

# Achieve Excellence and Empower Students to Succeed

Educate and prepare students with the **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS,** and **PERSONAL QUALITIES** to be productive citizens.



## GENEVA COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 304 227 NORTH FOURTH STREET, GENEVA, ILLINOIS RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS OF A REGULAR SESSION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Board of Education of Community Unit School District Number 304 met in a regular session on Monday, March 10, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at Coultrap Educational Services Center, 227 North Fourth Street, Geneva, Illinois.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER (Policy 2:220)

1. Roll Call
2. Welcome
3. Pledge
4. Reminder to sign attendance sheet

Board members present: Molly Ansari, Policy Committee Chair Stephanie Bellino, President Larry Cabeen, Dan Choi, Vice President/Finance Committee Chair Jackie Forbes, Willard Hooks, Paul Radlinski. Late: None. Absent: None.

The President welcomed everyone, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

District staff present: Tom Rogers, Principal Geneva High School; Matt Johnson, Director of Transportation; Todd Latham Assistant Superintendent for Business Services; Shonette Sims, Assistant Superintendent Learning & Teaching; Dr. Adam Law, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel Services; Dr. Andy Barrett, Superintendent.

Others present: Kathy Shabowski, Adam, Heidi & Evelyn Gibbons, Stacey Nasra, Ethan Ryan, Kim Grimes, Alan, Tara & John Koslowski, Vitaly Starkov, Brian Maher, Patrice Totman, Claire Totman, Nicholas Grimes, Ellie Grantcharov, Eric Ryan, Steve McHugh, Naomi & Von Lautenschlager, Reese Lackey, Ryan Fontana, Chris Pettie, Joseph Pettit, Shannon Ballenger, Colleen Ortiz, Kristina Panozo, Samuel Ortiz, Nicole Lisky, Erin Kelly, Melissa Swierczewski, Julia Swierczewski, Ashley Gerard, Brady Jordan, Kathy Fuller, Kara Prefountain.

### 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Policy 2:220)

1. Regular Session, February 24, 2025

Motion by Forbes second by Choi, to approve the above-listed minutes, item 2.1. On roll call, Ayes, five (5), Ansari, Cabeen, Forbes, Hooks, Radlinski. Nays, none (0). Absent, none (0). Abstained, two (2), Bellino, Choi.

### 3. RECOGNITION, AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Tradition of Excellence: GHS Students (Policy 6:330)  
National Merit Scholarship, Skaldic Literacy Magazine, Scholastic Art Competition, Wrestling, Boys Swimming, Gymnastics

#### National Merit Finalists

Evelyn Gibbons  
Ellie Grantcharov

Nicholas Grimes  
Ethan Ryan

Vitaly Starkov

2024 Skaldic Literary Magazine

Danielle Nasra Beau Trch  
Claire Totman Cameron Winsininski

Scholastic Art Competition

Mackenzie Benedek Drew Hosman Emma Nolan  
Caitlin Cassidy Willow Houck Morgan Reid  
Wyatt Curry John Kozlowski Miles Sheppard  
Ryan Fontana Von Lautenschlauger

IHSA Boys Wrestling State Qualifier

Joseph Pettit

IHSA Girls Gymnastics State Qualifiers

Reese Lackey Julia Swierczewski

IHSA Boys Swimming State Qualifiers

Brady Jordan Samuel Ortiz Nathan Walkington

2. 2025-26 Preliminary Transportation Budget – Todd Latham & Matt Johnson  
Matt Johnson and Todd Latham presented the 2025-26 preliminary transportation budget. Staff will consist of four office staff, two mechanics, one bus washer, sixty-seven bus drivers, and eight bus monitors. The fleet includes twenty 72-passenger propane buses, twenty-five 72-passenger diesel buses, fifteen 30-passenger buses, four 27-passenger buses, nine 21-passenger buses with lift, and four MFSAB. Revenues are estimated at \$4,567,675 and includes property taxes, interest income, rider fees, bus sales, and state transportation claim reimbursements. Expenses are estimated at \$5,053,400 and includes salaries, benefits, purchased services, supplies/materials, capital purchases, other objects, bus parts, and non-capital purchases. They shared a five-year comparison of revenue and expenses.

Board comments, questions, concerns: If you look at the capital needs, where the new buses are, and we look at the 2024-25 budget, if the buses do not arrive would that be shifted to the 2025-26 year? (Yes.) Do we have any in the local projected sales of existing buses once those come in or is that all for next year? (We have been reaching out to other districts and companies that might be interested in our older buses, but we do have a plan to sell off our older buses as the new ones come in.) Do we need these new buses to come in order to service all our students or do we hang on to our older buses until the new ones come in? (We would hold on to the older buses until the new ones arrive.) Is it one for one swap out? (Yes.) Is there a threshold for mileage where you say it is time to move this bus on? (We do not really use mileage per say but are trying to get all buses on a five-year rotation. I talk to the mechanics to find which buses have been more problematic before looking at mileage.) When you say breakdown, are you making choices that the new buses would have more longevity? (Absolutely.) So, how do you do that? (We have different fuel types and different vendors. It is not that the buses we buy are problematic, but it is like buying a new car.)

3. Panorama Pilot – Anne Scalia & George Petmezas

Anne Scalia and George Petmezas shared an update on the Panorama pilot taking place at Harrison Street Elementary, Mill Creek Elementary, Geneva Middle School North, and Geneva Middle School South. Panorama is a systemic and cohesive approach to problem solving. It is a platform that provides academic, behavioral, and social emotional support to students. It integrates data from various sources to provide a holistic view of student performance. The three topics discussed were data integration, user friendly interface, and actionable insights. Each building has a core

team that consists of administrators, psychologists, student support specialists, counselors, and reading specialists. The program consists of three phases that identify four key areas. As a district, our goal is to get to phase 3. We want to look at the number of domains, student attendance, are they here to learn, social emotional standing, and state assessments. Many are in phase 2 as we prepare to adopt this at the pilot schools. The other schools are in phase 1. The leaders involved in this are fully committed, however, we have not brought on those other four schools. When we look at data integration, we are trying to identify students that need support, which may require us to access multiple platforms to make the best decisions for each student. The program allows us to look at data based specific searches, such as student attendance or assessment scores. There are multiple views, with the first one being the balcony view that shows how a school is performing. It can also be broken down by many other options such as by grade level. Once a student is identified as needing an intervention we would create an intervention plan within the Panorama system. Each student will have their own specific interventions, such as academic or social emotional support. They showed how information is input into the Panorama system and how it provides recommendations. Overall, the benefits are improved student outcomes, holistic student support, and efficiency for all our teams and educators.

Board comments, questions, concerns: Does this not apply to our high schoolers? (It does. We will be looking at the high school and our early learning center, but their learning points are quite different from elementary and middle school.) Have we seen in the pilot schools that we have captured more students because we have more data? (This is hard to answer because we do an excellent job of identifying students, but maybe not as good at identifying the problem.) Who owns the interventions? Is it the teacher? How do we loop the parents in? (It depends. Tier 2 interventions can begin in the classroom. Tier 3 is more intensive, which could include a specialist. The specialist is who would reach out to the parents when a student reaches Tier 3 interventions. We will be onboarding our general education teachers at the pilot schools in the spring.) You said that you have access to 700+ strategies, but with the pilot are you coming up with your own list that we should try first? (That is a goal. We just started dabbling in those strategies.) Is there anything on the horizon that this might be applicable to generate to AI for decision making down the road? (Yes, I am part of the Panorama newsletters and user groups, and AI has been a topic.) So, this is a system that will incorporate data for all students in elementary and middle school, but will be used for students that need support? (Yes.) You showed dashboards that could be used, but will they be shared with the parents to help them understand where their child may be struggling? (This information is shared with the parents, but they get multiple reports.) Is this set on the existing Student Information System? (It is about getting the data into the format that the platform requires. This is not the only system that we will have to reshape the integration. It does not matter if we do it now or down the road.) Have you heard any feedback from the core teams? (The feedback we have received has started some great conversations about practices. Once we flattened out all the bumps there was positive feedback.) Do the plans get rolled out for the parents and are there options for the parent to go through the plans with the educator? (The intervention includes the parents. They are part of the team.) Since this is a pilot, is there a timeline? (It is now. We are moving to the second phase this next school year for the pilot schools.)

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*(PRESS Policy 2:230) Per Board Policy 2:230, attendees wishing to formally address the Board must register their intention to participate in the public portion(s) of the meeting upon their arrival at the meeting. Complete the form in the Welcome to Our Meeting brochure (print legibly) and give it to the Presiding Officer or the Recording Secretary before the meeting is called to order.*

A community member shared that TIF 4 has many of the same discrepancies, as well as other issues, like the Crown development in Sugar Grove does. FOIA requests

indicate no records exist pertaining to results cited in the study. There is no evidence that this area is blighted. There is no flooding on this land, and it has been farmed continuously for over 100 years. Until this grift is called out, we cannot blame a developer for taking advantage of the statutes written. Also, taking advantage of every tax paying citizen. This parcel is forty acres and has an EAV of \$10,000. If we look at the twenty-three-year life span of TIF, District 304 would get \$161,000. A cursory review shows that a building of this size that plans for this TIF brings in two to four times more in a single year. Instead of collecting these increased revenues annually, you will be forced to raise the taxpayers' contributions to meet future needs. School districts have the most to lose in a TIF district. It is incumbent on school districts to conduct individual due diligence evaluating these proposals. The developer has already shown that they are not responsive to the community by destroying trees that are hundreds of years old. It would be nice if District 304 would do its fiduciary duties to the community and examine this potential impact of these questionable activities relating to the TIF. This should be on your next agenda for discussion. The taxpayers in your district deserve your attention to this matter.

#### **5. LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

*Board Member Code of Conduct #8 - "I will be sufficiently informed about and prepared to act on the specific issues before the Board, and remain reasonable knowledgeable about the local, State, national, and global education issues."*

Jackie Forbes shared that there is action happening in the General Assembly, but not a lot of motion on some of these bills.

#### **6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT (Policy 3:40)**

The Superintendent shared that we started the year with the Demographic Study and have been working through the Facility Capacity Analysis because we want to look at both things together as we are looking at our Strategic Plan. We need a system that is reasonable, equitable, and sustainable. One key question is, how close are our learning spaces to achieving our district class size targets. Another is, what is a reasonable expectation for maximizing our scheduling efficiency, and how can we ensure consistent and equitable experiences for kids across our district. In terms of the process, we collaborated with our architect and administrators to generate data. We came up with three calculations, the maximum operational capacity, the design operational capacity, and the Illinois State Board of Education's capacity. Some key things we want to start looking at are what are our number of learning spaces, what is the number of students in our learning spaces, and what are our ideal class size targets in all grades. Our maximum operational capacity assumes 100% efficiency in achieving class size learning targets in our learning spaces, which is impossible. The data provides a foundation for us to start asking about those key questions. Some big ideas we have are sustainable room for growth, maintain our reasonable class sizes across the district, and room for improved efficiency and consistency across the district.

Board comments, questions, concerns: Your first idea of sustainable room for growth consistent with our needs is something I am struggling with because the Demographic Study today does not show a need for growth. Are you talking about functional growth, not student growth in terms of the number of students? (I am talking about both of those things. One is functional growth in terms of our programs continuing to evolve.)

He also shared that he sat on the advisory board for the Fox Valley Career Center this past week. This is some amazing programming for our students and well aligned with our Strategic Plan. They offer Welding, Fire Science, Healthcare, Law Enforcement, Electrical, Automotive and these are programs that no district in the cooperative could hold on their own. As we look at next year, there is strong interest

and many students across the area that are interested. Of course, there is limited capacity. We also must look at staffing because some of these are hard to fill. Thank you to Rick Burchell for all he has done for the program. He will be retiring at the end of the school year.

Board comments, questions, concerns: When you talked about strong interest and limited capacity, is this anything new? (No.) I did not know there was limited capacity. It is about how to organize this and to get the students there and back. We cannot be the only district to have this problem. If we do not do something now, in five years we will be sitting here saying the same thing and there will be students who really wanted to go into the trades but did not get this opportunity. We need to put some focus on this. One thing we can do is to look at what interest there is in Geneva. It is unlikely that we will be able to build our own facility to offer these programs.

Our district just participated in the County Wide Institute Day, winter activities are wrapping up around the district, spring activities are beginning to kick off, and standardized testing will begin this week. Thank you to our teachers and educators in our district. Looking back at board meetings this year, we have seen great growth in student achievement, strong programs, cool things kids are doing, building strong relationships, and feeling connected. This is because our teachers are awesome and empowered to do their jobs.

#### **7. BOARD DIALOGUE TOPICS & PENDING ACTION CONSIDERATION**

##### **1. 2025-26 Finance Committee Calendar Draft**

This calendar has been reviewed by the Finance Committee and administrators. Motion by Radlinski second by Choi, to approve the above-listed calendar, item 7.1. On roll call, Ayes, seven (7), Ansari, Bellino, Cabeen, Choi, Forbes, Hooks, Radlinski. Nays, none (0). Absent, none (0). Abstained, none (0).

##### **2. 2025-26 Preliminary Resource Adoption (Policy 6:40)**

This was brought to the board at a previous meeting for review and is now being brought back for a vote.

Motion by Hooks second by Forbes, to approve the above-listed, item 7.2. On roll call, Ayes, seven (7), Ansari, Bellino, Cabeen, Choi, Forbes, Hooks, Radlinski. Nays, none (0). Absent, none (0). Abstained, none (0).

#### **8. WORK-STUDY TOPICS & FUTURE ACTION CONSIDERATION**

##### **1. Student Information System Recommendation (SIS)**

Mike Wilkes and members of the review team shared how they reached their recommendation, what timeline did this process take, how they got to where they are, what were some of the drivers for considering this change, looking at what the recommendation is, and the benefits we expect by making this change. This process started last year with the core team and this year additional staff were added. Last school year an RFI was conducted and the core team considered two primary questions: 1) After seeing all the information that came back from those products did we see compelling information to consider a change in our current SIS?; and 2) If we did, then to identify two finalists to come back this school year and go through a more thorough and in depth process with the broader team. The team did see a need to make a change, so two finalists were identified. An RFP was created and sent to the finalists requesting them to submit proposals. Members of the team spent four days listening to the presentations. Once the team landed on a decision they worked on a recommendation. If we do move forward, then next school year will be a data conversion/migration year. Many staff members will participate in training during the 2025-26 school year to prepare for release in the 2026-27 school year. Our recommendation would be to purchase Synergy SIS from Edupoint. The estimated cost over five years would be \$539,825. This recommendation will be brought back in April for the Board to vote.

Board comments, questions, concerns: Do you have any idea what the structure cost was for the current system? (To do our last refresh in 2022-23, the cost was \$400,000.) So, could it be that continuing the current system could cost more? (Yes.) Was the cost part of the evaluation rubric and how did Synergy fall into that? (Price was the highest weighted in our criteria. We took the average of the two systems. With two different systems it is hard to compare them.) It seems like different systems have different nodules in terms of these systems. Was this an all in type thing or will there be additional costs? (This system addresses our core needs. There are additional things that can be added on for an additional cost.) Are these the core things that we need? (Yes.) How old is Synergy, how long has it been out there, and is there a chance that its current owner could come back in five years and say they will no longer support this system, so you will need to roll out the newer system? (Anything could happen. Synergy came out around 2010. It is one of the newer platforms out there.) Is this their first version? (I am not sure how they version their software.) Customization and adaptation are all great, but the reality is it is the killer of all SIS systems, because once you start adapting and customizing it makes it extremely expensive to move to the next version. Have you strategized this? (When you talk about customization and what Synergy allows to be customized, you are doing it within the parameters of the system.) So, there is a black box you cannot go in? (Yes.) I know we got feedback from several staff members with whom we trust their expertise, but do we know what that will look like on the parent and student side and how they may interface with it? (We could bring this back to the next meeting. We did have an opportunity to see the parent/student side when we were meeting with the different vendors.) So, this is probably proprietary software and has some limitations as to what you can and cannot do with it. How confident are you that it will not become obsolete within the next several years? (As confident as I would be with the current system.) Did you say that this system has mobile capabilities? (It has capabilities beyond what we can do with our current system.)

2. 2025-26 Staffing Plan (Policy 5:200)

Dr. Adam Law shared the staffing plan for the 2025-26 school year. It has been narrowed down to just one additional position. It is recommended that we add an additional Information Systems Analyst in place of the Technology Support Specialist position that is open. This position would be responsible for supporting the management, operations, and interoperability of the district's information systems. The cost for this position would be \$75,000 plus possible benefits of \$15,000.

Board comments, questions, concerns: What would be the minimal training or education needed for this position? (Typically, it is a college degree or equivalent work experience.)

**9. INFORMATION**

1. Board Meeting/Presentation Schedule (Policy 2:220)
2. FOIA Requests & Board Correspondence (Policy 2:250)
3. Suspension Report (Policy 7:200)

**10. CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Personnel Report: Resignations, Retirements, Leave Requests, Changes in Assignment/FTE, New Hires (Policies 3:50, 5:200, 5:280)
2. Monthly Financials - February (Policy 4:40, 4:55)
3. Annual Resolution for Joint Agreement as Part of the FVCC (Policy 6:185)
4. IHSA Membership Renewal
5. Gifts, Grants, Bequests: \$1,235.60, Midwest Trading-Horticulture Supplies, four pallets of bagged soil to support GHS & WAS (Policy 8:80)
6. Bid Summary: \$77,225.70, Midland Paper Company, district paper purchase for 2025-26 (Policy 4:50)

- 7. Request to Purchase: \$378,650, CDWG, for firewall devices and services
  - 8. Request to Purchase: \$575,287.50, CDWG, for 1,160 student devices
  - 9. Request to Purchase: \$322,200, CDWG, for 300 staff devices
- Motion by Forbes second by Choi, to approve the above-listed, items 10.1-10.9. On roll call, Ayes, seven (7), Ansari, Bellino, Cabeen, Choi, Forbes, Hooks, Radlinski. Nays, none (0). Absent, none (0). Abstained, none (0).

**11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

*Policy Committee, Finance Committee, Boundary Task Force, Communications Task Force, Facilities Task Force, Technology Task Force, Joint PTO, Geneva Academic Foundation, Geneva All-Sports Boosters, Geneva Music Boosters, Geneva High School Theater Boosters, GEARS, K-12 Discipline Committee, PRIDE, Fox Valley Career Center, IASB/Legislative, IASB Kishwaukee Governing Board*

Board members have gone through an email conversion and that is now complete. Winter events are wrapping up and spring events are kicking off. Thank you to everyone who presented tonight, with a highlight on Anne and George’s Panorama presentation. The Technology Task Force met this past week and discussed the student information system. Thank you to Mike Wilke’s and his team for their work on finding a new student information system. Dr. Barrett took a couple of board members on a tour of Mades-Johnstone last week. We recommend that if you have time, you visit this facility. Congrats to all the students that received awards tonight. Thank you to all parents that volunteer their time to attend field trips or other activities. Thank you to the community member that came to speak tonight. A board member attended the Empty Bowls Event and was able to take a nice ceramic bowl home. Board members attended the boys’ basketball playoffs. About a year ago, around this time, we approved a trip for our high school choir to go to London and Paris that a board member was able to chaperone. It was an amazing experience for our kids. A board member attended the Geneva Middle School South musical performance of “Annie” and this weekend, Geneva Middle School North will have their performance of the “Wizard of Oz.”

**12. NOTICES / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:43 p.m., motion by Forbes second by Choi and with unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ PRESIDENT  
 (Date)

SECRETARY \_\_\_\_\_ RECORDING SECRETARY