



Wednesday, March 8, 2023
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

BOARD OF EDUCATION, THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205 HELD AT THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL 15001 SOUTH BROADWAY, HARVEY, ILLINOIS, AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS CONFERENCING AT 6:30 PM

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.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 entire Board of Education and community is not feasible due to the disaster.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY
BOARD PRESIDENT

On roll call, Members Banks, Graham, Lawrence, Moody, and Whittington answered. Members Brown and Butler were absent. Dr. Nathaniel Cunningham, Superintendent, Dr. Jerry B. Doss, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources; Mr. Toriano Horton, Assistant Superintendent of Business; Mr. Brett Fickes, Assistant Superintendent 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 next meeting will be held on 03/01/23 via WebEx. Discussion items included report from Student Board of Education Curriculum Committee, recent ECRA data, celebrated and discussed a pilot program in teaching African American History course. Next meeting will be in April.

COMMITTEE OF THE
WHOLE

Report from Finance Committee: Mr. Horton reported that the last meeting was held on 03/01/23. Each action item approved will be presented at tonight's meeting for board approval. The next meeting will be held on 04/04/23 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 March 30, 2023, at 4:00pm via WebEx.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Regular Meeting and Executive Session Minutes dated February 8, 2023
- B. The District 205 bills as presented for payment dated February 9, 2023, through March 8, 2023
- C. Personnel dated March 8, 2023 (Resignations, Leave of Absence, New Hires and Terminations)

MINUTES

BILLS

PERSONNEL

D. Ratifications:

RATIFICATIONS

- i. Approval of Thornton Township High School 2023 IHSA Boys Wrestling State Finals Overnight Fieldtrip, Champaign, IL, February 16-18, 2023
- ii. Approval of Thornton Township High School and Thornwood High School IHSA Speech State Tournament Overnight Fieldtrip, Peoria, IL, February 16-18, 2023
- iii. Approval of Thornwood High School Speech State Finals Tournament Overnight Fieldtrip, Peoria, IL, February 17-18, 2023
- iv. Approval of Thornton Township High School Girls Wrestling IHSA State Finals Overnight Fieldtrip, Bloomington, IL, February 23-25, 2023
- v. Approval of Thornwood High School Boys Track and Field at Carthage College Overnight Fieldtrip, Kenosha, WI, March 17-18, 2023

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

The following individuals spoke during Public Participation:

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- None
- Dr. Doss stated that there were four (4) completed and all have been responded to.

FOIA

Mr. Fickes presented the following information:

COMMUNICATIONS

- Thornridge High School:
 - Hosted a Black History month potluck and Family Fun Night
 - Polished Pebbles: students practiced interviewing one another to prepare for Job Shadow trip to ComEd Training Center
- Thornton Township High School
 - Several of our Wildcat students displayed Random Acts of Kindness by purchasing cupcakes and distributing them through the hallways during passing periods.
 - Girls' Wrestling IHSA Tournament made it to the top twelve in the state. Congratulations!
 - Held a Black History assembly.
 - CONGRATULATIONS! Principal Todd L. Whitaker received the 29th Annual Archbishop James P. Lyke African American Male Image Award. Also, CONGRATULATIONS to one of our seniors on being a Scholarship recipient of this same award. He received \$2,000.
- Thornwood High School
 - Black History celebration
 - Thank you to all staff and students who support our Abe Reader program.
 - Regional IHSA 2023 Speech Performance in the Round Champions
- PEACE Center
 - Enjoyed a night of skating at Lynwood Roller Rink
- Infant Care Center
 - Toddlers attended a fieldtrip to Build-A-Bear

- Thornwood High School Mathlete - Thirty-six students competing at the SAC Mathletes competition. Students placed in the top three in the conference for each of the fifteen different competitions. Mathletes placed 2nd overall in the conference with a score of 395 points.

PRESENTATIONS

- Trade School Thursday - On at least two Thursdays in each month, representatives from Community Colleges, Trade Schools, the Military, and Local Unions visits Thornton's CCC to give students vital information needed to successfully pursue their post-high school plan.

Mrs. Whittington moved; Mr. Banks seconded the **Approval of the European Trip Planning for the Summer of 2024** presented by Mr. Horton. On roll call, Members Whittington, Banks Graham, Lawrence, and Whittington voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed. French teachers presented the district-wide opportunity at the last Curriculum Meeting. Mrs. Lawrence commented that students learn a lot in-person.

APPROVE THE EUROPEAN TRIP PLANNING FOR SUMMER 2024

Ms. Moody moved; Mrs. Lawrence seconded the **Approval of Second Reading of PRESSPlus Policy Update 110** presented by Dr. Doss. On roll call, Members Moody, Lawrence, Banks, Graham, and Whittington voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF SECOND READING OF PRESSPLUS POLICY UPDATE 110

Approval of HBCU National Band & Orchestra Directors' Consortium Overnight Fieldtrip, Atlanta, GA, March 29-April 2, 2023. This action Item was skipped; fieldtrip was cancelled.

APPROVE THE HBCU OVERNIGHT FIELDTRIP

Ms. Moody moved, Mrs. Whittington Banks seconded the **Approval of Thornridge High School FCCLA State Leadership Conference Overnight Fieldtrip at BOS Convention Center, Springfield, IL, April 13-15, 2023,** as presented by Dr. Moore. On roll call, Members Moody, Whittington, Banks Graham, and Lawrence, voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THORNTRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL FCCLA STATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE OVERNIGHT FIELDTRIP

Approval of Thornwood High School Music in the Parks Bands Festival Overnight Field, Six Flags Great America, Gurnee, IL, April 28-29, 2023. This action Item was skipped

APPROVE THE THORNWOOD HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC IN THE PARKS BANDS FESTIVAL OVERNIGHT FIELDTRIP

Mrs. Whittington moved, Mr. Banks seconded the **Approval of Technology Purchases for Special Programs** as presented by Mr. Porter. On roll call, Members Whittington, Banks, Graham, Lawrence, and Whittington voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE TECHNOLOGY PURCHASES FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Ms. Moody moved; Mrs. Lawrence seconded the **Approval of Barrier Gate Traffic Study** as presented by Mr. Horton. On roll call, Members Moody, Lawrence, Banks, Graham, and Whittington voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE BARRIER GATE TRAFFIC STUDY

Approval of Emergency Districtwide Bus Purchase. This action Item was skipped because a vote of six (6) members is needed and only five (5) members were present.

APPROVE THE EMERGENCY DISTRICTWIDE BUS PURCHASE

At 7:32 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mrs. Whittington 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, Lawrence, Whittington, Banks, Graham, and Moody voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

At 8:16 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded to **Reconvene Regular Session**. On roll call, Members Lawrence, Banks, Graham, Moody, and Whittington voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

RECONVENE REGULAR
SESSION

Dr. Cunningham stated the following:

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Last Friday, I sent our correspondence to the staff. Every two weeks or so, I send the staff a message. Last week's message was challenging. The news continues to report challenges in the educational system. Our latest challenge of benching bad behavior of athletic fans, the loss of teachers in the field, and the large question of why become a teacher - today.

It started - Today, I find myself reflecting on one question: Why become a teacher? Every teacher devotes their life to education for reasons that are meaningful to them. Those reasons are usually about something other than the salary or summer vacation. The reasons for becoming a teacher are more profound and personal. While your motivation for becoming a teacher is unique to you, one thing I believe is consistent is that teachers are united by a desire to positively impact lives.

You may have become a teacher to improve the quality of education in your community. The reality is, nationally, there is a decline in the public's confidence in our education system. If you connected with teaching out of a need to improve the quality of education, then perhaps you were driven to education as a way to effect change. We can all agree there is a tremendous need for improvement. I hope you agree that, collectively, our dedicated teachers are improving the educational experience for our students and the communities we serve.

You may have become a teacher to give back to your community. There is no better way to directly impact those around you than teaching. The contribution as an educator is invaluable and undoubtedly rewarding for teachers, students, parents, and guardians. You may have become a teacher to change the lives of some of the most challenging students. Teachers, indeed, do so much more than teach in a classroom. Our daily impact extends beyond the school building, as we are often mentors, confidants, and friends to our students.

I thought about why I became an educator. Perhaps it was the influence of my father. He was a teacher and a coach. He believed education could free us from poverty, racism, and classism. He proudly and with tremendous responsibility took on the battle. The breadth of experience I had in school districts also led me to the education profession. As a kid, I went to school in both public schools and private schools. I attend school in Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Texas, California, and New Jersey. Maybe it is not a wonder that I went to the military before becoming an educator like my parents. I believe the years of experience living and receiving an education in several cities nationwide have prepared me for this career.

Being an educator is a challenging career. It takes courage to do the job. It takes a commitment to the core values and mission of the organization. Our challenge is that we do not get to choose the students in our classrooms. Instead, we receive students that average sixth grade reading and fourth-grade math levels. There is nothing easy about this reality for high school teachers. Yet, our teachers rise to the challenge. For many years, District 205 faculty has prepared students who come to us academically behind to be successful.

We are changing students' lives. At Thornridge, Thornton, and Thornwood, we can all see excellence in our teachers, students, and staff. As the proud superintendent of District 205, wherever I go, I am happy to say that we have graduates from Harvard to Stanford and all points in between. It is a bit of a brag, but we deserve it. When I was

principal of a downstate suburban school, we worked hard every year to get our students into highly selective schools (Ivy League and the like). In my seven-year tenure, while we received recognition as one of Illinois' top fifty high schools (source: Chicago Tribune), we never cracked the top schools. Here at District 205, it is something that we do here almost every year. This year, a student from Thornridge has been accepted at Yale University.

Undoubtedly, our schools have a level of excellence that is different from other communities. Our challenge is to meet that level of excellence over the entire district. The district reviews the growth of our students every year. Most of our students meet the expected growth levels. However, some of our students greatly exceed the expected growth. Our challenge is to move from some to most. It still resonates with me so profoundly the words on the Statue of Liberty that I read as a student.

*Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

Education is the lamp beside the golden door that frees us all. It may look different to all of us -whether enrolled, enlisted, or employed. Still, it is how we help our students find their purpose, prepare for their adult life, and become good citizens. It is how we improve the quality of education. It is how we give back to our communities. It is how we change the lives of our students.

If you are a new teacher – this time between Winter and Spring break can be the longest and most trying. So, know we see you, and thank you for your hard work with our students.

Courage does not always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, "I will try again tomorrow." - Mary Anne Radmacher.

The Board of Education voted in favor of accepting the Superintendent's Report as written.

Faculty Association Matters for Board of Education's Consideration – Dr. Cunningham

- i. School Safety
- ii. Building Climate

Neither Mr. Bearden nor Mr. Doughty were present at tonight's Board of Education Meeting.

Ms. Moody moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded the **Approval of the 2022-2023 Non-Renewal of Probationary Teachers**. On roll call, Members Moody, Lawrence, Banks, Graham, and Whittington voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

FACULTY ASSOCIATION
MATTERS

APPROVE THE 2022-2023
NON-RENEWAL OF
PROBATIONARY TEACHERS

Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mrs. Whittington seconded the **Approval of Reduction-in-Force of Dean Position**. On roll call, Members Lawrence, Whittington, Banks, Graham, and Moody voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE REDUCTION-
IN-FORCE OF DEAN
POSITION

Ms. Moody moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded the **Approval of Reduction-in-Force of Athletic Director Position**. On roll call, Members Moody, Lawrence, Banks, Graham, and Whittington voted aye; voted nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVE THE REDUCTION-
IN-FORCE OF ATHLETIC
DIRECTOR POSITION

At 8:29 p.m., Ms. Moody moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Adjourn the Meeting**.
On roll call, Members Moody, Lawrence, Banks, Graham, and Whittington voted aye;
nay, none; motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

President

Secretary