



## **Board Briefs**

[Para español, por favor haga click aquí](#)

[April 8, 2025 Committee of the Whole Meeting](#)

[Board Meeting Videos](#)

### **Public Hearing Regarding School Improvement Day May 28, 2027**

The Board held a public hearing as part of the waiver process required by the state to designate a full day school improvement day. The district is proposing to designate Friday, May 28, 2027 as a school improvement day as part of its recommended calendar for the 2026-2027 school year. The 2026-27 school calendar will come back as an action item at the April 22 meeting.

### **Approval of Agenda**

The Board voted to approve the April 8 agenda as presented.

### **Board Reports**

#### ***President***

In honor of National Library Appreciation Week April 6-12, Board President Anne Neumann expressed appreciation for the DHS and HPHS school libraries as hubs of learning and community within the schools. She also acknowledged the district's local public libraries and thanked them for the support and services they provide to the district's families.

On behalf of the Board, Neumann acknowledged the passing of Marjie Sandlow in March, who served for 8 years as a member of the D113 school board (2007-2015) holding the positions of vice president and president during her terms. According to community members, she was instrumental in the passing of the 2013 referendum during her tenure.

#### ***ED-RED***

ED-RED Liaison Rick Heineman shared information from the April 4 ED-RED meeting. He said the main discussion items related to education waivers. In the proposed legislation:

- No approved waiver can be renewed more than twice.
- For PE waivers, they may not exceed 3 school years and cannot be renewed and once approved, no changes may be made and the waiver can only be rescinded.
- Requires school districts to report notice of any waiver hearings on all social media.
- Changes the drivers education fee to “not to exceed \$50” for the reasonable fee for students who participate in the course, unless the student can't pay the fee is waived.

However, the district can increase the fee not to exceed \$250 if by board resolution following a public hearing to increase the fee.

For this proposed legislation, ED-RED is encouraging member districts to file witness slips. When asked for her opinion, Superintendent Dr. Chala Holland agreed that District 113 should take a stance of opposing the bill because it reduces the flexibility across programming.

Heineman encouraged Cabinet and Board members to attend the next ED-RED mini-summit that will be held June 12.

## **Administration Information Reports**

### ***Superintendent***

Superintendent Dr. Chala Holland provided the following updates in her report:

#### *Focus on the Arts*

Last week, the district celebrated *Focus on the Arts*, a dynamic, multi-day event showcasing student creativity and engagement with professional artists. The program included both daytime sessions with students and evening community events, offering a rich array of artistic experiences. The event was led by Tamara Jenkins and supported by the HPHS Fine and Applied Arts Department, building administration, and staff across multiple departments. Dr. Holland praised the talent of both the guest artists and students, noting the inspiration and impact the event had throughout the district.

#### *D-Comps (Dance Company Showcase)*

Dr. Holland also attended *D-Comps* at DHS, an evening of student dance performances featuring choreography by and for students from all grade levels. The event saw its first sold-out performance and was described as exciting, interactive, and a true celebration of the dancers' talent, hard work, and camaraderie. Special thanks were given to Nikki Lazzaretto and Christina Boushala, the DHS Dance Department, and all involved.

#### *ACT Testing*

ACT testing began this week at both high schools, marking a major transition from SAT to ACT as the state-required assessment. Dr. Holland acknowledged the complexity of this shift and commended principals, staff, and student support professionals for their collaborative and thoughtful efforts to manage the logistical challenges. Emphasis was placed on the strong communication and support provided to students and families throughout the preparation process.

#### *Assistant Principal Recognition Week*

In honor of Assistant Principal Recognition Week, Dr. Holland celebrated the work and contribution of the Assistant Principals who serve in District 113, noting that they are often the unsung heroes behind much of the work that happens in schools.

#### **FOIA**

Dr. Holland reported the FOIA requests received since the last meeting and their disposition. The report is posted in BoardDocs online.

## **School Reports**

### *Student Liaison Reports*

DHS senior Lila Peck reported on the success of D-Comps Live. The three-night show showcased 14 dances, of which the majority were student choreographed. The EIU Academic Challenge Team won both the regional and sectional tournaments, and will be heading to state on April 16. She concluded by highlighting that the annual Jazz Nite will be held April 10 in the Performing Arts Center featuring the jazz band and Choraliers.

HPHS senior Miles Walker reported that last Wednesday and Thursday students attended assemblies, workshops and master classes where they were able to learn and experience all different sides of art as part of 2025 Focus on the Arts. He noted that juniors, sophomores, and freshmen have ACT/PACT testing this week and that teachers and staff have been helping students prepare. Moving on to athletic news, he reported that Girls Water Polo earned a double overtime victory against Maine East, scoring the winning goal in the final seconds; Boys Water Polo defeated Warren 10-9; Girls Lacrosse took on Northside College Prep and came home with an 8-1 victory; and Boys Baseball won their home opener against Lincoln Park.

## **Discussion**

### *Textbook Adoptions for 2025-26*

The Board reviewed a description of the books and digital platforms being recommended for adoption. These materials have been selected by faculty committees, discussed by departments, and approved by the administration. All groups made a concerted effort to review the available packages that included both print and online resources. The proposed adoptions will return for action at the April 22 meeting. It was noted that additional adoption requests may occur over this summer after instructional teams complete summer curricular projects.

## **Action**

### *Approval of McClory Bike Path Easement*

The Board voted to grant an easement to Lake County, Illinois, to access the existing bike path on Highland Park High School property to repair and resurface the path. The bike path and bridge are currently in place, and no significant changes are planned other than regular maintenance.

### *Approval of 2025 Summer Capital Improvements Project - Trade Contractors*

The Board voted to award contracts in the total amount of \$4,631,959 to trade contractors for district-wide summer 2025 improvement projects. The full list of contractors and itemized amounts can be found in public content of the [agenda item](#).

### *Approval of 2025 Summer Capital Improvements Project - Pepper Assignment*

The Board voted to approve an assignment to Pepper Construction in the amount of \$5,988,540 for construction management services related to the 2025 summer capital improvements project.

### *Approval of One-Year Employment Contract for Special Education Coordinator at Highland Park High School*

The Board voted to approve as presented a one-year contract with Jennifer Hotwagner to serve as Special Education Coordinator at Highland Park High School.

***Approval of Resolution for Honorable Dismissal/Reduction in Hours of Teachers***

The Board approved as presented a resolution for the honorable dismissal/reduction in hours of licensed staff members.

***Approval of Resolution for Dismissal of Educational Support Staff Employee***

The Board approved as presented a resolution for the dismissal of an educational support staff employee.

**Consent Agenda**

The Board approved [the consent agenda](#) as presented. The consent agenda includes personnel, stipends and board bills.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

**Upcoming Meetings**

***April 22, 2025***

Board Reorganization Meeting

Regular Action Meeting

6:00 p.m. Closed, 7:00 p.m. Open

Administration Building