



## Board Briefs

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[April 11, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting](#)

[Board Meeting Videos](#)

### **Approval of Board Meeting Agenda**

The Board voted to approve the April 11 agenda as amended.

### **Board Reports**

#### ***President***

Board President Ken Fishbain began his remarks by congratulating Board Member Jody Elliott-Schrimmer for earning her Doctor of Philosophy degree. Mr. Fishbain then extended his congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected Board members, noting that all will bring their professional and parent experience to guide their work.

Looking ahead to Focus on the Arts 2023 the following week, Mr. Fishbain shared with Board members that an invitation had been extended to attend the events and that when attending, they should wear their D113 lanyards for security purposes.

He added that he and Vice President Anne Neumann had attended a student town hall pilot program at DHS in Mrs. Allen and Mrs. Shah's class called, "Connecting Classrooms to Congress" with Representative Brad Schneider that provided students the opportunity to engage in dialogue with Rep. Schneider.

Mr. Fishbain then read into the record [the email he sent to staff following the events of April 4](#). He closed by adding that the students who came forward need to be commended for their actions.

#### ***Finance Committee***

Finance Committee Chair Ken Fishbain provided a report from the April 4 meeting, noting that insurance renewal rates, the technology fee and a feasibility study to evaluate installing solar panels at DHS and HPHS are listed later in the agenda for full Board discussion. He highlighted that approximately 10 percent of the District's budget goes to providing health insurance to employees, and that the cost of health insurance premiums continue to rise, not just for District 113 or in education but in all industries. He closed by saying the Board recognizes the importance of the health insurance plans, that the plans are working well, and are highly utilized with over 90 percent of staff participating.

### **Administration Information Reports**

### ***Superintendent***

Superintendent Dr. Bruce Law began his remarks by congratulating DHS Principal Kathryn Anderson for earning her Doctor of Philosophy degree. He shared that on April 10, he along with Ken Fishbain accepted on behalf of the District and the Board recognition from the City of Highland Park for the efforts District 113 made in the response to the Highland Park shooting. The ceremony was an expression of gratitude from Highland Park to the multiple agencies that responded to the Highland Park shooting.

He then spoke about the April 4 lockdown at Highland Park High School, extolling the response of students, teachers and staff during a terrorizing situation. He emphatically stated that the efforts schools are making, along with the time, talent and resources devoted to preventing gun violence in our schools is not normal and should not be accepted as normal. He added that schools should be focusing on all the things students do to prepare for their future, academics, the arts, athletics, clubs. He then said that until the gun violence problem is solved where it originates—outside schools—schools will continue to have to devote tremendous resources to protecting students and staff from it.

### ***FOIA***

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

### ***A Passion for Excellence: Tesa Edwards***

The sixth installment of the video series, [“A Passion for Excellence,” focuses on HPHS Math, Computer Science and Engineering Teacher Tesa Edwards.](#) The series highlights teachers and staff telling their stories as educators, which tell the story of the passion for excellence in District 113 that drives the passion for students' potential.

### ***School Reports***

#### ***Student Liaison Reports***

Highland Park High School student board liaison Raquel Bach and Deerfield High School student board liaison Anna Catella provided some highlights of the previous month to the Board.

### ***Discussion***

#### ***2023-24 Paper Bid***

The Board reviewed a cooperative purchasing paper bid for the 2023-24 school year. The District participates in a consortium of public agencies to get the best price, and the District 113 portion of the bid is in the amount of \$24,434.50, which is lower than what District 113 paid for paper for the 2022-23 school year. The item will come back for a vote at the April 25 meeting.

#### ***FY24 Health Insurance Renewal Update***

Assistant Superintendent of Finance Ali Mehanti provided an update on insurance renewals for the upcoming fiscal year. Through its insurance broker Gallagher, the District was able to negotiate a reduction in the renewal rate to 11.5 percent, down from the 12.4 percent increase originally quoted by Blue Cross Blue Shield for the District's most utilized healthcare plan, our PPO plan. FY24 health insurance costs are projected to account for approximately 10 percent of the District's budget with an increase of nearly \$940,000 from FY23.

### ***Technology Fees for FY24***

The Board discussed increasing the current technology fee from \$40 to \$100 while at the same time removing the \$40 Chromebook repair fee. The technology fee offsets the cost of the device and software students need in class. Over the past three years, the cost of Chromebooks has risen from just under \$200 per unit to \$528 per unit. At the current fee level of \$40, District 113 recoups only \$160 per student creating a deficit of \$368 per student over four years. The Board will consider raising the technology fee at a future meeting.

### ***Installing Solar Panels at DHS and HPHS***

The Board discussed commissioning a feasibility study to gather detailed information on installing solar panels at DHS and HPHS. The District's FY24 total electricity budget is projected to be at \$1.2 million. It represents one of the major expenses in the District's non-personnel operating budget. Incentives under the *Inflation Reduction Act* could provide rebates of up to 30 percent of the total cost of the panels and have the potential to generate over \$300,000 in operational energy savings annually. The item will come back for a vote at the April 25 meeting.

### **Action**

#### ***Approval of Licensing Agreement***

The Board approved as presented a licensing agreement with Tessa Edwards and George Krizanovic to use music created by the two artists in the "A Passion for Excellence" video featuring Tessa Edwards. The Board moved the item up in the agenda in order to approve the agreement before debuting the video during the meeting.

#### ***Resolution for the Honorable Dismissal/Reduction in Hours of Licensed Staff Member***

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

### **Consent Agenda**

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

April 18, 2023 Facilities Committee Meeting  
5:00 p.m.  
Administration Building

April 25, 2023 Regular Action Meeting  
6:00 p.m. Closed Session, 7:00 p.m. Open Session  
Administration Building