021 |
| April 2021 | June 2021 | | |

On roll call, Members Moody, Lawrence, Banks, Brown, Graham, Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

At 8:48p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Brown seconded to **Adjourn the Meeting**. On roll call, Members Lawrence, Brown, Banks, Graham, Moody, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

President

Secretary