

Legislative Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 3:45 PM

Downers Grove Civic Center, 850 Curtiss Street, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515

1. **Opening Items**

1.A. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. **Approval of Minutes**

2.A. Minutes of the January 7, 2026 meeting

3. **Legislative Breakfast**

3.A. Member Feedback

3.B. Review of Survey Results

4. **Legislative Updates**

4.A. Legislative Updates

5. **Public Comment**

6. **Adjournment**

DISTRICT 58 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of January 7, 2026

The Legislative Committee met on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at 3:45 p.m. at the Downers Grove Civic Center.

Call to Order

Katie Thomas called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

Present

Katie Thomas, Melissa Ellis, Kevin Russell, Julie Relihan, Zac Craft, Chuc Brewster, Kelly Novotny, Bruce Swanson, Sarah Borgetti Ebenezer, Julie Byars, Emily Teising, Cam Johnson, Allison Rickard.

Absent

Emily Hanlon, Jason Suchy.

Approval of Minutes

Sarah Borgetti Ebenezer moved and Chuck Brewster seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2025 meeting. Motion carried.

Legislative Breakfast

Dr. Russell provided an overview of the upcoming Legislative Breakfast, including the event date and time, parking logistics, invite list, and the format for the legislator panel and small-group discussions. Committee members will be assigned to guide legislators as they rotate through two discussion sessions. Members will also serve as moderators for the small-group discussions, with responsibilities including posing the prepared questions and ensuring conversations remain focused on education-related topics. District administrators and Dr. Russell will be available to provide support as needed. Committee members volunteered to serve as guides and moderators; each volunteer will be paired with a legislator once RSVPs are finalized.

The committee also reviewed the draft questions for the Legislative Breakfast. The questions reflect 11 topic areas identified at the previous committee meeting. Overall, members agreed the questions were appropriate, with several minor edits suggested. Committee members were encouraged to ask clarifying questions and provide feedback on each topic. Dr. Russell offered detailed explanations for each area, including background context and examples to support the discussion topics.

Legislative Updates

None.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Melissa Ellis moved and Cam Johson seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST 2026 - FEEDBACK SURVEY RESULTS

| What did you like best about the Legislative Breakfast and would recommend we continue next year? | How can we improve the Legislative Breakfast for next year? |
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| | Though the seat arrangements without tables created more flexibility, the ability to hear the speakers was a bit challenging. |
| We spent A LOT of time in our group talking about transportation. Seems like there should be moderators in each group to help move the conversations along and redirect as needed. | It would be helpful to have received the event agenda/ timeline ahead of time. Maybe I missed it? I was under the impression that it started at 7AM, not that attendees would casually start arriving after 7AM and the program would begin at 7:30. |
| I really liked sitting in the circles having the intimate conversations with the legislators in small groups. | n/a |
| I really enjoyed the small group discussion topics! I learned a lot from educators and administrators about challenges facing schools and found the conversations about DuPage PADS, unfunded mandates, and school safety informative. I also always enjoy the students' introductions. | This is a really great event! I hope we are able to make this work with Rep. Casten's schedule next year. I truly appreciate our office being invited every year. |
| I appreciated learning more about the current financial challenges our schools are facing. | I like having a table if the existing format continues, but I would instead prefer one large group session so that everyone can hear a few targeted Q/A exchnages. |
| I appreciate your turnout of legislators and the opportunity to learn about the district's priorities. | It would be great if the attendees received your legislative priorities document in advance. I think we could be more productive if we focus on a couple of specific, actionable items and pair up those discussions with legislators we think can get us what we want. I'd be happy to meet in advance or over a longer term to prep and execute. I wonder if there's an opportunity to have a grassroots movement to make change. |
| I feel like the format, with all the previous adjustments, is great! | I felt like it was awkward without tables. I liked the circle groups... but it was weird without something in the middle to put coffee or breakfast on. Also.... I would suggest renaming it to the legislative forum. I feel like that better describes the activities that take place. It is more about the conversation than the "breakfast." |

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| <p>It was a good forum to share thoughts and opinions but I wonder what might be actionable from it. It's unclear to me what next steps could look like or if this session had any impact on future legislation impacting education funding in our state.</p> | <p>I was anticipating a breakfast - I didn't even grab a coffee on my way out the door. I would just be clear about water / fruit in a cocktail hour type setting if that's the offering vs. a sit down breakfast given the time of day and likelihood most will head to their workday right after.</p> |
| <p>I appreciated the opportunity to mingle at the beginning and to participated in two discussions loosely guided by well-planned questions.</p> | <p>No suggestions.</p> |
| <p>Small group discussions, involvement of students</p> | <p>Is there a way to divide the groups by educator role? For example: building admin may want the opportunity to ask questions about topics such as attendance and mental health issues but the community members or district level admin want more time to discuss MCATs or TIFs. Just trying to open opportunities for all types of questions to get asked.</p> |
| <p>I love it this opportunity. I enjoyed hearing both from legislators and the community on various issues.</p> | <p>I find that the first half hour is mostly people talking to people they already know so I'm not sure it needs to be 30 minutes. Also, I did feel as though it was difficult for some of us to ask questions since the designated person in both of my groups asked most of the questions and although they were good, the rest of us didn't necessarily have time to ask our questions.</p> |
| <p>The conversation and open questions from legislatures to what we're seeing and feeling as parents. I appreciated having an assistant Superintendent in our group as it was a great gut check - please continue to do this! I know it's probably really difficult to manage.</p> | <p>Add tables if there will be beverages! It would also be great if there was an easy way to share contact information. Additionally, it didn't seem like all legislators knew who would be in the audience (PTA Presidents, Active Parents, etc.) if we're not already, it might be helpful for them if they knew who was in the room.</p> |
| <p>(1) The mix of participants and legislators; (2) the quality of prepared questions; and (3) the student orchestra.</p> | <p>While the small group breakout format was innovative and terrific in many ways, it was more difficult to hear people in our group speak due to the multiple simultaneous conversations occurring. Perhaps explore ways to retain the informality but reduce the ambient noise level.</p> |
| <p>I like the students being involved, as well as the panel of legislatures at the beginning. The small group breakouts are nice.</p> | <p>I wonder if we can divide the small groups up by topics of discussion so we are not having repeat discussions at the same group?</p> |
| <p>Face to Face with elected officials</p> | <p>Shorten the Meet & Greet or better facilitate opps for those new to the breakfast that do not know any/many other people there.</p> |