
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, NAPERVILLE COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 203, DUPAGE AND WILL COUNTIES, ILLINOIS, HELD AT District Administration Building, 203 West Hillside Road, Naperville, IL 60540
December 4, 2023, AT 7:00 pm. Closed Session at 5:00 pm

Call to order

President Kristine Gericke called the meeting to order at 5:01p.m. Board members present: Kristine Gericke, Kristin Fitzgerald, Charles Cush, Amanda McMillen, Joe Kozminski, and Melissa Kelley Black. Absent: Donna Wandke.

Administrators present were:

Dan Bridges, Superintendent,

Bob Ross, Chief Human Resources Officer (entered at 6:46pm)

Michael Frances, Chief Financial Officer/CSBO (entered at 6:46pm)

Others present: Arlana Bedard, IASB Field Services Director (entered at 5:02 pm/exited at 6:46 pm) and Joe Perkoski, Legal Counsel (entered at 5:02 pm/exited at 6:46 pm)

Closed Session

Kristin Fitzgerald moved, seconded by Charles Cush to go into Closed Session at 5:02 p.m. for consideration of:

1. Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(16) Self-evaluation, practices and procedures or professional ethics, when meeting with a representative of a statewide association of which the public body is a member.
2. Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees or legal counsel, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or legal counsel to determine its validity.
3. Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(2) Collective negotiating matters between the school board and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees.

Those voting yes: Cush, Fitzgerald, Gericke, Kozminski, McMillen, and Kelley Black. Those voting no: None. Absent: Wandke. The motion carried.

Meeting Opening

Joe Kozminski made a motion, seconded by Charles Cush to return to Open Session at 7:06pm. A roll call vote was taken. Those voting yes: McMillen, Gericke, Fitzgerald, Kelley Black, Cush, and Kozminski. Those voting no: None. Absent: Wandke. The motion carried.

Welcome and Mission

Kristine Gericke welcomed all and read Naperville Community Unit School District 203's Mission Statement.

Roll Call

Board members present: Kristine Gericke, Kristin Fitzgerald, Charles Cush, Amanda McMillen, Joe Kozminski, and Melissa Kelley Black. Absent: Donna Wandke.

Student Ambassadors present: None.

Administrators present: Dan Bridges, Superintendent, Allison Boutet, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, Roger Brunelle, Chief Information Officer, Michael Frances, Chief Financial

Officer, Chuck Freundt, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, Chala Holland, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services, Rakeda Leaks, Executive Director of Inclusion and Diversity, Alex Mayster, Executive Director for Communications, Patrick Nolten, Assistant Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability, Bob Ross, Chief Human Resources Officer, Jayne Willard, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and Lisa Xagas, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

Pledge of Allegiance

Led by the Board of Education

Good News:

Congratulations to Naperville North Fine Arts Teacher Shannon Rehs on receiving the University of Chicago Outstanding Educator Award. The award is given to educators who thoughtfully approach instruction with an infectious love for learning and care, for students inside and outside of the classroom. Congratulations, Ms. Rehs.

Nathan Yuan, the student editor-in-chief of Naperville Central High School’s student-run newspaper, the Central Times, during the 2022-23 school year, was recognized by the National Scholastic Press Association with the first place award for the News Story of the Year. This award, sometimes referred to as a “Pulitzer Prize for high school journalists,” is considered the highest honor given to high school journalists. In addition to Nathan’s recognitions, the Central Times took sixth place in the national Best of Show competition for print newspapers published at schools with enrollment of 1,800 students or more. Congratulations to Nathan and the Central Times.

Public Comment:

President Gericke gave the parameters for public comment.

Dr. Vicky Curless- Certified staff at KJHS. She noted that these thoughts are her own opinions. She has seen and experienced this district in many ways over the years as a classroom teacher, a curriculum facilitator, interim director of assessment, integration specialist, and now a Learning Support Coach as well as serving on the NUEA executive board since 2008. Watched educators work hard and do everything asked of them by the BOE. She encouraged the Board to ask: what is the impact, time, money, and why are we making changes. Teachers are burning out trying to keep up and implement all the changes. Many are also part of the community. She also encouraged the Board to find the time to talk to the staff in the buildings.

As a reminder, the Board of Education has designated the Superintendent to respond to public comments.

Action by Consent:

1. Adoption of Personnel Report

	Effective Date	Location	Position
REASSIGNMENT-ADMINISTRATION			
Melanie Brown	12/4/2023	PSAC	Director of Buildings & Grounds
RETIREMENT-CERTIFIED			

Cindy Tilt	1/8/2024	NCHS	Social Science Teacher
RESIGNATION-CERTIFIED			
LisaMarie Camp	12/8/2023	Connections	Learning Behavior Specialist
Hye Won Kwon	12/31/2023	Prairie	3rd Grade
APPOINTMENT-CERTIFIED FULL-TIME			
Terry Thompson	1/8/2024	Prairie	Music Teacher
LEAVE OF ABSENCE-CERTIFIED			
Allison Hillyer	10/8/24 - 12/20/24	NNHS	FACS Teacher
RETIREMENT-CLASSIFIED			
Tony Long	11/28/2023	Transportation	Bus Driver
RESIGNATION-NON-UNION CLASSIFIED			
Amber Curl	12/1/2023	PSAC	HR Generalist
RESIGNATION-CLASSIFIED			
Dyrell Lee	11/17/2023	NNHS	Campus Supervisor
Xiaoyan Lu	8/17/2023	NNHS	Special Education Assistant
Maria Kaldis	11/28/2023	KJHS	Special Education Assistant
Kristen Bolduc	12/4/2023	Steeple Run	Executive Secretary
Alexandra Schwanebeck	12/11/2023	JJHS	Senior Secretary
Richard Oberbruner	12/1/2023	NCHS	Special Education Assistant
EMPLOYMENT-NON-UNION CLASSIFIED			
Alexis Faber	12/5/2023	Ann Reid	Birth to Three Parent Educator
Lynda Rowader	12/26/2023	PSAC	HR Generalist
EMPLOYMENT-CLASSIFIED FULL-TIME			
Karen Warren	12/4/2023	JJHS	Senior Secretary

Charles Cush made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Joe Kozminski. Those voting yes: Kozminski, Kelley Black, McMillen, Gericke, Fitzgerald, and Cush. No: None. Absent: Wandke. The motion carried.

Superintendent/Staff/School Report

Superintendent Bridges thanked the Board for attending the Triple I conference. He also noted that Mrs. Gericke, Mrs. Wandke, student Trenton Polk, and he attended the student voice preconference

President's Report

President Gericke added that Friday was a great day to spend time with students. More geared to those districts who are in the beginning stages of engaging student voice. The remainder of the conference was spent learning with and from other districts. Nice to learn with our board members. Enjoyed the dinner we had together on Friday evening.

Board of Education reports:

Other Board members reported on what they learned by attending the Triple I conference. A few mentioned the Carousel of Panels where they were able to visit multiple tables and hear presentations from a number of districts. They thanked Dr. Leaks and Board Vice President Fitzgerald for their work on the SUCCESS presentation.

Board members expressed appreciation for learning what other districts are doing.

Board members noted the variety of sessions available and learning about topics and positions of which they had no previous knowledge. A highlight session was the one on Women in Leadership. The Board gathered as a group for dinner and that was appreciated by all.

Board Vice President Fitzgerald reported on the SARC meeting on assessment review. She thanked Dr. Nolten for his help. She noted the state is moving in a positive direction.

Discussion without Action

2023 Tax Levy Workshop and Discussion

Superintendent Bridges noted that annually each district has to set a tax levy. We will look for action on December 18. On November 14, Citizen's Finance Advisory Committee met and reviewed the five year forecast and gave positive feedback. They did support the administration recommendation on the tax levy but we need to look at the Fund Balance and ways to reduce it. Board members Cush and Fitzgerald represent the Board on the committee.

Board Questions/Comments

CFA committee made up of business people within the district. Good to hear their feedback on our finances. Complimentary of the Audit and the direction the board is moving.

What are we requesting? Are we asking to increase what we receive?

Mr. Frances responded that the levy is an increase over what we collected last year due to the CPI.

Can you explain how the tax levy works?

Mr. Frances noted we use the 2022 Calendar year CPI that is 6.5% but we are capped at 5%. We will know 2023 CPI for next year in January.

We are requesting more because our expenses have increased?

Mr. Frances stated yes, our expenses have gone up. Our Employee payments are also tied to the CPI.

Is the fund balance what we received last year?

Mr. Frances noted it is all funds at the end of Sept 30. It is updated every month.

Fund balance falls until we get our tax payments.

How do we come up with the 5%?

Have we factored in how we will use this fund balance?

Mr. Frances referred to the five year forecast presented last month that includes the fund balance.

Mr. Frances noted the levy covers operational expenses. Seventy seven percent of our expenses are staff salaries and benefits.

Mr. Frances explained further that capital expenses are funded some by the tax levy. Others are funded by the fund balance. We need to spend some of it down to be in line to board policy.

The tax levy is set based on what our expenses will be?

What determines what we set it?

Superintendent Bridges stated that was covered last month in the presentation.

Look at last month's presentation of the five year forecast.

Will be back for approval December 18.

Commitment 1.2: Junior High School Exploratory

Superintendent Bridges noted that this is an update on work we started a couple of years ago as well as course recommendations.

Recognized Middle School principals and LCS who have worked with us on this plan.

- Tonight, we are pleased to offer an update on the advancements in our Strategic Blueprint 1.2 Commitment. We will focus on the modifications made to our middle school-level exploratory offerings, and additionally, we will be presenting two new junior high exploratory courses for your consideration and approval.
- The why behind our work in Blueprint 1.2 is that the shifts in programming aims to foster relevant and engaging learning experiences for our middle school students. By making strategic shifts in our programming, we can provide students with more choice and voice, align our offerings to their interests, and ensure that our curriculum supports their college and career pathways.
- We want to provide students with more opportunities to participate in relevant, college, and career exploratory options while still allowing them the option to complete level one of Spanish or French before entering high school. This desired state also aligns with State legislation, particularly the Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Act (HB3296), which emphasizes college and career preparation starting as early as 6th grade. As part of the mandated units of study in computer science, we aim to cover Computing Systems, Data & Analysis, Algorithms & Programming, Impacts of Computing, and Emerging & Future Technology. Student interests were at the center of our Blueprint work. Much of the coursework we are presenting tonight began during the JHS school day meetings and conversations that took place in during the 2018.
- Our update to the junior High Elective Courses and Programming relates to our Visioning for Students offerings. We want our students to have voice in the courses they take to enhance their experience. In addition to our career pathways of study, we know we need to strengthen our computer science offerings at the junior high level. Our approach is to create elective opportunities for students within our program offerings. This is in alignment with the Illinois Computer Science mandate where *“All school districts shall ensure students receive developmentally appropriate opportunities to gain computer literacy skills at each grade level. A stakeholder group is working on guidelines and a continuum of computer literacy skills for K-12. Currently, there are no mandated units of study”* [Illinois Computer Science Standards](#)
- Beyond each of our district commitments to developing college & career & life ready graduates, national and state legislation impact our work. This work is grounded in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Illinois PostSecondary Readiness Act (PWR-Act) that focuses on pathway of study for students. The PWR-Act (Postsecondary Workforce Readiness Act) was signed to law on July 29, 2016. The PWR-Act is a framework to help students avoid remedial coursework and to help them persist in postsecondary education. The Act creates more clear and consistent expectations for college and career preparation starting in 6th grade with the Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations framework.
- Illinois Mandated Units of Study: *“All school districts shall ensure that students receive developmentally appropriate opportunities to gain computer literacy skills embedded in the district’s curriculum at each grade level.”* [105 ILCS 5/10-20.79; 10-20.74](#)
- Illinois Computer Science Standards Illinois Computer Science Standards were adopted with the enactment of Public Act 101-0654, which required the Illinois State Board of Education to develop rigorous learning standards for computer science by December 1, 2021.
- In December 2020, changes in 6th-grade exploratory programs were shared with the Board of Education. These changes included transitioning from quarters to trimesters, maintaining options in FACS, PLTW, Music, and Art, and providing students with three choices based on interest. Last year we began the redesign process for FACS spaces to better align with curricular shifts and authentic learning opportunities. The WJHS FACS room was done in Summer 2023 and we plan to complete the remaining space renovations over summers 2024 and 2025.

- Currently, sixth-grade students choose 3 out of 4 exploratory offerings by selecting their preferred options. In 7th grade, students decide on a pathway, opting for either FACS, Art, or PLTW, or choosing between Spanish and French. The Level 1 Spanish and French courses span two years, replacing the pathway coursework in both 7th and 8th grades. It is important to note that Performance Music is not considered part of the exploratory wheel.
- Currently, students opting for Spanish and French in 7th and 8th grade forego any other exploratory courses, receiving PE and WCL without exposure to a pathway. Although our existing Spanish and French courses match the rigor of high school-level Spanish 1 and French 1, we extend them over two years, incorporating additional enrichment.
- To enhance our students' experience, we propose a rigorous one-year course that would enable them to explore pathways in 7th grade while still completing Level 1 Spanish and French in 8th grade, positioning them to begin Level 2 in high school. This restructuring ensures alignment in curriculum and student experience at both middle and high school levels.
- Moreover, this adjustment facilitates more effective Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for our middle and high school WCL staff. Additionally, it addresses ISBE requirements for computer science and aligns with the PWR-Act and PACE framework.
- Looking ahead, our sixth and seventh-grade students will have the opportunity to express their preferences for exploratory offerings. They can either continue their pathways courses in 8th grade or opt for Level 1 Spanish & French. This proposed approach addresses the expressed desires of students and families for more exploratory choices, responds to the demand for additional PLTW coursework, and still enables students to commence Level 2 World Classical Language in high school.
- With a decline in our WCL offerings, we aim to reverse this trend by allowing students to take additional exploratory courses in 7th grade, rather than committing to a single pathway for two years.
- The proposed changes bring numerous benefits for our students. They will have more choices in selecting courses in 7th grade. All seventh grade students will now have the chance to engage in our exploratory pathways, which include Art, FACS, PLTW, and Computer Science. This adjustment aligns with the expressed desire of students and families for more technology-based opportunities and course-specific interests. Our Academic Support program will provide additional intervention and study time. This initiative also ensures compliance with State Mandated Computer Science standards at the junior high school level, while still allowing students to commence Level 2 Spanish or French in high school. Student voices matter. We have shaped these changes based on what our students and families have told us. It is not an abstract plan; it is a response to their needs and desires, ensuring they have a say in their education while at the same time increasing offerings rather than limiting choices.
- Shifting World and Classical Languages to 8th grade will allow for 2.8 Full-Time Equivalent teachers (FTE) to be reallocated to other needed positions. With two WCL retirements at the conclusion of 23/24, the current Junior High School WCL educators will remain full-time at the JHS level. The 2.0 FTE will be reallocated to support our English Learners and/or our exploratory offerings. No additional FTE requests will be made for the code explorers or PLTW courses. We are not just adjusting numbers; we are ensuring that our students have the support they need, whether it is in language courses or in other areas where we can make a positive impact on their education.
- PLTW shift -- the new course is in alignment with our two high school IT pathways and allows for more computer science exposure for students at the junior high level. The previous course, Energy & Environment, has quite a lot of overlap with the newer science curriculum.

- Code Explorers - further expands options for students in computer science and technology -- allow for more choice in the offerings and brings another computer coding elective to the 7th grade offerings
- Beyond the expansion of computer science and alignment with pathways, we have offered computer coding courses in summer school as clubs. The feedback from students and teachers who participated in these offerings has been positive and shows the need for us to scale these for all students.
- Over the next three years, our educational initiatives are set to transform and elevate the learning experience for both students and educators. This strategic timeline reflects our commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in education, ensuring a dynamic and engaging learning environment.
- Empowering students with the ability to choose their courses not only fosters a sense of autonomy and ownership in their education but also significantly contributes to their overall sense of belonging within our school community. By allowing students to have a voice in their course selection, we acknowledge and respect their individual interests and learning preferences. This approach reflects our commitment to providing opportunities and access, ensuring that each student has the chance to flourish academically and personally.

Board Questions/Comments:

Thank you for the presentation. These are a cool set of courses you are putting together. Does this mean that as part of the mandated computer science course, all the seventh graders will be taking the Code Explorers?

Mrs. Willard noted either the 6th grade to 7th grade option meets this requirement.

Can you clarify the FTE reallocation?

Mrs. Boutet walked the Board through the changes. Looked at staffing and what endorsements they have and how they can support these changes.

Mrs. Boutet noted that Principals are looking at staffing. Learning Services and Project managers are already, looking at what PD will be needed. We have about 18 months to get teachers prepared.

You said ESL teachers could teach language?

Mrs. Boutet clarified that some WCL teachers have ESL endorsements so they could teach a language.

Is the FACS curriculum being redeveloped?

Mrs. Willard stated yes board approved last year.

Could I see the curriculum?

Mrs. Willard responded yes.

Is SchoolLinks an AI program?

Mrs. Willard responded no it is not. All High School students do their four year planning in SchoolLinks. It is a repository of all HS information. We want to back it up and begin to have junior high students use it.

How does the system accommodate diversity of path?

Mrs. Willard noted that students could diversify all courses. It will be a little different for seventh graders. Seventh graders will rank options based on conversations with counselors. In HS-it organizes the students planning.

Want to be sure I understand, are we condensing Language Arts?

Mrs. Willard noted that this is about WCL. We currently teach Spanish and French in two years. We are condensing it into a one year course.

Do students need two years of language to graduate?

Mrs. Willard responded that ISBE does not mandate two years to graduate but some colleges do require two years.

Are we adding courses?

Mrs. Boutet noted that we are adding Coding Explorers in 6th grade. Would be allowing students to get more support.

How does this impact staff? Do we have enough staff for the coding classes?

Mrs. Boutet responded that Spanish and French would need to pick up an additional course to stay full time. We will have the LSC teach one course which is what they do in HS and in elementary they teach all day.

Thank you to all who have worked on this. Feel excited that there is time to work on the WCL.

How does this rigor compare to other courses at the Middle School level?

Mrs. Willard stated we have evolved as to our teaching. We feel very confident that this will be successful for students. It is nice that we have the 18 months to prepare.

Will there be a system in place to monitor the success of this program?

Mrs. Willard stated we would look at student progress and teacher feedback.

Can we ask for that monitoring?

Mrs. Willard stated that is the job of our building administrators and it would be reported in the SIP process.

Superintendent Bridges added that we need clarification as to what you are asking.

If it is too much, can we get updates mid year?

Superintendent Bridges stated that if the board requests an update, we would provide an update.

Students are not locked in to anything as they can make changes at the trimester.

Mrs. Boutet noted that counselors do work with families and students when changes need to be made.

Commitment 1.4: EL Program Services

- We will outline our envisioned future for EL programming, emphasizing academic and social-emotional growth for our students, we will review pertinent data on our EL student population, guiding our strategies and decisions and we will also explain the need and reasoning behind the proposed expansion and modifications to our EL program. Lastly, we will recommend the expansion of the EL program to all 6-12 schools, sharing a timeline, financial implications and action steps.
- In alignment with the Comprehensive Equity Plan, two specific commitments underpin our proposed EL program expansion: Commitment 1.4 - We have conducted a thorough analysis of our student services support systems. This has been instrumental in identifying the need to revamp our EL services, ensuring they meet the exceptional needs of our students efficiently and effectively.
- Commitment 2.2 - As part of our ongoing dedication to the Comprehensive Equity Plan, this expansion is also a strategic step towards closing academic achievement gaps. By enhancing our EL program, we aim to provide targeted support that addresses these gaps, ensuring equitable learning outcomes for all students.
- This expansion is not just an isolated initiative but also a critical component of our broader commitment to equity, excellence, and effectiveness in education across our district.
- Presently, EL services are available at Ann Reid Early Childhood Center, all 14 Elementary Schools, Jefferson Junior High School, and Naperville North High School. This existing framework has been guided by the requirements set forth by the Illinois State Board of Education, the historically small number of students who qualify for EL services, and our fiscal responsibility.
- Research indicates that Dual Language models are most effective for TBE programs. This model has been our approach for English Learners with Spanish as their home language. Dual Language is currently available at Elmwood, Mill Street, Beebe, Steeple Run, River Woods, and Jefferson Junior High School.

- Our current EL service model has been instrumental in addressing the needs of our English Learners. However, with the evolving demographics and increasing number of EL students, there is a pressing need to expand and enhance these services, ensuring equity and excellence in education for all students.
- Our goal is to offer a range of EL services in every school. This is not just about meeting legal mandates; it is about ensuring that every student feels a genuine sense of belonging in their neighborhood school. We have seen the success of an inclusive, co-teaching model at the elementary level, significantly aiding our EL students' journey to proficiency. We aim to replicate this success across our Junior High and High Schools, ensuring consistency and effectiveness in our EL program district-wide.
- A key aspect of our vision is to boost both the growth and achievement of all students receiving EL services. This expansion is tailored to provide targeted support, thereby raising the academic bar for these students. We also envision an environment where EL students feel deeply connected to their school community. This emotional and social integration is as important as academic success.
- We are committed to ensuring that eligible students receive the necessary EL services right within their home school. This approach underscores our dedication to inclusivity and equal access to educational resources. The Dual Language program will continue to be a magnet program and remain at Jefferson Junior High School.
- Our current structures are not fully aligned with our beliefs in fostering inclusive school communities. We are dedicated to providing support for our students within their home schools. Families should not have to choose between receiving support and feeling a sense of belonging.
- Another driving factor behind this expansion is our desire to increase growth for every student. By enhancing our EL program, we aim to provide more effective support, thereby elevating academic achievements. This expansion seeks to eliminate these barriers, providing more accessible and efficient support for our EL students.
- Our decision is also informed by data showing inequities and gaps in belonging and inclusion within our current structure. We are committed to addressing these disparities through this expansion.
- As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we completed a data review into how our EL students have performed over time.
- One of the most significant findings from our data is the noticeable achievement gap that widens at the secondary level between students eligible for EL services and those who are not. This gap highlights the urgent need for us to enhance and tailor our EL services to better support these students.
- A substantial percentage of students eligible for EL services choose to decline these services when they reach the secondary level. This trend is a crucial factor in our planning and decision-making process. Upon further investigation, we have learned that the primary reason students decline EL services is their desire to remain in their home schools. This insight has been pivotal in shaping our expansion plan, emphasizing the need to provide EL services within students' neighborhood schools, thereby eliminating the need for students to choose between support and belonging.
- Our EL student population is one of the fastest-growing groups in our district. In January 2013, we had 823 students eligible for EL services. Fast forward to January 2023, and that number

rose to 1,393. As of this month, we are serving 1,460 students eligible for EL services; this is a rise of over 75%.

- Alongside the overall growth, we have also seen a substantial rise in the number of secondary students who are newcomers, as well as those who have experienced limited or interrupted formal education in their home countries. This change in our student demographics requires a nuanced approach to EL education, one that is sensitive to the unique backgrounds and educational needs of these students.
- Currently, we have 404 students eligible for EL services in grades 6 through 12. Of these, a concerning 122 students, accounting for over 30%, are refusing EL services. In contrast, at the early childhood to fifth-grade levels, the scenario differs significantly. Out of 1,047 students eligible for EL services, only 23 students, or about 2%, are refusing these services.
- Why are secondary students more inclined to refuse EL services? This discrepancy has led us to delve deeper into our refusal data, especially at the critical transition point from fifth to 6th grade.
- The transition from fifth to 6th grade has revealed some startling trends in EL service refusal.
- We specifically looked at 5th grade EL students who:
 - Did not exit the program in 5th grade,
 - Had not previously declined services before 5th grade, and
 - Whose home school is not Jefferson?
- In 2022, an alarming 71% of these students declined EL services as they transitioned to 6th grade. This trend intensified in 2023, with the refusal rate climbing to 74%. These figures are particularly concerning, given that these students had not previously declined services.
- Upon investigating the reasons behind these high refusal rates, three key factors emerged from discussions with parents:
 - A strong desire to have their children attend schools closer to home,
 - A preference for their children to stay with neighborhood friends,
 - Concerns about their children enduring long bus rides.
- Understanding these parental concerns helps us shape a more responsive and community-aligned EL service model.
- One important indicator for how students are developing their English Skills is their EL Progress to Proficiency percentage. This measure is a vital component of our school report card.
- Our data reveals a stark contrast between our elementary and secondary schools. In our elementary schools, over 75% of EL students are making expected progress towards enhancing their English proficiency. At the secondary level, this figure drops to around 35%.
- While there are numerous factors contributing to this gap in progress, one aspect that stands out is the high number of service refusals at the secondary level.
- Our data shows a notable achievement gap in academic proficiency between students eligible for EL services and their peers.
- This trend is multifaceted and cannot be attributed to a single cause. Factors such as the length of time in EL programming, time spent in the country and varying degrees of educational experiences prior to joining our district all play a role. A portion of this performance decline is potentially linked to the number of students who refuse EL services at the secondary level. This refusal of services could be limiting their access to the tailored support necessary for academic success in a new language environment.

- It is also crucial to acknowledge the inequities that our EL students face when they are centralized in specific junior high and high schools. Many of our EL students endure long bus rides due to the centralized location of services, significantly lengthening their school day.
- Students attending NNHS often have to leave classes early or arrive late, as they need to accommodate additional busing to and from their home high school. This disruption affects their educational continuity. The need for transportation home limits EL students' ability to participate in after-school activities. This barrier denies them the full range of enriching experiences available to their peers.
- This separation can impact their sense of belonging and integration into the school community.
- EL students may face multiple transitions if their designated EL service location changes, further disrupting their educational experience.
- While our current EL service model addresses certain educational needs, it inadvertently creates a series of inequities impacting our students' overall school experience.
- Since the fall of 2022, our district has taken several significant steps towards enhancing our EL program in order to prepare for an expansion of services.
- We established a partnership with NIU to offer a discounted EL endorsement program, specifically targeting educators in grades 6-12. This initiative is a crucial step in building our capacity to serve our expanding EL student population.
- To ensure the success of our EL program expansion, we have actively engaged with administrators across grades 6-12. This collaboration focuses on ensuring optimal readiness and effective implementation of the expanded EL services.
- We implemented a sophisticated EL data management system. This tool enhances our ability to track and analyze EL student progress, supporting data-driven decision-making.
- Recognizing the importance of leadership in this initiative, we delivered specialized professional development sessions for administrators overseeing the expansion sites. These sessions are designed to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage the expanded EL programs.
- We have implemented a strategic hiring initiative, focusing on recruiting junior high educators with EL endorsements.
- Working in conjunction with our EL committee, we have rigorously researched and are adopting additional best practices in EL instruction. This collaborative effort is instrumental in refining our instructional strategies to better serve our EL students.
- Lastly, we provided comprehensive training to leaders in Student Services and Learning Services. This training focuses on addressing the unique needs of multilingual learners within the special education framework, ensuring an inclusive and supportive environment for all our students.
- At this time, we recommend the Board of Action approve the expansion of the EL program to all secondary schools over the course of the next three years.
- We have established a structured timeline for the phased implementation of our expanded EL program. This timeline is designed to ensure a smooth and effective rollout of the program across our schools.
- The initial phase of our implementation begins in the 2024-2025 school year. During this year, we will introduce the expanded EL program in all four of our expansion Junior High Schools, specifically targeting 6th-grade students. This first step is crucial in laying the groundwork for the program and addressing the immediate needs of our youngest secondary-level students.
- The following year, 2025-2026, we will extend our services to include both sixth and seventh graders in our Junior High Schools. Additionally, this year will see the introduction of the

program for students in grades 9 through 12 in our High Schools. This expansion is a vital step in ensuring that our EL services are comprehensive and inclusive across all secondary grade levels.

- By the 2026-2027 school year, we aim to achieve full program implementation for grades 6 through 12.
- This implementation timeline reflects our commitment to a methodical and thoughtful expansion of EL services. It allows us to adjust and refine our approach at each stage, ensuring the highest quality of support for our EL students throughout their educational journey.
- This expansion is not without some financial implications. It is important to note that these implications are based on the current enrollment of students eligible for EL services and does not account for any continued growth.
- Our financial analysis takes into account the next three years, focusing primarily on the staffing needs driven by current and anticipated EL service acceptances. All costs related to professional learning and resources will be absorbed into our existing budgets. It is also critical to note that should all currently eligible students accept EL services today; this would require an increase of approximately 5-6 certified staff.
- For the first year of implementation, we will require 3.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. To meet this need, we plan to reallocate staffing from other positions.
- In the second year, we anticipate needing an additional 1.5 FTE for Junior High Schools and 2-4 FTE for the High School. This variation depends on the number of students who choose to remain at NHS under the legacy clause. In the third year, while the exact FTE need is yet to be determined, we anticipate it being in the range of 2-4 FTE, again potentially covered through reallocation.
- A crucial aspect of our staffing strategy is the prioritization of hiring educators with an EL endorsement.
- While the financial impact is predominantly in staffing, our strategic planning and reallocation efforts are designed to mitigate these costs.
- As we move forward with our EL program expansion, we want to share the key action steps we have planned across various domains to ensure a successful implementation.
- To increase Staff Capacity, we will revise job descriptions to indicate a preference for EL endorsements among core academic teachers and implement a comprehensive professional learning plan, ensuring our educators are well-equipped to support our EL students effectively.
- For Curriculum and Academic Structures, we are revising and reinforcing strong tier 1 structures at all secondary schools, utilizing a design team to embed and align English language development standards within our curriculum and work to develop specific support structures tailored for newcomers, addressing their unique educational needs.
- To address Budgetary Considerations, for the school year 2024-2025, we will hire an EL teacher for each of the four expansion sites, reallocating these positions from other areas, consider the potential increase in hiring costs for new educators with multiple endorsements and develop SY 25 Budgets to ensure representation of any costs related to professional learning and resources are included
- In regards to Community Engagement and Support, our focus will be on revising and communicating the enrollment guidelines for ELs, ensuring they are transparent and accessible. We are also working to launch a Welcome Center for families to foster a supportive and inclusive community environment.

- To address Communications & Operations we will address placement and attendance issues for existing EL students, ensuring their educational journey is uninterrupted and smooth and develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan will be established to keep all stakeholders, including families, educators, and community members, informed and engaged.
- Our analysis clearly indicates the pressing need for expanding EL services. This expansion is not just a compliance measure but also a vital step towards equitable education for all our students. It addresses the growing needs of our diverse student population, ensuring that every student, especially our emerging bilingual learners, receives the support they need to thrive.
- Our teams across the district have been meticulously preparing for this expansion. From staff training and curriculum alignment to budgetary planning and community engagement, every facet has been carefully considered. This preparedness is a testament to our commitment to delivering high-quality, inclusive education.
- Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this expansion is the ability to meet our students' needs right in their home schools. By prioritizing both services and a sense of belonging, we are fostering an environment where students can excel academically while feeling connected and valued in their school community.

Board Questions/Comments

Thank all of you. This gets me very excited. This makes a lot of sense as we address gap closing. Do we have any projection as to what the real growth may be?

Mrs. Xagas remarked we do not have a real estimate as to where we will be in one year. We take the current students, roll up, and look at trends at each school. That is how we staff. Presentation is if numbers stay the same, this is what we will need. We will look at staffing in the spring and will have a better number of needs.

Would we want to consider supporting teachers in getting the needed endorsements?

Mrs. Xagas remarked that we were able to secure several staff members who have their EL endorsement.

Is the need evenly spread throughout the district?

Mrs. Xagas stated no, there are pockets of the community where there are greater numbers.

With the growth in numbers, is there going to be a transportation cost difference?

Mrs. Xagas remarked that there will be cost savings in transportation but they would not be actualized until full implementation.

What is causing the huge drop off?

Mrs. Xagas noted that some students meet the criteria and no longer need services.

What are the options looked at by starting at the 6th grade level instead of HS level?

Mrs. Xagas stated that the committee of staff met and discussed a variety of options. The challenge is that we need a bit more runway at the HS. There are many courses and staff that will need additional learning. At the Junior High level, we have a model that we are ready to start at the 6th grade level. There is a challenge in that some students who will still have to go to Jefferson.

Appreciate you taking a look at this and the needs of the community.

FTE reallocation-how will that be done and what is the ripple effect by moving students from JJHS to their own junior high schools?

Mrs. Xagas stated that 2.8 would come from WCL changes. LSC and LC teachers may teach some courses.

Mrs. Boutet added that we have been looking at enrollment trends. This does help spacing at JJHS. We have already begun conversations about where staff will go. Have left some wiggle room so that we can stay within the class size aspirations.

This is exciting and will be positive for these students.

Excited to see these changes. Thank you for that. If students do not enroll for services, are they still included in the EL gaps?

Mrs. Xagas stated yes.

That is good to know because those are lower. You kind of touched on some other reasons that could be achievement gap issues. Were there specific issues and were you going to address those?

Mrs. Xagas noted that gaps widen at the secondary level across the country. We have experienced a growth in the number of newcomers who have not received education in their home country and their home language. Their needs are significantly different.

That is part of the plan already, great. You have teachers now who have EL endorsements. Are there any incentives to get staff to get these endorsements?

Mrs. Xagas restated that we have partnerships with NIU that allows our staff to get endorsements at a reduced rate.

We have a robust professional learning. We also have opportunities with Career 203.

Your program talked about some support staff teaching some of the ESL courses. Did I get that wrong?

Mrs. Xagas responded that in the earlier presentation we talked about some this being taught by the Learning Support Coaches.

Will an EL certified teacher teach students always?

Mrs. Xagas stated that in their language yes. LSC could teach core classes.

Will these support staff collaborate with certified staff?

Mrs. Xagas restated that no support staff would be teaching students.

So proud of you. So proud of the advocacy for our students. These are our lowest achieving students. Proud of you for holding us accountable. I hope we have the need for additional staff. If you find that you need us to revise because there is another factor, I hope you will share that with us.

Mrs. Xagas thanked the language acquisition team who advocated for our students and families.
Speaks to us as a community to try to make this better for the families.

Policy 7:270 Administering Medicines to Children

Superintendent Bridges noted this policy has been looked at and has been reviewed by counsel. We are comfortable with this policy.

Board Questions/Comments

We took out a school code. Why did we take that out?

Superintendent Bridges stated that we would get clarification on if the school code changed.

Does the school code require this to be available after school hours?

Mrs. Xagas stated that the law is changing in January. Counsel is comfortable with the policy as written.

The policy is not written to cover every situation.

Mrs. Xagas stated that after school hours we would call 911.

Would like to know what has been removed by the changing of the wording.

Facility Capital Improvement Plan

Superintendent Bridges welcomed and congratulated Melanie Brown on her approval as Director of Buildings and Grounds.

This is an annual plan. It does include a snapshot of years out.

- I will be providing you an update regarding the 2023-2024 Capital Improvements that were approved as a result of last year's presentation as well as details of the projects we plan to complete in 2024-2025.

- I will also share which capital improvement projects we are tentatively planning for in fiscal years 2026, 2027, and 2028 and will discuss 2029 and beyond. While most of this presentation is informational, we will be seeking approval for the 2024-2025 projects at the December 18^t meeting.
- The 2023-2024 O&M budget is approximately \$30,000,000. As in the Education Fund and the Transportation Fund, salary & benefits is the largest expenditure category at 46.1%. Our typical annual ask for capital improvement plan projects is \$6,000,000, which equates to about 20% of the FY24 O&M budget.
- Capital Improvement Projects are selected using information from several sources. Formal reports such as 10 Year Safety Surveys and comprehensive facility studies are considered. More informal reviews such as site conditions and equipment age are utilized as well. We also have traditional rotations in place for projects such as playground replacements and new learning environment priorities to keep in mind. Sometimes this means that projects that are listed in one year may be shifted to another year based on current experience.
- In the past, we have reported set line items and budgets for miscellaneous summer modifications, flooring replacements & asphalt work. Since those requests fluctuate annually based on needs, requests, and larger project final costs, I have not included those line items in this report. They will of course still be completed as the O&M schedule and budget allows.
- We do have some current projects that are either entirely or partially funded by government partners. We would like to thank them for their partnership. The Illinois DCEO projects will be reimbursed upon completion of the project and submission of required grant documentation. For our NPD projects, we have been reimbursed for their contribution to the Mill Street playground already and will expect to be invoiced by the park district for our portion of the softball field project sometime in FY25.
- These six projects are slated to be completed in fiscal year 2025. Due to lingering supply chain concerns & long lead times, we have preordered the chillers and the playground equipment. The other projects are either out to bid for Board approval or in the final architectural & engineering stages prior to going out to bid. The total estimated value for these projects approximately \$6.5 million, which is slightly higher than we typically plan for each year. We do anticipate that once final bid costs come in that the value will be lower.
- When this agenda item is brought for approval at the December 18 Board meeting, this fiscal year's plan is what we will be asking for your approval on. Upon your approval and when our project costs are firmed up, we will budget this line item accordingly in the FY25 O&M budget.
- Any Fund 60/Capital Projects fund initiatives, such as the Phase II Connections build-out, are not included in this or future year project listings. Those will be presented later.
- These next 4 years are tentative and are subject to change should priorities be realigned or an urgent matter arise. The domestic water replacement projects were identified in the 10 Year Safety Survey as something that is needed to be completed within 5 years. There will be many of those mixed in with Capital Improvement Plan items that were previously planned for in past presentations. Our architects provide all of these estimates and engineers, are based on the current market, and are subject to change.
- You will notice that the project total is lower than the \$6,000,000 figure we use for these projects annually. I included only the projects that have been specifically identified in prior presentations and the Life Safety recommendations. Being new to this role, I plan to work with the Buildings & Grounds management team to evaluate site, building & equipment needs over the next year to fine tune this forecast. In addition, at last year's presentation, it was noted that in 2026 we would ask for permission to begin a brand new 10-year Comprehensive facility assessment document to guide capital and maintenance programs in the future. We expect to stay on schedule with that request.
- With that, there is room for cost fluctuations as well as smaller Life Safety items, flooring & asphalt updates, roofing work, and for any unknown additional needs.

- These projects are slated for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Again, we have some items that have been presented previously and others that were identified in the 10-Year Safety survey. I did add a line for general life safety projects as well. There are several items in each school's survey that are important to complete within the 5 year recommended time frame but are smaller in cost and scope so they are grouped in this total.
- The capital needs of a school district are predictable yet also ever-changing. We might know that we are nearing the end of useful life on a piece of major equipment but need to replace a different one earlier due to an unexpected issue. We also have seven schools whose 10 Year Safety Survey are still pending. I expect that there will be projects that will need to be shifted to accommodate those recommendations. Overall, my goal in creating this plan was to build reasonable expectations for budgeting & planning but to also maintain needed flexibility.

Board Questions/Comments:

Thank you. Congratulations, excited to have you in this role. What are some life safety items?

Mrs. Brown noted these are things that have come up on inspection.

Any percentage of surprise items?

Superintendent Bridges stated that this year we have had several, power outages, wall at NCHS.

Want to be sure there is enough flexibility to cover those.

Congratulations. When do costs ever come in under the anticipated budget?

Mrs. Brown stated that we use previous projects and experience to make the best projections we can. Sometimes we do get bids that come in under the projections.

Are we voting on the amount of the project slated for the year?

Mrs. Brown remarked yes.

Superintendent Bridges added that there would be bids for a number of these projects that will come before the board.

Can you update the board and community on the carbon action plan?

Mr. Frances stated that it went to RFQ and received several offers. We have narrowed it down. Wanted to wait until we got a new director on board. Melanie will begin work on this soon. At some point, it will be brought back before the board.

Thank you.

Congratulations. When do the life safety surveys happen?

Mrs. Brown stated that every ten years. It has been a bit longer due to COVID.

When will the next ones be?

Mr. Frances noted that they are not all done at the same time. There is another cycle of schools that need to be done.

Then does B&G do evaluations every year?

Mrs. Brown stated yes, fire, and Roe inspections.

Any reason that other capital needs are not brought in this this report.

Superintendent Bridges stated that they have a larger price tag. We should have a plan that will come to the board in the next couple of months.

We are asked to approve projects but we do not always know the whole project.

Mr. Frances stated that we are building an infrastructure that can be expanded. The Board approved the electrical station and we are working with the city right now to run that electric for the four buses that the board approved last spring. It has the capacity to charge more buses if the board approves the purchase of them.

We do not have a timeline of purchasing the electric buses. Have we factored in all the costs?

Superintendent Bridges remarked that we knew that there would be infrastructure costs to get the electric buses running. We report these costs to the board and move forward based on board approval.

We cannot run the four buses until we get the charging stations installed. Do we have a comprehensive plan to getting all the buses done?

Superintendent Bridges stated we have not said by x date we will have all electric buses.

We will talk about this in a future meeting when we are talking about buying buses.

Superintendent Bridges added these estimates are all inclusive in our expected projects. These are anticipated costs because we do not always know what will happen when the project starts.

We are looking at 2024-2025.

Water replacement does it have anything to do with lead?

Mrs. Brown stated no.it has to do with the replacement of pipes. We have been doing this in other schools.

Is there a practice in bid leeway time?

Mrs. Brown noted that she is getting information from Building and grounds staff as to better timeline to get bids.

Discussion with Action

None

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Upcoming Events

Superintendent Bridges noted:

- The next Board meeting will be on December 18
- Winter Break from December 25-Jan 5.
- January 9, 2024 Board meeting will be on a Tuesday.

Adjournment

Amanda McMillen moved seconded by Joe Kozminski to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 pm. A roll call vote was taken. Those voting yes: McMillen, Kozminski, Fitzgerald, Cush, Gericke, and Kelley Black. No: None. Absent: Wandke. The motion carried.

Approved: December 18, 2023

Kristine Gericke, President, Board of Education

Susan Patton, Secretary, Board of Education