

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 25

1200 S. Dunton Ave.
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005
Special School Board Meeting Minutes
Committee of the Whole Meeting
March 8, 2022

Scott Filipek, President of the Arlington Heights School District 25 Board of Education, called the meeting to order on March 8, 2022 to accept a motion to adjourn into closed session at 5:10 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 District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes, 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).



Special Meeting

Scott Filipek, President of the Arlington Heights School District 25 Board of Education, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on March 8, 2022. The meeting was held at the Dunton Administration Building, 1200 S. Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights, IL. Roll call was noted and the Pledge of Allegiance said.

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

Board members excused: Gina Faso

Others Present: Dr. Lori Bein, Superintendent; Stacey Mallek, Assistant Superintendent for Business/CSBO; Dr. Peg Lasiewicki, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services;

Dr. Brian Kaye, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Planning; Chris Fahnoe, Director of Technology; Ryan Schulz, Director of Facilities Management; Brad Katz, Information Technology Specialist; staff; and community.

Community Input

- Kelly Darby addressed the Board regarding the Integrated Services program at Westgate Elementary School.
- Britt Polihronis addressed the Board regarding Full Day Kindergarten and consideration of using Ivy Hill and/or the park district; and offering students with IEPs to be at their home schools.

All electronic comments received are given to the Board in full and posted on the website.

Committee of the Whole Reports

Superintendent Report

Full Day Kindergarten Update

Dr. Bein introduced Mr. Jim Hobart from Public Opinion Strategies. This presentation was moved to the beginning of the discussion so that Mr. Hobart could Zoom in to provide his report. Mr. Hobart shared a comprehensive report with key findings from a telephone survey conducted February 16-21, 2022 among 250 registered voters. His report included results related to political environment, the school district, ballot measure proposals, funding, classroom space, and message testing.

Mr. Hobart summarized the report by sharing that "A potential referendum that would fund full-day kindergarten in the district starts out in solid shape, but winning a June campaign will require an aggressive turnout effort that maximizes turnout among younger voters, especially parents . . . The strength of the messages that we tested also demonstrates that there is an opportunity for a persuasion campaign focused on the benefits of full-day kindergarten . . . The district receives high marks from voters, which is certainly a positive when it comes to passing a referendum. A strong turnout-focused campaign that emphasizes how full-day kindergarten will serve to improve the already strong district will give the referendum the best chance of passing."

Dr. Bein, Dr. Kaye, Mr. Schulz, Dr. Lasiewicki, and Ms. Mallek, also reviewed the following items related to their research on full-day kindergarten.

- Enrollment Study 2: Dr. Kaye shared the expected impact that full day kindergarten would have on enrollment. This includes an expected additional 101 students. Projections show that there could be a transition to this number with only 85% attending in Year 1 and 95% in Year 2.
- Facilities – Format: Mr. Schulz reviewed the format options that the Board could consider: building on at all seven elementary schools for added capacity; building on only additional kindergarten capacity for full day and kindergarten enrollment; building on at existing elementary schools using updated Kasarda information and 85% occupancy; and moving the 5th graders to the middle schools. He reviewed estimated costs and how each format would impact individual schools.

- Department of Student Services - Inclusion Impact: Dr. Lasiewicki shared information about an audit that NSSEO will perform on District 25 Student Services programs in the Fall of 2022. This information will be important as we continue to refine our inclusive practices. She shared a high-level perspective on the conceptual needs for full inclusion in District 25. This projects a need for 64 Student Services teachers. Utilizing the current 33 teachers employed in District 25, we would expect to need an additional 31 teachers, or 32 if we included employing a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher. This would have an estimated cost of \$1,884,800 annually in teacher salaries.
- Financing: Ms. Mallek shared information on the estimated cost to a homeowner should we utilize a referendum to pay for full day kindergarten additions and capital outlay needs. For a \$60M referendum, a \$400,000 home would see an additional \$228 per year, or \$19 per month. For an \$80M referendum, a \$400,000 home would see an additional \$324 per year, or \$27 per month. Ms. Mallek also showed the Board a financing option for the annual capital plan needs beginning in 2026, but indicated decisions could be made at that time as priorities change and projects get deferred.
- Timeline Considerations: Dr. Bein described two timelines for Board consideration. While August 2023 could be a goal to start full day kindergarten, everything would need to happen without delay (referendum approval, construction, etc.). She also shared that further detailed work would incur an expense prior to the approval of a referendum. The timeline with an August 2024 start provides for more time to work through each aspect of the project so that a more likely start date would be achieved smoothly.
- Communication Plan: Dr. Bein shared a memo with the Board that detailed a communications plan should the Board choose to pursue full-day kindergarten. The plan included descriptions for community forums, village-wide mailings, connections with partner organizations, and local interest groups, as well as online communications.
- Alternate Plans: Dr. Bein shared three options that could be considered if alternate plans are needed. These included (1) offering a lottery system where FDK could be held wherever rooms were available. Tuition would be approximately \$3,800 per student, and parents could be responsible for transporting their student; (2) a need-based enrollment program could invite those who are in subgroups demonstrating an achievement gap. Utilizing the district budget would be considered; and (3) Dunton could be used temporarily to house full-day kindergarten classes for a transition year.

Board members asked detailed questions and shared comments related to the needs of Westgate Elementary School; the data-driven research that was presented; an interest in additional polling data; the importance of continuing the Integrated Services program in the manner in which it has proven to be beneficial for students, staff, and the community; establishing an 85% capacity environment to the greatest extent possible in schools to prepare for possible future needs; the timing challenges related to start dates and election dates compared to the timing benefits of each. The Board determined that they could remove Option 3, and focused their conversation on Options 1c1 and 1c2.

After extensive conversation about the financial costs and the costs on instruction, programming, culture, and specifically students, Board members expressed the greatest interest in Option 1c1 while holding additional fee work as administration prepares information for the Board to consider for a June referendum. Based on the discussion from tonight's meeting, the administration will bring more focused information to the Board at the March 17, 2022 meeting.

Community Input - None

Motion: C. Conley moved and A. Patel seconded that the Board of Education adjourn the regular meeting.

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

The Board adjourned the regular meeting at 9:11 p.m.

Submitted,

Lori D. Bein, Ed.D.
Superintendent
for
Lana M. O'Brien
Recording Secretary

Approved: March 17, 2022

President
Board of Education

Secretary
Board of Education

Date minutes available for public inspection: March 18, 2022

Date minutes posted on District website: March 18, 2022

Community Input Received Electronically

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the March 8, 2022 Board Meeting
Mindy Turner	<p>I currently have a 6th grader (South) and 4th and 1st (Dryden) and I completely support full day kindergarten. What I do not agree with is the idea of moving the 5th graders to the middle schools. I cannot imagine my 6th grader starting middle school a year earlier. The difference between the emotional maturity of a 5th grader and 8th grader is huge. I feel it would be a safety concern to have kids that could potentially be 4-5 years apart in age together on busses and in the hallways. These kids need to remain in elementary school through 5th grade. Many districts don't even have 6th graders in their middle schools! This is not the best option for our kids. Adding on to the current schools, or utilizing Dunton makes more sense for the long run.</p>
Diana Giacalone	<p>Dear School Board Members,</p> <p>I would like to express my concern for the potential full day kindergarten program that is being considered right now in District 25. All of the options for expansion currently being considered are all very disruptive to the students and very expensive for the taxpayers. One of the advantages of neighborhood schools is that siblings and neighbors are in the same place. Moving the youngest or the oldest students from the elementary buildings would be very unfortunate and cost a lot of money on additional bussing.</p> <p>More importantly, I am concerned about the motivation behind these considerations. The students of District 25 are doing very well academically and are quite prepared for first grade with the current half day program. Children who are five need a lot of unstructured play time which can be provided in an all day kindergarten program but why should we pay teachers to supervise play time? Unstructured play is critical to the cognitive, physical, and social emotional development in young children, I don't think this is up for debate. What is up for discussion is the need for a full day kindergarten program. Many surrounding districts do have a full day program however something that attracted me to this school district is the half day kindergarten program. Our youngest learners should be spending the other half of their school day at the playground, on playdates, shopping with an adult, at the public library, visiting with grandparents, helping in the kitchen, bouncing a ball, playing with siblings... the list goes on. I enjoy providing my children with these experiences and other parents do too.</p> <p>Families have the choice of where to live and as is, our schools are bursting at the seams. The half day program has not deterred people from moving into this district. If there are some families who need the full day program for child care purposes then let's provide a childcare program for those families in need, not spend millions of dollars to alter a program that is not broken and not necessary. Some families, like mine, appreciate this extra time with their little ones. How many times have we all uttered the words, "they grow up too fast?" Let's not make it even faster by getting them into a full day program even younger.</p> <p>Thank you for taking careful consideration of all opinions before making a decision on this topic.</p> <p>Sincerely, Diana Giacalone</p>
Holly Dunkel	<p>Though I could support full day kindergarten I do not support 5th graders at the middle schools.</p>
Jessica Camp	<p>I support full day kindergarten, but do not support 5th grade moving to middle school.</p>
Sara Campbell	<p>I believe moving 5th grade to junior high is not the right answer here. 9 year olds in a building with 13/14 year olds feels like too big of an age gap both in years and development as well. Some of your younger elementary school kids have already had a shortened elementary experience given the covid situation- moving them earlier would cut their elementary experience too much in my opinion. Please don't consider this option.</p>
Michelle Monhaut	<p>I do not support 5th grade moving over to the middle school. If that means half day Kindergarten has to continue I'd rather have that than my 5th grader at TMS.</p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the March 8, 2022 Board Meeting
Kristen Alm	I am in favor of the district offering full day kindergarten, but I do not support 5th graders moving to middle school. Thank you.
Lindsay Nugent	While I agree full day kindergarten in District 25 is necessary, I do not think moving 5th graders from their elementary school to their assigned middle school (Option 3) is the best idea. I would even call it irresponsible. Many districts, including 15 right next door don't move students to the middle school level until 7th grade. There is a huge difference in physical development, emotional development and lifestyle between 10/11 year olds and 14 year olds. I think back to the things I was exposed to as an 8th grader at Thomas, and cannot fathom my daughter, who will be in 5th next year, learning about or being exposed activities, words and ideas. You said that 5th grade would be separated from 6th-8th, with different arrivals and dismissals, but there will be too many instances of influence. They don't need to get any older any faster. Not to mention the inconvenience it would create for parents trying to get their kids in K-4th to elementary and a 5th to middle school at the same time. Please consider Option 1, which checks the full day kindergarten box and keeps 5th graders at their current elementary school. I also believe the presentation showed it was the most cost conscious.
Renee Klues	<p>While I fully support FDK in D25, please don't make our kids grow up faster by moving 5th grade to the middle schools! This feels like the wrong option for many reasons.</p> <p>Additionally, looking at Patton specifically, I would like to know why the plans don't include a larger gym and commons area. Those are both already too small and adding more students will make that even worse. If you're going to invest in adding on to schools, I think issues like this should be addressed instead of only building a couple more classrooms.</p>
Sherilyn Martinez	While I support the implementation of full day kindergarten I do not support the option of moving 5th graders to junior high. That is not in the best interest of our fifth graders. Please do what is best for all of our students and choose a different option.
Carrie Holt	I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposal to move 5th graders to middle school to make space for FDK. I feel 5th graders belong at the elementary school. They should not be pushed to into a middle school situation before they are ready. In fact there is research that 6th graders perform better on tests and have higher self esteem when at elementary school as opposed to a middle school. If 6th graders are not developmentally ready for middle school, than 5th graders are definitely not ready.
Dana Wehrheim	<p>Hello, and thank you so much for the opportunity to make a comment regarding the decision to transition to whole/full day kindergarten. I feel it necessary to begin by stating that for both my husband and me, our opinions on this matter are not colored by concern about a property tax increase. We believe in taxes and respect and appreciate their necessity, and the necessity for increases, for building and maintaining the community in which we want to live and in which we want our children to love being raised.</p> <p>With that said, I do object to whole day kindergarten being instituted in Arlington Heights. It seems as though making the transition to whole day kindergarten is more of an answer, a solution to the question, "Is this what is desired by working parents?" more than it is an answer or solution to the question, "Is this what is best for our children?" I am absolutely sympathetic to how challenging it can be to arrange excellent childcare, but I don't think this problem should be at the heart of this matter.</p> <p>We must consider, first and foremost, what is most developmentally appropriate for our children, and I am not convinced that whole day kindergarten is best of that having fifth graders in a middle school setting is best. Admittedly, it has been many years since I was working as a teacher and involved in this discussion/transition at my own school, but I do recall that at that time, there was very little research supporting the notion that whole day kindergarten was best. I remember administrators and proponents citing research and literature, but it was specific to how children from low-income communities who were considered at risk for failure faired in a whole day program versus a half day program, but that is not relevant here.</p> <p>Is there current research supporting the long-term benefits of whole day kindergarten for children in a community like ours? Additionally, have we spoken enough to the current kindergarten teachers, and</p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the March 8, 2022 Board Meeting
	<p>do we know if they believe children like those they have been teaching the last several years would thrive in a whole day environment? My family moved to Arlington Heights from Chicago just over a year ago, and when we moved, we were thrilled that our children would attend a half day program rather than a whole day like that in Chicago. I see the joy and the love my children have for learning and for their school, and I truly believe that in large part, it is because they had/are having an appropriate kindergarten experience that honors who they are at five-years-old. Similarly, I want them to continue to love learning and feel safe in their school and attend fifth grade at their elementary school, not in a middle school setting, where developmentally, sixth, seventh and eighth graders are quite different.</p> <p>Thank you again for this opportunity, and I wish you the best in making this tremendous decision.</p>
<p>The following comments were received after the submission deadline and not included in the March 8, 2022 Board Meeting.</p>	
Melissa R	<p>Please consider other options other than moving 5th graders to middle school in order to accommodate full day kindergarten. I strongly disagree with that being an option. I feel it will be more harm than good for 5th graders. Even though I am for FDK, but not at the expense of our 5th graders. There has to be a better option.</p>
Tiffany Sieroslawski	<p>The IS Program should NOT be moved to Ivy Hill School, related to an ethical and legal standpoint. Ivy Hill already supports a high number of students in marginalized groups, Multi Lingual Learners, Students of Color and Low Income families. If the IS program is moved there, a significantly large population of students with disabilities will also call Ivy Hill home. The issue of placing high needs and marginalized groups of students in one school is in direct conflict with any diversity, equity and inclusion values we regard as a priority.</p>
Elisa Raugstad	<p>Please do not allow 5th graders to move to Middle schools. There are better options for placing full day kindergarteners, without disrupting 5th graders in the Elementary Schools.</p>
Hilary Bartels	<p>Please keep our 5th graders in elementary school where they belong.</p>
Katie Zabor	<p>I am not in favor of 5th grade additions to Thomas and South middle school. I believe 5th graders are best served to stay in elementary schools.</p>
Elizabeth Choporis	<p>I'd like to express my concern regarding one of the proposed options for accommodating full-day kindergarten within District 25. While I do not feel full-day kindergarten is a necessity, I do understand that it will likely happen for our district. However, I am very concerned with the option of moving the 5th graders to the middle schools.</p> <p>I strongly believe that moving 5th graders to the same building as middle school students will be a detriment to their development. The adjustment to middle school is a major life change and 5th graders are still only 10-11 years old. Regardless of if they're kept separate from the 6th-8th graders, they will be in a middle school building. That alone will cause a shift in them. Children are already growing up fast, there's no reason to speed up the process. A 10 year old has very different needs than a 14 year old and they should not be lumped together.</p> <p>The other concern I have is that the kids in our neighborhood are not bused to South. It's over a mile for many of us and every child needs to cross Arlington Heights Road. I grew up in this neighborhood and I went to South. I'm well aware that although there is a light and crossing guard at Park St., many kids thought it was "cooler" to cross AH Rd. at any place other than the light. This is incredibly dangerous at any age but I certainly don't want my 10 year olds even offered the chance.</p> <p>Families have a choice of where to live and choose Arlington Heights knowing that District 25 has half-day kindergarten and K-5 in the elementary schools. Please do the right thing and keep our 5th graders at their elementary schools, they should not be the ones to sacrifice in order to add full-day kindergarten.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>