

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 25  
1200 S. Dunton Ave.  
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005

School Board Meeting Minutes  
September 23, 2021

Scott Filipek, President of the Arlington Heights School District 25 Board of Education, called the meeting to order on September 23, 2021 to accept a motion to adjourn into closed session at 6:49 p.m. The meeting was held at the Dunton Administration Building, 1200 S. Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

The meeting was noticed for closed session to discuss: The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors, or specific volunteers of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor, or a volunteer of the District or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity, 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1); Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21); Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11); Collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2); The placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students, 5 ILCS 120.2(c)(10).



**Public Hearing on the Budget**



Regular Meeting

Scott Filipek, President of the Arlington Heights School District 25 Board of Education, called the meeting to order 7:28 p.m. on September 23, 2021. The meeting was held at the Dunton Administration Building, 1200 S. Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois. Roll call was noted and the Pledge of Allegiance said.

Board members present: Brian Cerniglia, Gina Faso, Scott Filipek, Rich Olejniczak, Anisha Ismail Patel, and Greg Scapillato

Board members excused: Chad Conley

Others Present: Dr. Lori Bein, Superintendent; Stacey Mallek, Assistant Superintendent for Business/CSBO; Dr. Brian Kaye, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Planning; Dr. Becky FitzPatrick, Assistant Superintendent for the Department of Student Services; Chris Fahnoe, Director of Technology and Assessment; Adam Harris, Head of Communications and Story Telling; Brad Katz, Information Technology Specialist; Lana O'Brien, Recording Secretary; staff; and community.

Anisha Patel entered the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

### Recognitions and Presentations

Mr. Filipek, on behalf of the Board, and Dr. Bein presented certificates to the newly tenured teachers. Dr. Bein stated that earning tenure in District 25 is a meaningful achievement, and we are impressed and thankful for the positive impact these teachers have on our children and colleagues.

Kaitlyn Schefske	Ivy Hill	Heather Nisbet	Thomas M.S.
Tamara Carlson	Olive-Mary Stitt	Riley Wharton	Thomas M.S.
Betty Henderson	Olive-Mary Stitt	Stephanie Bizzaro	Westgate
Kimberly Kusiciel	Olive-Mary Stitt	Katherine Heidrick	Westgate
Amy Jo Naughten	Olive-Mary Stitt	Colleen Higgins	Windsor
Robin McEwen	Patton	Katie Karrasch	Windsor
Jennifer Bornhorst	South M.S.	Melissa LaBlance	Windsor
Kevin Steck	South M.S.	Amy McEllen	Windsor
Michael Watson	South M.S.	Meghan Olson	Windsor
Dorotea Matanovic	Thomas M.S.		

Dr. Bein introduced the principals from South and Thomas Middle Schools, Dr. Jim Morrison, and Ms. Lori Naumowicz. They explained that the theme of both of the middle schools is Be Brave. They showed the enrollment of both schools by grade, and noted that each school's enrollment increased by approximately 20 students. They stated that they are excited about seeing all students each day; the RULER program; and the ability to offer all of our extracurricular activities. Dr. Bein stated that both schools gave Board members school shirts to wear to the schools. Mr. Filipek added that the Board was able to tour South Middle School.

### Community Input

- Greg Lendy addressed the Board regarding the vaccine mandate.
- Colin Craig addressed the Board regarding the mandates.
- Jerry Berger addressed the Board regarding the testing and vaccine mandates.
- Brenda Miller addressed the Board regarding masks and the vaccine mandate.
- Renee Schleinhardt addressed the Board regarding the Shield test.
- Ewa Wojcik addressed the Board regarding her child not wearing a mask in school.
- Todd Witherow addressed the Board regarding the right to choose.

- James Melton addressed the Board regarding encouragement to both the Board and for Jerry Berger.
- Karen Wolff addressed the Board regarding local control and removing the mandates.
- Tom Kopacz addressed the Board regarding supporting the teachers that spoke previously.
- Stacy Pacilio addressed the Board regarding reconsidering the mask mandate in school.
- Renee Schleinhardt spoke again regarding the Shield test.

Public comments were also received electronically. All comments are given to the Board in full and posted on the website.

#### Consent Agenda

**Motion:** A. Patel moved and G. Scapillato seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve those items on the Consent Agenda as follows: (A) Personnel Report and Addendum to Personnel Report; (B) Treasurer's Report (C) Invoices; (D) Fixed Asset Disposal Report; (E) Committee of the Whole Meeting minutes of September 2, 2021; (F) Regular and Closed Session Meeting minutes of September 2, 2021

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Dr. Kaye introduced the new Assistant Principal at Dryden Elementary School, Mrs. Cara Giacomini-Ferris.

#### Communications:

The following reports were given:

- IASB – Ms. Patel reported that she and Mr. Cerniglia attended the North Cook Division Dinner meeting, which was held the previous evening. Dr. Courtney Orzel was the main speaker at the meeting. Dr. Bein added that Ms. Patel was presented the Level 2 of her Master Board member status at the meeting.
- ED-RED – Mr. Olejniczak reported that the ED-RED luncheon meeting will be held tomorrow.
- Board Governance – Mr. Filipek read an excerpt from the Board Governance Framework, and noted that the Board will be participating in Board development in October.
- Other Board Communication – Mr. Scapillato noted that he is glad to see positive topics being reported from the Communications Department. A Board Coffee was held on September 11, and they were grateful to the community members that came out for the event. There will be three more Coffee with the Board events throughout the year. Ms. Patel noted that the Arlington Heights Memorial

Library opened the Makerplace facility, and the District 214 Foundation golf outing was recently held. Mr. Filipek added that Dr. Bein had been helping at the CAP program at Patton as they are short staffed. If anyone is looking for before and after school job experience, feel free to apply.

The following reports were received:

- ABC25 –Ms. Faso explained what ABC25 does for the community, and that they are seeking volunteers. The grant application is currently open until October 15.
- ATA – Ms. Berg thanked the Board members and administrators that worked on the negotiating team on the MOU. She also congratulated all of the newly tenured teachers this year. She explained the various happenings at Windsor, and showed a slideshow of pictures.

There were no reports from the following:

- NSSEO
- PTA

### Student Learning – No Report

#### Student Services

##### Special Olympics Stipends

Dr. Bein spoke on behalf of Dr. Lasiewicki. Dr. Bein noted that the Special Olympics representatives indicated that the Traditional Team model is the best way to start and lay the foundation within our schools, and then transition to the Unified program. She said that each team will have a head coach and auxiliary coaches, and they will start in the spring with a track and field team, and in the 2022-2023 school year will add basketball. She explained the Special Olympics requirements. We have estimated that we could have up to 40 students participate on a district Special Olympics Team. Our hope is to have a Traditional Special Olympics team in place this Spring with the ultimate goal of bringing the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools program into all of our district schools. Board members asked questions regarding starting with a Unified program; who can be a coach; and volunteers.

**Motion:** A. Patel moved and B. Cerniglia seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve adding the Special Olympics Coach Stipends as submitted to the 2021-22 budget.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

#### Business and Finance

##### 2021-2022 Budget

Ms. Mallek noted that the tentative budget was presented at the August Board meeting and has been posted on the website. She reviewed the changes since the tentative budget was presented. Board members asked questions regarding the deficit and

paying for capital projects; technology spending; staffing costs; and reducing the budget.

**Motion:** B. Cerniglia moved and G. Scapillato seconded the motion that the Board of Education adopt the 2021-22 Budget as presented.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, no; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 5/1.

#### Administrator Compensation Report Public Act 96-0434

Ms. Mallek stated that Public Act 096-0434 requires that on or before October 1 of each year, each school district in the State shall post on its website an itemized salary compensation report for every employee in the district holding an administrative certificate and working in that capacity. This report shall be presented at a regular school board meeting, and subject to applicable notice requirements. It will be posted on the district website.

#### Administrator and Teacher Salary & Benefit Report 2021

Ms. Mallek said that in accordance with Sections 10-20.47 and 34-18.38 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/10-20.47 and 5/34-18.38] school districts are required to report administrator and teacher salary and benefits to the Illinois State Board of Education by October 1. This information must also be presented at a school board meeting before posting it on the district website. This will be posted on the district website.

#### Facilities Management – No Report

#### Personnel and Planning

##### Memorandum of Understanding September 23, 2021

Dr. Kaye noted that this Memorandum of Understanding is a result of the governor's vaccine or testing mandate. Dr. Kaye thanked the members of the negotiating committee. He reviewed the three changes to the agreement. A Board member thanked the members of the negotiating team for their work on the agreement.

**Motion:** B. Cerniglia moved and G. Scapillato seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the Memorandum of Understanding September 23, 2021 as presented.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

#### Superintendent Report

##### Strategic Plan Update: Action Plan Teams, Whole Group "State of the District" Meeting

Dr. Bein noted that she will provide monthly Strategic Plan updates to the Board. The whole group met once via Zoom to review a "state of the district". The presentations covered the current data available for Personnel and Planning, Business-Finance-Operations, Student Services, and Student Learning.

Participants met in person on September 13 in their separate goal Action Teams. At this meeting, each group reviewed the Strategic Plan and discussed our interests in participating and agreed to some group norms. The groups began to brainstorm objectives for their specific goals, and this list will be continued and prioritized at the next meeting in October. At the next couple of meetings, each group will work to finalize their lists of objectives as well as determine how we will measure success for each item. A Board member noted that it has been an impressive undertaking and thanked the entire team.

### Second Reading of Policies – Press 107

Dr. Bein stated that the following policy is presented to the Board for a second reading. The title was changed to Multilingual Learners.

Press 107:  
6:160                      Multilingual Learners

**Motion:** G. Scapillato moved and G. Faso seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve Policy 6:160 as presented.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

### Community Input

- Sarah Knott addressed the Board regarding the vaccine mandates.
- Maryann Zaleski addressed the Board regarding Shield testing.
- Juliet Craig addressed the Board regarding her husband, Colin Craig and his love of teaching in the district.

### Future Agenda Items

#### Topics with Dates to be Determined

Dr. Bein read a request from a community member, which is a motion to overrule Governor's vaccine/testing order, protect the privacy of our teachers, prohibit the discrimination of our teachers, based on vaccination status, protect their jobs in D25 regardless of vaccination status or compliance to mandated testing of healthy teachers due to their private decisions about their health. She explained that any request of the community must be submitted two weeks before a Board meeting. It would be up to the Board to determine if this would need further discussion. Board members asked questions and discussed the topic, and determined that this will not be added to a future agenda, but the Board can add this type of topic in the future.

Dr. Bein noted that the district is still working on a plan for migrant students. We are working on it with other districts that have a migrant population, and would like to understand their process and how we might apply that here.

A Board member would like to add additional topics to the General Board Meeting Topic document, and to create one for the current year.

New Topics:

A Board member requested an update on Special Olympics for early spring.

A Board member would like to look at Policy 4:10 regarding the budget process. Ms. Mallek noted that the dates and the timelines in Policy 4:10 align with the law, and cannot be changed. There was also discussion regarding adopting Policy 4:20 Fund Balances, which the district currently does not have. There was discussion regarding PRESS Plus, and the process that the district can utilize to review policies.

Mr. Filipek also noted that the Board does not take the decisions lightly, and all Board members take time to consider everyone involved.

**Motion:** B. Cerniglia moved and R. Olejniczak seconded that the Board of Education move into the Closed session at 9:41 p.m.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

**Motion:** G. Faso moved and G. Scapillato seconded that the Board of Education adjourn closed session at 10:12 p.m.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

**Motion:** B. Cerniglia moved and A. Patel seconded that the Board of Education adjourn the regular meeting.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

The Board adjourned the regular meeting at 10:14 p.m.

Submitted,

Lana M. O'Brien  
Recording Secretary

Approved: October 7, 2021

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President  
Board of Education

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Secretary  
Board of Education

Date minutes available for public inspection: October 8, 2021

Date minutes posted on District website: October 11, 2021

Community Input Received Electronically

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 23, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
Ewa Wojcik	<p>In Superintendent Update from 8/13/21 I read: "Last night, the District 25 Board of Education also passed a motion, approving the use of the University of Illinois' COVID-19 SHIELD testing in our schools. The SHIELD Illinois saliva-based test developed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), is able to detect COVID-19 and its variants in symptomatic, pre-symptomatic, and asymptomatic individuals."</p> <p>According to FDA: "Performance of covidSHIELD has only been established with saliva specimens from symptomatic individuals. Use of covidSHIELD with other specimen types has not been assessed and performance with these sample types is not known. Performance of this test was not evaluated in an asymptomatic patient population from individuals suspected of COVID-19 by their healthcare provider".</p> <p>EUA Summary Updated August 26, 2021 <a href="https://www.fda.gov/media/146317/download">https://www.fda.gov/media/146317/download</a></p> <p>Who should we believe? Are you saying FDA is wrong?</p>
Ewa Wojcik	<p>The quarantine rules are extremely complex to me, they keep changing and are hard to understand. For example, if an unvaccinated person who was in close contact with an infected person doesn't have any symptoms, they are subject to quarantine. But a fully vaccinated person who can still get and spread covid in not required to quarantine. You should not expect us to follow something that doesn't even make sense.</p>
Ewa Wojcik	<p>FDA defines masks as experimental medical devices, and has not licensed them for use by the general public other than through Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Under the terms of the EUA, manufacturers are expressly forbidden from misleading the public by alleging that masks can be reused or used to stop or reduce infection.</p> <p>On the box of earloop surgical masks, you can read, "This product will not provide any protection against covid-19 (coronavirus) or other viruses or contaminants. Wearing an ear loop mask does not reduce the risk of contracting any disease or infection."</p> <p>How mandating masks is supposed to make parents who support masking feel safe?</p>
Kerri Hood	<p>Please note that our community has been below 4% positivity for months and below 3% positivity for several weeks now. It is past time to start removing mitigations. What is the plan? Those insisting on keeping these mitigations are not following them in their daily lives outside of school. It is time to take that into consideration and make certain things optional and at the parents' discretion.</p>
Kristina Heaton	<p>Please stand up to our governor and make masking optional for all d25 students. Per the COVID dashboard the statistics are all very favorable:</p> <p>Vaccinations administered is 57%-62%, Positivity rate is down to 3%, Cases are down 9%, hospitalizations are down 8%, deaths are down 6% all while COVID testing is up 22%. These are all great statistics. How minor does the risk need to be?!?!</p> <p>Please make masking the choice of parents.</p> <p>Data from: <a href="https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/covid-dashboard.html">https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/covid-dashboard.html</a></p>
Mia Wery	<p>I oppose the Community member requested motion to overrule Governor's vaccine/testing order for teachers. Such a motion is nonsensical and has no legal basis. Please continue to protect the health and safety of our students, who are unable to be vaccinated.</p>



First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 23, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
Nathan Ulery	<p>Tonight's agenda includes a community member's suggested future topic and motion to defy the Governor's Vaccine Mandate. It is well past time for this Board to stop appeasing a vocal minority of Arlington Heights residents. The Governor's mandates throughout this pandemic have withstood legal challenges. The State Board of Education's actions since the mask mandate has made it clear the risks the Board takes and the impact to this district if it chooses to defy the mandate. The President has announced that OSHA will be releasing its own vaccine mandate. Stop wasting resources and time and follow the mandates and guidance from public health officials. You were elected to focus on educating our children. Stay focused on that mission. Let the experts in public health make decisions related to keeping our children and the district staff healthy.</p>
Jeffrey Wery	<p>Please continue to support and adhere to the Governor's policy of requiring vaccination or weekly testing for District 25 teachers. Supporting a motion to overrule the Governor's policy would be reckless in my view, and put our children in harms way.</p> <p>Teachers are not mandated to become vaccinated as they can opt for weekly testing instead. Teachers have the ability to make private decisions about their health. If they are unable or choose not to become vaccinated, they can opt for weekly testing to protect our unvaccinated elementary school children. If they also object to weekly testing, then I support a teacher's choice to retire/resign as this removes a potential vector of infection from the classroom.</p> <p>My unvaccinated children have had countless cotton swabs stuck up their noses (with resulting crocodile tears) throughout this pandemic due to COVID exposures at school. I think it is reasonable for teachers to protect our children with weekly testing to prevent potential exposure.</p>
Jen Anderson	<p>Please provide the community at large with details about the process through which a "Community member request" is included in the Board's official meeting agenda for consideration to be included/discussed at a future meeting. Along with the process for this to occur, how often has it happened in the past and what criteria are used (and by whom) to evaluate which community member requests are elevated in this manner and which are disregarded.</p> <p>From my perspective, you've created quite a precedent by including any such request, but especially one that is so completely ridiculous and counterproductive to the District. I don't know how many times the Board needs to hear the District's legal counsel provide the same legal opinion about the validity of the Governor's orders, but it's starting to seem like they either aren't listening, aren't capable of understanding or are in deep denial. Either way, it's concerning. Please refocus the Administration's and Board's energies toward the actual work of bettering our children's educational opportunities and our schools. Thank you.</p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 23, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
Laura Culley	<p>To the SD 25 Board:</p> <p>I am very saddened that my daughter will not be able to have a highly respected and passionate social studies teacher at South Middle School due to vaccine and testing mandates. We have had other well loved teachers, administrators or staff retire or quit from South Middle School (and I'm sure many other schools in the district) before the school year started or right after the mandate was required and I am concerned more will follow due to the current or future mandates, leaving the kids with more disruption and lower quality instruction. I would respectfully request to know what the district is doing to reach out and retain teachers who may be at risk for leaving the district due to mandates and that have excellent reviews from peers, administration, parents and children. Was quarantine academy offered to these teachers to retain them? Were there specific concerns over testing that they had that could find a practical solution?</p> <p>In addition, testing deficiencies in the district needs to be immediately addressed. Currently parents cannot test at home to qualify for test to stay programs. ISBE updated their guidance on 9/21/21 to indicate that at home testing can be available to parents: "For schools and school districts, at-home or self-tests that are fully self administered are permissible when the school or school district requires proof of the test result through a video or picture of the test result to be available upon request from the school personnel." Please update the D25 school guidance to allow at home, third party or doctor office testing even if SHIELD testing is not in place. Trusting parents and allowing at home testing can reduce instructional loss time for teachers and students. Dr Bein has said that SHIELD weekly and test to stay will have an associated instructional loss time and SHIELD testing has been delayed by the vendor and due to staffing issues. Please do not allow SHIELD testing delays or staffing issues prevent parents from participating in the test to stay program at home, with a third party or using their doctor's office for testing.</p> <p>Lastly, it is clear that quarantine academy will be utilized by many students in the district this year. Currently the classroom teachers have no communication with the quarantine academy teacher on current work to keep kids on track during quarantine. Please ensure that the material presented in quarantine academy is consistent with SD25 educational offerings and ensures that upon return that the teacher does not have the burden to catch up the child. If the administration finds that this is not possible for operational, staffing or other reasons, perhaps we need to go back to streaming in the classroom or find another creative solution.</p> <p>Please partner with your teachers, parents and students to find practical solutions to continue to provide a safe learning environment with top notch teachers and quality instruction for students.</p> <p>Thank you, Laura Culley ISBE updated guidance: <a href="https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ISBE-IDPH-School-FAQs-20210921.pdf">https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ISBE-IDPH-School-FAQs-20210921.pdf</a></p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 23, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
<p>Robyn Swanson</p>	<p>I encourage the school board to decline to add the "Community member request: Motion to overrule Governor's vaccine/testing order..." to a Future board agenda and focus their time and energy on the education of the D25 students. This request is a distraction away from legitimate board business. Any move by the board to disregard the Governor's mandate jeopardizes the districts accreditation with the state and would not be in the best interest of the students.</p> <p>Health screening of Illinois teachers, including for Tuberculosis is already required by IL statute (below). It specifically states that teachers be free from communicable disease.</p> <p>The proposed motion is misleading at best.</p> <p>(105 ILCS 5/24-5) (from Ch. 122, par. 24-5) Sec. 24-5. Physical fitness and professional growth. (a) In this Section, "employee" means any employee of a school district, a student teacher, an employee of a contractor that provides services to students or in schools, or any other individual subject to the requirements of Section 10-21.9 or 34-18.5 of this Code. (b) This subsection (b) does not apply to substitute teacher employees. School boards shall require of new employees evidence of physical fitness to perform duties assigned and freedom from communicable disease. Such evidence shall consist of a physical examination by a physician licensed in Illinois or any other state to practice medicine and surgery in all its branches, a licensed advanced practice registered nurse, or a licensed physician assistant not more than 90 days preceding time of presentation to the board, and the cost of such examination shall rest with the employee. A new or existing employee may be subject to additional health examinations, including screening for tuberculosis, as required by rules adopted by the Department of Public Health or by order of a local public health official. The board may from time to time require an examination of any employee by a physician licensed in Illinois to practice medicine and surgery in all its branches, a licensed advanced practice registered nurse, or a licensed physician assistant and shall pay the expenses thereof from school funds</p>
<p>Ben Burney</p>	<p>A request has come before the Board: A motion to overrule the Governor's vaccine/testing mandate for teachers.</p> <p>It is the Board's responsibility to act in the best interests of all students, teachers, and staff of SD25. Providing a safe environment for all students, teachers, and staff means taking steps to ensure that COVID-19 variants do not spread on school grounds. The Governor's vaccine/testing mandate serves the ends of protecting students, teachers, and staff from COVID-19 exposure. It decreases the risk of the virus spreading on school grounds.</p> <p>Actions taken towards overruling the Governor's mandate would accomplish the opposite ends. Fewer vaccinations and less testing will result in more COVID-19 exposures and increase the possibility of spreading the virus on school grounds.</p> <p>The Board has a responsibility to put the long-term health interests of students, teachers, and staff first. The Board must reject this dangerous motion.</p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 23, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
<p>Robyn Swanson</p>	<p>Dr. Bein and D25 board, I request that you review and tighten up indoor lunch procedures. With the Delta variant and a large part of the student population not yet vaccinated, lunch remains a glaring exposure risk to students, punctuated by lunch transmission in our school district.</p> <p>Lunch poses no less of a risk than any other activity during the day, yet it is the only time that we allow kids to go unmasked, in enclosed spaces for an extended length of time. The way the virus spreads does not magically change at lunch time because it is convenient.</p> <p>Furthermore, we have talked a lot about the mental health of our students during the pandemic, as we should. Adults delivering contradictory messages regarding masking and social distancing is confusing to anxious students. It erodes trust and credibility.</p> <p>Psychology Today has a very pertinent article describing the harm this causing our students. I encourage you to take the time to read it (below).</p> <p><a href="https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/compassion-works/202109/children-america-you-ve-been-gaslit-lunchtime">https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/compassion-works/202109/children-america-you-ve-been-gaslit-lunchtime</a></p>
<p>Alexis Hammond</p>	<p>Dear D25 Board and Dr. Bein,</p> <p>I ask that the board recommit themselves to providing the best education possible to all students of District 25. I ask that you desist from entertaining motions to overrule the Governor's executive orders. As explained by the board's attorney at the September 2nd meeting, the Governor has "clear legal authority" to make executive orders regarding masks and vaccination as they pertain to the disaster proclamations that have been issued every 30 days since March 2020. The Illinois Emergency Act gives the Governor the authority to protect the citizens of Illinois. That includes the children, teachers and staff of District 25. Vaccination and testing are not violations of privacy. There is already precedent for inoculations in the state of Illinois regarding Tuberculosis. (105 ILCS 5/24-5) (from Ch. 122, par. 24-5) of the school code specifically calls out the health criteria that school personnel must follow to be employed by the school. The Illinois Department of public health and the local health department can also issue requirements based on need. As we are in a global pandemic, there is obviously a great need for the masking and vaccination orders. Before going down the path and spreading disinformation at another board meeting regarding vaccination/testing violating teacher's privacy, I ask you to consult with the board attorney or with articles such as "Is it a HIPAA Violation to Ask for Proof of Vaccine Status?" (<a href="https://www.hipaajournal.com/is-it-a-hipaa-violation-to-ask-for-proof-of-vaccine-status/">https://www.hipaajournal.com/is-it-a-hipaa-violation-to-ask-for-proof-of-vaccine-status/</a>). In the article referenced, it clearly states that this is not a violation of HIPAA and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), in regards to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA), confirmed "there's no indication that there's any federal law that would be violated by the employer asking this question."</p> <p>During the September 2nd Board meeting, there was much discussion about the board's power. I ask that the Board remember its place in the community and put all political agenda and pride aside. Yes, you have been elected to guide the District in the education of our children. Nevertheless, I believe that is where your "power" stops. By being voted to the board, voting citizens did not expect or ask you to be omniscient in all areas, especially in regards to public health. District 25 does not operate in a vacuum. Our district is not a self-sufficient governing body. We exist in Cook County, the State of Illinois, and the United States of America. There are many governing bodies that supersede what little "power" the District 25 Board holds. Your discretion regarding public health and the health of our children and the</p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 23, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
	<p>community has been taken away. For that I am relieved. The Federal Government, the Governor, the IDPH, the ISBE, and the Cook County Department of health have the clear legal authority and public health expertise to make these decisions for our community. The decisions about health and safety transcend the students of District 25. We are talking about the health and safety of families in the community of Arlington Heights, Illinois, and the nation as a whole.</p> <p>For these reasons, I ask that the board cease and desist in further debating bucking the mandates, executive orders, and public health guidelines. I ask that you stop wasting what precious time you have together entertaining drafting a dissenting opinion. When making comments at the September 2nd Board meeting such as “we didn’t run for this position to be told what to do” you are not representing the students of District 25. You are only thinking of yourselves. I ask that members of the Board find a little humility. Board positions are not about power, they are about leading and representing the students of District 25 in pursuit of excellent educations.</p> <p>Surrounding Boards of Education are getting creative and solving Covid related concerns/problems so that the students they represent can focus on learning. Their families can feel assured that their children are as safe as possible during this global Covid pandemic. These districts are providing daily updates to their Covid Dashboard. These districts have secured tents and seating for outdoor lunches. These districts are masking at recess. These districts have band practice outdoors. These districts have figured out how to arrange desks and students so that they aren’t facing each other. Our district should do more.</p> <p>Sincerely, Alexis Hammond</p>
Karen Joseph	<p>As a parent of D25 students, I support the revised language in policy 6:160 Multilingual Learners. I applaud the District and Board for using this asset-based language and for removing the deficit-based language of English Learners. Asset-based policy language sends an important message about the District's commitment to equity for all students, including our multilingual learners. I urge the Board to accept the revised language and approve policy 6:160 as re-written.</p>

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Alina Laurie	<p>I urge the superintendent and the entire Board to halt deployment of SHIELD testing in our district. Asymptomatic, mandatory, weekly testing will unnecessarily exclude kids from school if they test "positive." Like any virus, the coronavirus "lives" on people. Asymptomatic testing will force kids to be excluded from school even when they aren't sick, and test "positive" due to being carriers of a virus that isn't affecting them, their families, or anyone around them. Asymptomatic testing will create a culture of fear within our schools when kids line up for testing and are immediately sent home for the day after testing "positive." And, when one asymptomatic child is sent home, possibly their friends they sit with at lunch are also sent home. Close your eyes and imagine the stress on our kids as they watch their classmates be pulled out of class for this testing and see their classmates not return, knowing that could be them. Exclusion from school comes with a cost: kids are not only excluded from school, where they are learning, they are also excluded from activities they love like dance class or piano lesson, they are not invited to playdates with friends, they end up with cancelled birthday parties. Once kids are excluded from school, they are unable to stay current with their classroom work since the placeholder for the education this year (also known as "Quarantine Academy") is "busy work" that does not continue the work they are covering in their classroom. How will children who need supports from an aide, or physical therapist, speech &amp; language therapist, or occupational therapist be supported when they are excluded from school? How can children with IEP goals meet those goals when they are subject to a possibly unlimited number of days excluded from school? Let's imagine 100 kids from an elementary school are enrolled in asymptomatic testing. Now, imagine 10% of those kids test positive: that is 10 kids immediately sent home and 10 positive "cases" attributed to that school, which is 8 more than the 2 cases currently considered an "outbreak." What happens then? Is a letter sent to all the parents stating there is an "outbreak?" What if 3 of those kids are all from the same 5th grade class. Will an entire class of healthy kids now be excluded from school? Remember your neighbor, uncle, coworker, -- the one who had COVID and then continued to test positive for months, even though they were asymptomatic. We all know someone like that. What happens when the same kids test positive in SHIELD testing over and over again? It is normal for some humans to naturally be carriers of a virus. This doesn't mean they are spreading the virus to anyone else. If they were spreading the virus: you would know it because every time they do a playdate, or visit with grandma, or go to a sleepover, everyone would be coming down with COVID. A good friend of mine had COVID. She tested positive for 5 months after having COVID. After 3 weeks, her workplace and her kids' schools let them all back to school and back to work because kids need to be in school and people need to work in order to buy groceries and pay bills. What decision will this Board and this superintendent make when the same healthy, asymptomatic first grader tests positive over, and over again? Will you pay for the private tutor their family will need to hire to teach them how to read? Will you pay for the therapist for that same asymptomatic, healthy first grader when they sink into depression because the school they love and the teacher they love are no longer a part of their lives, and they are sent home, once again? There are many more things I can say: but I'm closing this with my urge to all of you to halt the deployment of SHIELD testing in our school district.</p>
Jara Kern	<p>Regarding Item 16 - Future Agenda Items A. Topics to be Determined. A community comment has prompted a member request to have a future motion to overrule the Governor's vaccine mandate for teachers - it concerns me that there is even a discussion about overruling state leadership mandates meant to protect the health and safety of our entire community, of students, staff, teachers, parents, and more. Please continue to follow the guidance of public health and state government.</p>



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Erin Zurek	<p>Please give parents and teachers choice when it comes to this vaccine. Most teachers are already vaccinated. We both know if they have chosen not to, they have a reason. Please don't be a part of forcing things on people. Also, please look at the data for our town. There is a less than 3% positivity rate. Please get these masks off these poor children. My own son was in the hospital for 6 days with an eye infection. Take temperatures, remind parents to not send their sick kids to school, wash their hands, get exercise outside. Do all that instead of these awful masks. Social emotional development and speech development is so huge. 7 hours a day, 5 days a week for months on end...what are we doing? It will never be "safe" enough for those concerned about a virus where now the majority of adults are vaccinated, the positivity rate is less than 3%, and it's in a controlled environment. Not to mention the extremely low risk on young children. I know we often don't agree, but you all are parents... imagine the awful situation we are being put in?</p>
Gitana Lapys	<p>Something has to be done immediately to improve quarantine academy. Because all middle school grades are placed together, my 7th grader was taught last year's material. Luckily she did quarantine academy just for a couple days, but how about the kids who have to quarantine for 10 days? If the kids are sent home because of close contact, they deserves same education as their classmates. And I know the kids don't have to make up the work, but how about the gap in their education?</p>
Kelly Causero	<p>Good evening. Thank you for your time and effort. Please STOP the push for SHIELD testing. Please stop testing healthy kids. Please stop making our children feel like they are lab rats. Parents need to parent and keep symptomatic children home and test only upon symptoms....with positivity rates under 2.5% SHIELD testing is unnecessary and a waste of money. thank you.</p>
Agnes PIERSA	<p>1. WHY DO YOU MASK CHILDREN IF YOU KNOW THAT THE MASKS DON'T WORK AND THEY ARE DANGEROUS FOR THEM ?</p> <p>2. ARE YOU IN A POSITION OF RECEIVING AND STATE, FEDERAL OR PRIVATE FUNDING FROM ANY ENTITY ON A CONDITION OF UNIVERSAL MASKING, VAXING OR ANY COVID RELATED PROTOCOL FOR STUFF OR STUDENTS IN THE ENTIRE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS DISTRICT?</p>
Christy Witherow	<p>I would like to ask board of education to conduct a comprehensive review District 25's 2021-2022 COVID-19 Protocols &amp; Guidelines (<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1db0GYc8ejH2xKRVBZzCNwtYg9bsFVWV1251ATd3CKOo/edit">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1db0GYc8ejH2xKRVBZzCNwtYg9bsFVWV1251ATd3CKOo/edit</a>) to identify any acts of discrimination as it pertains to Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act (745 ILCS 70/) and our student body. Can a report of any discoveries be shared with the stakeholders at the next board meeting? Thank you.</p>
Jim Small	<p>Thank you for timely posting the agenda to the September 23rd meeting. Under future agenda items, you included a community member request to overrule the Governor's vaccine/testing order which the requestor implies the order does not honor the privacy of teachers and is discriminatory. Please waste no further time considering any such motion. Implementing a mandatory vaccine policy is not discriminatory in any way, shape or form. This already exists, for example polio or measles. Unfortunately, common sense and respect cannot be legislated so thankfully in the meantime we have a mask and vaccine mandate. The fact of the matter is that employees and educators do have a choice: get vaccinated or be subject to testing. If my 10 year old at Windsor can get weekly testing, so can our educators and staff. I request that you do not entertain this agenda item any further.</p> <p>At the last two meetings, Mr. Olejniczak and Mr. Conley made comments during the August and September meetings, respectively, to the board attorney to explore what the ramifications of defying the governor's orders would be by individuals or the district. I appreciate the fact that these comments may have been made to play devil's advocate, however I don't believe</p>

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	<p>that was the case. If Mr. Olejniczak and Mr. Conley really would consider such a premise putting the district's accreditation at risk, I request that the board president censure both of them on any pandemic related board decisions or votes. Further, I ask that Mr. Olejniczak /Conley recuse themselves from any decision making on any matters related to COVID mitigation. Please stop politicizing the pandemic and focus on doing your job governing the administration.</p> <p>At the last meeting, Mr. Filipek read the board the Board Governance framework and reiterated how important it is. I echo Ms. Patel's question on why the Board thinks the framework is important. I agree that each Board member should publicly comment on her question.</p> <p>Thank you to all of our teachers and staff that work tirelessly to maintain the utmost quality of our children's education despite the challenges faced through the pandemic and a constantly changing environment!</p>
Marianne Corcoran	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am so happy to see Special Olympics on the agenda. Please continue to do all you can to include this for our children. I attended the DEI presentation and I believe this could be a wonderful way to help further those goals.</li> <li>2. Please put in as much time and effort into fixing the lunch exposure problem/automatic quarantine situation as you have in the other areas of school life. I appreciate that the rest of the day is "safe," but cannot understand why there are not better mitigations to avoid sending more healthy children home just because they ate lunch at the same table as someone else who tested positive.</li> <li>3. Stop SHIELD. The special treatment of only certain students, missing class, disruption of the day, bringing in strangers to the school (are they tested daily?), and the high false positive rate (2 out of 100) which will lead to an incredibly high number of quarantined healthy children due to the aforementioned lunch situation are all against your goal of keeping kids in school. At a school such as ours with 100 kids testing each week, that could be two false positives and approximately 10 unnecessarily quarantined healthy children.</li> <li>4. I urge each of the board members and Dr. Bein to watch a full day of quarantine academy and follow up with some students and their parents about how it went. Get first hand data on the quality and relevance of the education received. Please address the question of students receiving packets of work or Google classroom assignments so there is less work for the teacher to help them catch up on post return.</li> </ol>



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Katie Rausch	<p>Dr Bein, please read aloud at meeting if time allows thank you. Thank you for implementing Special Olympics in D25 this coming spring. The traditional special Olympics team will be a great inclusive event for our special needs population and my family is excited to help in any way we can. It's a great start. Let's continue to move forward.I would like to formally request that you add to future board agendas items and discussions that D25 pilots a unified champion school, with the support of SOILL, by the Fall of 2022 school year. I know we have an administration willing to implement this program. We need to plan now so we can successfully start next fall. Unified champion schools directly align with our community's DEI efforts and our district's strategic goals to create an inclusive learning environment for every learner?</p> <p>One of our learning environment goal strategies is as follows... "Foster a sense of belonging, mutual understanding and competence to address diversity, equity, social justice, racism and inclusion in our everyday practices"</p> <p>Two of our family and community goal strategies are as follows... "Improve classroom, school and district connections, collaboration and communication with our families and community to enhance external relationships, trust, respect, commitment, engagement and satisfaction." "Develop effective partnerships with community agencies, higher education and district 214."</p> <p>Finally our student achievement goal strategy is as follows ... "Refine and expand our continuum of services to better meet the needs of ALL students and close performance gaps for identified student subgroups."</p> <p>Traditional Special Olympics have wonderful events but we know that to create an environment that is authentic and supportive we must provide our children with regular real life experiences where students with and without disabilities are constantly engaging together on a regular basis. This is how we make change. This is what unified champion schools produce. I have enjoyed meeting with Dr. Bein and other administrators to discuss how we can move forward. I'm eager to continue our collaboration together. Thank you. Katie Rausch</p>
Natalie white	<p>Given the current local situation ... I'd like to recommend making masks for children optional. This tactic is working fine in states that border IL such as WI. Additionally, we continue to encourage future vaccines for children to be optional due to lack of enough data around efficacy, long term impacts and children being low risk for hospitalization / death. Finally - and more near term - I am aware that gym class is being held indoors even on good weather days. I want to encourage a review of the curriculum to be outside to allow removal of masks - this is another opportunity for breaks - but also with running inside with masks, it's an opportunity for worse health risks from inhaling CO2, sweat and just plain lack of oxygen.</p>
Maria Zeller Brauer	<p>As the parent of a student in District 25, I strongly encourage the Board's approval of policy 6:160 as presented. The language we use with and for our students has meaning. By using deficit-based language in our policies, we are telling these students that they have "shortcomings" and need to be "fixed." Instead, we need to focus on making their educational experience more equitable so that they are more likely to succeed. Thank you, Maria Brauer</p>

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Todd Witherow	<p>I started a petition on September 3rd after my wife spoke at a board meeting on this very issue and advocated for our teachers. After we learned of the loss of a district teacher, I updated the language and shared the petition more broadly. It has received over 400 signatures to date. These 400 supporters are advocating for a teachers right to not be mandated to vaccinate or submit to weekly testing. It is not fair. It is not just. It is not right.</p> <p>I am not asking you to defy the mandate. I am asking you to implement the mandate in the best interest of our district and community. Is it fair to only test unvaccinated teachers when a local district had over 80% of the cases being in fully vaccinated. Is it just for the State Health Department to not provide individual "orders" to a teacher as required by Illinois law, the same law that requires the state to "isolate or quarantine" any individual who does not comply – not resign or be fired. It is right to ignore science when requiring vaccination of those with superior immunity to the disease naturally. The answer is no. It is not fair. It is not just. It is not right. Take action and develop a fair, just and right solution for our teachers, staff and administration.</p>
Mairin Gradek	<p>Test to stay program for asymptomatic potentially exposed students needs to be available now. Our district should not be waiting on an outside testing company for their weekly testing program to begin. Shield in operation or not shouldn't impact healthy children's access to in person learning. Quick tests are available everywhere in our community to use on days 1, 3, 5 and 7 and parents can get those results on their own</p>
Heidi steinike	<p>How did we get here? Why does the target keep moving? 2% positivity and we are STILL testing and quarantining healthy kids?! This is unnecessary. STOP SHIELD testing before it begins. It serves no purpose.</p>
Magdalena Martinez	<p>Please allow the children to move around and stand during outdoor lunch. There is no reason that the children should have to be seated after they eat. All research indicates the need for physical movement for youngsters of this age. There is plenty of space at both Middle Schools for the children to run and play sports, should they choose. Considering they are wearing masks all day, asking them to remain seated during their break time is especially cruel. Sitting for the duration of lunch is not asked of staff, therefore it certainly should not be asked of the children! Behaviors such as trashed bathrooms would probably decrease, if the children were allowed to have a healthy physical outlet. Some of the children do not have gym, as they are in health, so lunch is there only time for movement during the day. Please remove this backward rule!</p>
Deborah Freudenberger	<p>Dear Dr. Bein and D25 Board,</p> <p>I would like our district to continue following the Governor's mandate. Masking along with other mitigation standards and testing implemented for the school year will allow students the greatest opportunity to stay in school and avoid remote learning in a safe environment. The vaccine portion of the mandate provides a testing alternative for those who can not or choose not to get the vaccine and should be followed.</p> <p>I ask that D25 allow elementary students along with middle schoolers to eat outside whenever the weather is appropriate to limit the spread of Covid among students and staff. It is an unused (elementary) or underutilized (middle school) mitigation practice in our district right now to provide the safest school environment since you obviously can not eat inside while masked.</p> <p>Please refigure and update the Covid Dashboard daily. Since D25 removes the prior week graph when the current week is placed, many (if not the majority) of Covid cases are not being represented. D214 updates daily and that could help represent a truer picture to the community.</p> <p>Thanks in advance for your consideration</p>

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<p>Brittany Polihronis</p>	<p>I would like this comment read at tonight board meeting.</p> <p>After the last board meeting a point was made in regard to board governance by Anisha. This should have been done in private as Scott mentioned and not during a regular board meeting. Discussions about texting or whereabouts should not be given this amount of time. We elected you to focus on our children and community, not saying you are upset about text messaging that wasn't accurate.</p> <p>If we are going to start calling out board misconduct, then I ask that there be 2 apologies made in the next board meetings:</p> <p>On April 29th, the very first board meeting after the election, Anisha left the board meeting for 2 min on her cell phone, and missed a vote on past practices, and policies. (See attached) Additionally her husband left the meeting with an accusatory statement and a disrespectful tone to the board.</p> <p>Dec. 4th, Brian made a joke about suicide and hanging himself, during an online board meeting, that was completely disrespectful and hurtful. You can not make jokes about suicide in a public forum where you are supposed to be a leader, not to mention the suicide risk we were facing in the midst of a pandemic.</p> <p>I am not sure how we got here, to a place where we are again at odds with each other, but I ask this be the end, and these final apologies be made so the community can get back to what is important to our children and D25! Thank you</p>
<p><b>The following comments were received after the submission deadline and not included in the September 23, 2021 Board Meeting.</b></p>	
<p>Michele Hilgart</p>	<p>I just wanted to send a quick thank you to the board for the effort to revise and policy 6:160, removing deficit based language.</p> <p>In addition, I wanted to thank Dr. Bein and the board for considering funding for Special Olympics and to encourage the district to take this initiative one step further and consider implementing Special Olympics Unified Champion programming for next school year.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>