

MINUTES OF THE  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
Of the Board of Education  
Riverside School District No. 96  
Held on Wednesday, May 6, 2026  
Central Elementary School

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE/SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD

20-575 A. President Wesley Muirheid called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and on roll call, the following members were recorded as being present:

Mr. Barsotti  
Ms. Kachlic  
Mr. Olech  
Mr. Hunt  
Ms. Claps  
Mr. Muirheid

Absent: Ms. Gunn

Also in attendance were Superintendent Martha Ryan-Toye, Director of Technology Molly Marquardt, Director of Special Education Nora Geraghty, Central Principal Pete Gatz, Blythe Park Principal Casimira Gorman, Hauser Principal Chris Harvalis, Hauser Assistant Principal Katie Kayastha, the Board of Education recording clerk, a Riverside TV videographer, and staff members.

B. Welcome to Central School.

Principal Pete Gatz shared a warm welcome to the board and shared highlights of the happenings at Central Elementary School.

C. Public Comment/Response.

There were no public comments.

20-576 D. Approval of Director of Teaching and Learning - Action Item.

A motion was made by Mr. Hunt and supported by Mr. Barsotti to approve the 2026-2027 contract for Director of Teaching and Learning to Casimira Gorman as presented.

President thanked Casimira Gorman, who will move from her role as Principal of Blythe Park to serve as the District's Director of Teaching and Learning.

The motion carried the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Ms. Claps  
Mr. Olech  
Mr. Barsotti  
Ms. Kachlic  
Mr. Hunt  
Mr. Muirheid

Absent: Ms. Gunn

Nays: None  
Abstain: None

20-577 E. Approval of Principal for Blythe Park Elementary School - Action Item.

A motion was made by Ms. Kachlic and supported by Mr. Barsotti to approve the 2026-2027 contract for Principal of Blythe Park Elementary School to Christopher Reid as presented.

Superintendent Ryan-Toye shared that Chris Reid is here today and excited to work with Chris Reid starting on July 1, 2026.

The motion carried the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Mr. Olech  
Mr. Barsotti  
Mr. Hunt  
Ms. Claps  
Ms. Kachlic  
Mr. Muirheid  
Absent: Ms. Gunn  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None

F. Committee Reports

1. Education Committee - Mr. Hunt.

a. Advanced Learning Update.

- Blythe Park Principal and newly approved Director of Teaching and Learning, Ms. Gorman, presented to the Board the presentation that was originally shared with D96 staff.
- The presentation highlighted the Advanced Learning Committee's progress from March to May.
- Two consultants/planning meetings were scheduled with the Northwestern Center for Talent and Development. The committee shared the expanded student qualification profiles with multiple plus indicators for elementary and Hauser Junior High.
- Confirmed the service structures at each building, including staffing and scheduling logistics.
- Selected and aligned curriculum resources for Advanced ELA.
- More enhancement of D96's MTSS Diamond. Developing the enrichment and enrichment + of the diamond.
- Advanced learning enhancements which will take place during the 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 school years were discussed.
- Determined a communication plan for families:
  - Program overview review to staff during Opening Institute Days
  - Shared description of identification profile and service model on district website over the summer

- In-person presentation to parents and recording of presentation on district website (Fall 2026)
- Determined a professional learning plan for staff.
- Determined priorities for the 2027-2028 school year.
- Board Questions included:
  - School clustering/grouping. This grouping will be diverse and mixed, with differentiation and intentional lessons provided for the groups. This benefits both teacher and student.
  - Revisions to the indicators will open the windows, helping promote students' access to more of these opportunities.
  - thanking Ms. Gorman for coming in and hitting the ground running
  - the advantages and disadvantages of the Northwestern Center for Talent Development (CTD) model. Ms. Gorman affirmed the model's overall strength and committed to researching critical perspectives or documented drawbacks.
    - The Northwestern CTD identified several districts (Deerfield and Orland) that have successfully implemented this framework, which may warrant future site visits.
  - The administration outlined a cluster grouping scenario, confirming that a cluster grouping pilot will launch at designated grade levels next school year.
    - During intervention blocks, teachers utilize small-group instruction and rotate among all student groups. Lessons are specifically tiered and leveled to meet individual students' needs.
    - To bridge learning gaps, the program features multiple entry points for students. The core focus of the curriculum is student readiness.
    - The administration highlighted that i-Ready has developed specialized enrichment lessons. These resources are fully available, and staff are actively integrating them into current instruction.
- Board members expressed satisfaction with the proactive adjustments and instructional scaffolds currently in place.
- The administration emphasized its commitment to protecting foundational concepts, noting that preventing early learning gaps is critical to keeping students from struggling in later grades.
- The program's goals are the identification and communication piece. The administration thanked the board for their input and will take it into consideration.
- The board thanked Ms Gorman for this insightful presentation.

- b. Hauser Math Update.
- Casimira Gorman, Chris Harvalis, and Katie Kayastha shared updates on the math curriculum and personnel considerations.
  - The recommendation to the board is to increase the Hauser Math Teacher position by 1.0 FTE, beginning in the 2026-2027 School Year.
  - The enrollment trends and class sizes to ensure an effective teacher-student ratio were discussed.
  - Vetting the effectiveness of D96's curricular resources and determining a need for new resources.
  - Each Hauser class is unique in terms of the number of students and their specific needs (e.g., IEP, 504, MTSS, ELL, Advanced Learners). By lowering class averages, we can better meet these needs in Math.
  - An extra math teacher enhances scheduling flexibility and reduces math class size overall
  - An additional math teacher would bring Hauser's total to nine math teachers
    - This allows us to place teams of three teachers at a grade level.
    - Currently, two Hauser Math teachers split between grade levels
    - One Student Support Coordinator has a modified job description to teach a class at 6th grade
  - The administration shared a review of middle school mathematics, and input was gathered from math teams on the current effectiveness of resources.
  - The next steps regarding this review were shared.
  - A comprehensive pilot program will be conducted throughout the 2026-2027 school year, with a summative evaluation and final adoption determination scheduled for Spring 2027.
  - During the 2026-2027 school year, Hauser Junior High School is interested in piloting EdGems Math Resources. The pilot will begin with training for Hauser staff on May 27 to ensure instructional readiness and curriculum alignment.
  - A strategic partnership was established with District 95 to facilitate cross-district professional learning, enabling our educators to leverage shared expertise and best practices during implementation.
  - The goal is to schedule more articulation with Riverside Brookfield High School.
  - Clarity was sought on the adoption pricing, and the matter will be brought back to the board at the May business meeting.
  - The budgeting for this position was discussed, and it was shared that this is a partial offset due to the removal of the permanent sub at Hauser. It was noted that the elimination of this FTE is not the person in the role, but the utilization of the position. In addition, one math teacher (FTE) would be added. (Internal subbing works well at Hauser).
  - The board was polled and all in favor of posting for this additional math position.
  - The Board thanked Casimira, Chris, and Katie for this presentation.

2. Family Engagement Committee - Ms. Kachlic.
  - a. Family and Community Partnership.
    - Ms. Kachlic shared highlights from the March 12th Family and Community Partnership meeting.
    - The last meeting of this school year is scheduled for May 12.
  - b. Parent Leadership Team - April 17
    - Ms. Kachlic shared highlights from the April 17th PLT meeting.
    - The outgoing and incoming PTA/PTO members will attend the last meeting scheduled for May 22.
3. Facilities Committee - Mr. Olech.
  - a. Facility Advisory Committee.
    - Member Olech shared highlights from the last FAC meeting.
4. Policy Committee - Ms. Gunn.
  - Nothing to report tonight.
  - A new PRESS Policy Memo #121 has been released, and information will be brought back to the board in June.
5. Personnel Committee - Mr. Barsotti.
  - a. Superintendent Search Committee Process Update.
    - Board Member Barsotti reiterated that the district has retained BWP Associates, Ltd. (BWP). The board is collaborating with BWP to outline the next steps and establish a formal project calendar. Additionally, the board discussed the stakeholder engagement process, including upcoming interviews with administration and board members. Ultimately, the board will use this input to develop a comprehensive candidate profile.
6. Finance Committee - Ms. Claps.
  - Nothing to report tonight.

G. Public Comment/Response.

There were no public comments.

H. Future Meeting Dates.

1. May 20, 2026 - Regular Business Meeting, 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium at Hauser. (The Board will enter into Closed Session at 6:15 p.m., if necessary, and return to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.).
2. June 3, 2026 - Committee of the Whole Meeting, 7:00 p.m. - multi-purpose room at Hollywood Elementary School.
3. June 17, 2026 - Regular Business Meeting, 7:00 p.m. - in the multi-purpose room at Ame School. **(The Board will enter into Closed Session at 6:15 p.m., if necessary, and return to Open Session at 7:00 p.m.).**

K. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

May 6, 2026

Date Recorded

Date Approved

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President, Board of Education

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Secretary, Board of Education