

Special Meeting  
Thursday, May 7, 2026 5:00 PM Central

Richland County High School  
1200 E. Laurel St.  
Olney, IL 62450

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance – The special meeting of the Richland County Board of Education was called to order by President Scott Snyder at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, 2026.

II. Roll Call

Dennis Anderson: Present  
Jake Anderson: Absent  
Cindy Bailey: Present  
Dusty Kocher: Present  
Cindy Lockley: Present  
Scott Snyder: Present  
Jeff Wilson: Present

Present: 6, Absent: 1.

Mr. Snyder, President of the Board, expressed his apology to the public for the misunderstanding of the room location of the special meeting. He had no intention of kicking the JROTC Awards Night out of the RCPAC. When he realized it was a conflict the board and Mr. Fox made adjustments to change the room location of the meeting so JROTC could be in the RCPAC.

III. Recognition and Comments from Employees and Public – There were a total of 10 public comments made at the board meeting in regards to the Athletic Complex.

1. Tara Racklin, member of the community, tennis player and past coach, presented to the board a binder of letters and email communication and a list of all Illinois Class A high school tennis court orientations. Tara stated she was not here to place blame on anyone but to share facts, not opinions with the board. She shared her email that she received from Dan Le, Asst. Executive Director of IHSA, stating there is not a steadfast rule that requires tennis courts to run north-south, however the east-west orientation is very uncommon due to the impact the sun can have when playing. Tara stated they could not find any courts that run east-west. Tara also researched GeoSurfaces to find any complexes they had designed that ran east-west. She could not find any. Tara stated “It is never too late to do the right thing”.
2. Gene Brauer, representing the tennis community, had spoken at the previous two board meetings. He wanted to reiterate the safety concern and the personal injuries that could happen if tennis courts ran east-west. Gene has spoken to Matt Wright from the Chicago area, a 20 year teaching professional and former Olney tennis player. He said there are no public courts that run east-west. Gene once again asked the board to consider changing the orientation to north-south.
3. Sherry Brauer, member of the community, reflected on the FACTS committee formed prior to the high school remodel and its successfulness. The committee was once again asked to reconvene for the start of the planning of the Athletic Complex but the third meeting was cancelled and the FACTS committee never met again. She referred to the

multiple athletic complex plans that were presented with at least one of the plans showing the courts north-south and that the final plan chosen had the courts running east-west. Sherry stated the east-west is not safe and would be irresponsible. She asked the board, if it is not possible to change the orientation at the athletic complex, then to consider an alternate location for the tennis courts.

4. Sadie Gassmann-Kocher, member of the community and former tennis player, addressed the board in regards to the east-west orientation, asking to change to the north-south orientation. Sadie stated it would be better to spend more now, than later, to get it right.
5. Michelle Kauble, member of the community, stated she has been involved with tennis for over 25 years. Michelle stated that Patricia Bramlet, Chief Executive Officer of the USTA Mid-South District Coordinator, has taken a professional interest of the athletic complex construction and she stated that she would never advise anyone to build an east-west court. Michelle also read a letter from Kylie York the Director of Facilities of the USTA Midwest Section. Michelle wanted to ask a question about the process and transparency. Michelle stated with her research of previous board meetings she noted that visits were made to other football, baseball and softball fields. Did anyone visit tennis court facilities as part of the planning process? Michelle stated that guidance from the American Sports Builder Association clearly states the east-west court orientation is not recommended due to sun interference player safety. ASBA only recommends east-west with site constraints.
6. Logan Kauble, RCHS Girls Head Tennis Coach, wanted to make the board aware that she has decided the original design (east-west) is not feasible. She has decided, after much thought and talking to others, that in the best interest of the players the design should be changed to north-south. She understands there will be additional costs but she does apologize for changing her mind.
7. Mark Richardson, member of the community, presented a letter from Stefan Aydt, Paris High School Tennis Coach, stating that Mr. Aydt is not in favor of the courts running east-west and feels it is a bit of a risk. Mark also presented a letter from Pat Harrison, Head of the Harrison Tennis Academy in Florida. Pat stated that he would highly recommend building the courts north-south direction. It is too difficult to see for most of the day if built east-west.
8. Matt Zuber, member of the community, addressed the board about his concerns of the overall project cost and design. He stated if changing the courts is a long term solution to do it correctly now. He asked that the board look at the continued costs and take them all into consideration.
9. Drew Muston, RCHS Boys Head Tennis Coach, stated to the board that he originally didn't think it would be too bad to play east-west. After thinking about it and after playing some recent matches, he and his players reconsidered the idea of playing east-west. They realized the sun would be too much of a factor. Drew thanked the board and apologized for the inconvenience at this time.
10. Jon Racklin, attorney and member of the community, stated that he felt the purpose of the meeting is not to place blame or point fingers but to discuss which tennis court layout provides the safest playing environment for our student athletes. He wanted everyone to visualize driving into the sun and how hard it is to see the road. Jon said the same thing is going to happen when playing tennis. He understands that the change order will cost money but isn't the students safety worth it? He also wanted to explain that if a student

gets injured the district will get sued. He stated the evidence will show that the board was warned of the possibility of injuries and ignored it, if you don't make the changes.

President Snyder asked Mr. Fox what his recommendation would be to the board. Mr. Fox stated he and Mr. Rusk have had many conversations with GeoSurfaces. The decision for the east-west orientation is based on the site ergonomics, which Geo provided. Geo is in agreement that we can make the court change to north-south orientation by making the tennis courts a 3/3 offset and reducing parking spaces. Geo also offered information on installing sunscreens to the east/west courts but it would cause viewing obstruction. After Mr. Fox and Mr. Rusk spent more time with Geo they presented a cost of \$279,000.00 to change the orientation due to the fact they would need to change culvert work, parking lot layout and retention pond changes. After additional conversation and internal discussion by Geo, they contacted Mr. Fox and reduced the cost to do the rotation to north/south to \$200,000.00. Mr. Fox recommends we approve the change order to north/south and take out the option of athletes looking into the sun and possible injury.

Mr. Fox stated the \$200,000.00 would be added on at the end of the project. The Capital Projects Fund is where the \$200,000.00 would be paid out of.

#### IV. New Business

IV.A. Approve Change Order with GeoSurfaces for the Tennis Courts.

**Document Registry 26-05-01**

Motion to approve change order with GeoSurfaces for tennis court orientation change to north/south with total cost of \$200,000.00. This motion, made by Jeff Wilson and seconded by Cindy Bailey, Passed.

Jake Anderson: Absent, Dennis Anderson: Yea, Cindy Bailey: Yea, Dusty Kocher: Yea, Cindy Lockley: Yea, Scott Snyder: Yea, Jeff Wilson: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

Prior to adjournment Board Member Jeff Wilson wanted to address the community about the comments made on social media earlier in the week against Mr. Fox and the district. Mr. Wilson stated the accusations against Mr. Fox were inaccurate. Mr. Wilson wanted the public to know that Mr. Fox has come in and made changes and that is what the board expected him to do. Mr. Wilson noted some of the positive changes that have been made, such as, curriculum, processes in various buildings, job descriptions, expectations of employees, and purposes of benefiting the kids.

#### V. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6:07 p.m. This motion, made by Dennis Anderson and seconded by Dusty Kocher, Passed.

Jake Anderson: Absent, Dennis Anderson: Yea, Cindy Bailey: Yea, Dusty Kocher: Yea, Cindy Lockley: Yea, Scott Snyder: Yea, Jeff Wilson: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0, Absent: 1

Approved:

President: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_