

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOARD OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 186, SPRINGFIELD,
SANGAMON COUNTY, ILLINOIS
Monday, May 19, 2025 (3:45 PM)

The Board of Education convened in Regular Session on May 19, A.D., 2023, at 3:45 p.m., there being present thereat:

Present:	Erica Austin, President Julie Hammers, Board Secretary Kristin Barnett Sarah Blissett Ken Gilmore Debra Iams by phone Buffy Lael-Wolf Micah Miller Jennifer Gill, Superintendent of Schools Phong Duong, Student Board Member
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CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Roll Call

President Austin called the meeting to order.

1.2 Approval of Remote Attendance by Debra Iams

Member **(Ken Gilmore)** Moved, Member **(Erica Austin)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion "That Debra Iams be allowed to attend remotely via telephone for medical reasons."

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: 5 Nay: 0. The motion **Carried 5 - 0**.

Those voting "aye":	Austin, Barnett, Gilmore, Lael-Wolf, Miller
Those voting "no":	None

APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

Approval of Executive Session

Resolution: That the Board of Education approves adjournment to Executive Session to consider the following items:

- 2.1 Student Board Representative Interviews 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3)
- 2.2 Student Discipline and Other Matters Concerning Individual Students - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9, 10)
- 2.3 The Appointment, Employment, or Dismissal of Employees – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)
- 2.4 Contract Negotiations - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)
- 2.5 Pending and Imminent Litigation - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member **(Kristin Barnett)** Moved, Member **(Buffy Lael-Wolf)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'That the Board of Education adjourns to Executive Session to consider the following matters: 2.1 Student Board Representative Interviews 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3), 2.2 Student Discipline and Other Matters Concerning Individual Students - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9, 10), 2.3 The Appointment, Employment, or Dismissal of Employees – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), 2.4 Contract Negotiations - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2), 2.5 Pending and Imminent Litigation - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).'

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: 7 Nay: 0. The motion **Carried 7 - 0**.

Those voting "aye": Austin, Barnett, Gilmore, Lael-Wolf, Miller
Those voting "no": None

Adjournment to Executive Session

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m. and reconvened at 7:00 p.m. Upon reconvening, it was noted that seven Board members were present as Ms. Blissett and Ms. Iams joined the meeting at 3:46 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3.1 Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Austin asked those in attendance to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

4.1 Approval of the Agenda for May 19, 2025

Resolution: That the Board of Education approves the agenda.

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member **(Buffy Lael-Wolf)** Moved to approve the agenda. Member **(Sarah Blissett)** seconded to approve the ORIGINAL motion, 'That the Board of Education approves the agenda'.

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: 7 Nay: 0. The motion **Carried. 7 - 0**

Those voting "aye": Austin, Barnett, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf, Miller
Those voting "no": None

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

5.1 President's Comments

Dr. Austin read the following statement:

Public Comment

Public comments will occur during the Public Comments portion of the meeting. The Board will not allow interruption during the meeting. If you are interested in addressing the Board, fill out the required Public Participation form and submit it to Ms. Hammers. Alternatively, those wishing to

participate via the telephone may email their name, phone number, and topic of discussion or agenda item number to boe@sps186.org.

5.2 Student Report

Dr. Austin reported that the Board conducted interviews for the 2025-2026 Student Representative to the Board of Education earlier in the evening. She announced that Jordan Robinson of Springfield High School has been selected. She introduced and congratulated Ms. Robinson.

Dr. Austin thanked each of the students who applied for the position. Superintendent Gill noted that Ms. Robinson has demonstrated strong leadership qualities with the Superintendent's Student Roundtable.

5.3 Recognition of the Franklin Middle School Scholastic Bowl Team

The Board recognized the Franklin Middle School Scholastic Bowl Team for their first-place finish at the State Scholastic Bowl Tournament. The following students were introduced by their coach, Dave Knoefle, and presented with certificates of recognition:

Anvi Agarwal
Asmi Agarwal
Shrihan Aleti
Arjun Bhandari
Alonzo Decarlo
Pridhvi Mamillapalli
Sanvi Modi
Aarav Patel
Saina Sreedhar
Jacob Entinghe
Veer Garg
Anushka Moonat
Anders Schnell
Henry Hobson
Daniyal Siddique
Dave Knoefle, Coach

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

6.1 Superintendent's Report

Celebrate 186

Superintendent Gill provided the bi-weekly Celebrate 186 presentation. Copies of the presentation filed with the Official Minutes can be found [here](#). The report covered the following topics.

Big Truck Day

The Early Learning Center recently hosted its annual Big Truck Day. Semi trucks, buses, police, fire, and other types of vehicles lined up for the school's preschool-aged students to explore. Superintendent Gill thanked the numerous community partners who supported the event, making it a success.

Springfield High School Beam Signing

Springfield High School seniors left their mark on a special beam painted red and adorned with the SHS logo on Friday, May 16, 2025. The beam is being used in the renovation and new construction. Superintendent Gill thanked Selvaggio Steel and O'Shea Builders for assisting with the signing.

2025 Grad Walk

More than 225 students participated in the 3rd Annual Grad Walk, which took place on May 7 and 8, 2025. Seniors from each of the District's high schools donned their caps and gowns to walk the halls at each of the elementary and middle schools to celebrate with their former teachers and staff members and serve as an inspiration to younger learners.

Lee School Road Improvement

Superintendent Gill thanked Kinny Construction for filling the potholes along the road to Lee School. She reported that the road is privately owned so the City is unable to maintain it like other roads.

Southeast High School Spotlight on Mental Health Week

Southeast High School shined a light on mental health during the week of May 12-16, 2025, with daily activities to engage students and staff during the lunch hour. Staff members also participated by wearing green on Wednesday, May 14, 2025.

Franklin Middle School Band and Show Choir

The Franklin Middle School Band and Show Choir traveled to Orlando, Florida for the Orlando Fest Music Festival. The Show Choir took home first place in the competition, and the band took home second place.

Our Schools Our Future Facilities Update

Superintendent Gill shared photos and a construction update from the construction taking place at Springfield High School. Photos of what will be the Music Commons area on the second floor, footings for the new basement for the three-story addition where the old gym had been located, the west balcony of the competition gym, and the new Commons area were shared. She noted that the steel trusses for the roof of the gymnasium had arrived earlier in the day.

Superintendent Gill also shared photos of Southeast High School's new weight room. She reported that all of the equipment has been installed.

Lastly, Superintendent Gill shared photos of Grant Middle School's new outdoor Challenge Course. She noted that each of the middle schools will receive a challenge course, which is an obstacle course for students to use during recess or gym time. She indicated that the courses were paid for with federal ESSER funds.

Report from Representatives of the Springfield Education Association Regarding Technology and Cell Phone Usage

Superintendent Gill introduced Monique Davis, speech teacher at Lanphier and Springfield High School, and Melissa Hostetter, science teacher at Franklin Middle School, who gave a presentation highlighting their personal experiences and opinions regarding technology and cell phone usage in the classroom. They urged the Board and administration to reconsider student access to cell phones and school-issued devices taken home each day by students.

Ms. Hostetter addressed the Board, reporting that her stance regarding sending technology devices home with Kindergarten through 8th grade students has not changed since she addressed the Board in January

2024. She urged returning to a model of having a cart of devices in each classroom, as was used before 2020. She noted that she believes that devices are negatively impacting student engagement, achievement, and motivation. She provided a brief history of technology in the classroom and information about observations she has made with her students.

Ms. Davis shared information about the negative impact cell phones have on students and parents, as well as the results of a survey she and Ms. Hostetter conducted with teachers related to student cell phone usage. She also shared the potential benefits of an enforced bell-to-bell cell phone ban policy, possible enforcement options, and information about the potential impact of student cell phone usage during a school crisis.

There was then a brief discussion by the Board regarding the impact, effectiveness, and enforcement of the new cell phone policy that was enacted at the beginning of the school year, and data related to the policy. There was discussion regarding Yondr Pouches. Multiple board members expressed the unlikelihood of purchasing the pouches in part because of the cost and current budget scenario.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Old Business

Ms. Blissett shared an update from the recent SCOPE Committee meeting. She noted that the meeting was very productive. The committee was presented with nine proposals for SCOPE fall fees. She indicated that the committee's goal is to have the fee revenues completely cover the cost of the program without making a profit. She reported that it is likely that the fees will need to be increased annually in order to cover increased personnel costs and ensure program sustainability.

7.2 New Business

There was no new business at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

8.1 Public Comment

Ms. Austin read the following statement outlining requirements related to public comment:

The Board of Education and I encourage public comment and public participation in Board meetings. However, it is inappropriate for any person to name a student or an individual employee, including designating an employee by job title rather than name, in open session. If any public commenter wants to address issues related to an individual student or a District 186 employee, that commenter is invited to contact the Board office or a member of the cabinet prior to public comment. It is not the intention of the Board to discourage public comment in any way; rather, it is the intention of the Board to address issues regarding individual students and employees in an appropriate manner. We thank you for respecting the privacy of our students and employees by following this rule.

District 186 streams board meetings on YouTube, and all content posted there is subject to YouTube's content guidelines.

Springfield Public Schools District 186 continues to encourage public comment. Statements made by speakers during public comment do not represent the views or opinions of the Board of Education or Springfield Public Schools District 186.

The following individuals addressed the Board:

- Nataleya Edwards regarding boys' basketball at Springfield High School
- Marques Warfield regarding boys' basketball at Springfield High School
- Sean Kenny regarding starting a co-op middle school wrestling team

PRESENTATIONS TO THE BOARD

9.1 Consolidated District Plan

Board members were provided with a presentation on the Consolidated District Plan. Copies of the presentation filed with the Official Minutes can be viewed [here](#).

Larry McVey, Chief Officer of Federal Funds, and Rene Johnson, Coordinator of Math, Science, and Technology, overviewed the presentation.

Superintendent Gill reported that each school is required to have a targeted learning focus that, along with data, informs its School Improvement Plan. She then provided the seven targeted learning focus areas.

Ms. Johnson reported that the District's Improvement Plan incorporates three SMART Goals at each school: Culture, Math, and Literacy. She noted five areas of focus over the past year, including work to continue embedding AVID in the curriculum, implementation of the new Literacy and Math curricula, strengthening inclusive practices for students, staff, and families, and strengthening the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) tier one, two, and three supports.

Ms. Johnson then shared information regarding the continuous improvement plan work to align teaching practices with college and career readiness.

Next, Mr. McVey provided information on the Consolidated District Plan. He noted that the plan is required by the Illinois State Board of Education and provides a summary of our district improvement plans and actions from multiple data sources. The plans document how the district will use federal funding to support improvement work. He reported that the improvement plans are the work done to improve teaching and learning. Progress on goals is continually monitored. Mr. McVey then overviewed the assessment process and data related to the SMART goals. He noted the importance of maintaining the current work to accelerate the growth that has been the trend.

BUSINESS REPORT

10.1 Business Reports

Board members were provided with the April 2025 Monthly Business Report. Copies filed with the Official Minutes are available for public viewing [here](#).

Steven Miller, Director of Business Services, reported that for April 2025, Education Fund revenues were \$5.8 million and expenditures were \$12.9 million. The Operations and Maintenance Fund revenues were \$2,244, and expenditures were \$1.5 million.

For the Investment Balances Report, as of April 30, 2025, the District had a combined cash balance of \$32.8 million in the bank for all funds. For the operating funds, which include the Education, Operations and Maintenance, Transportation, and Working Cash funds, total cash in the bank was \$12.7 million. Total investments are \$125.8 million, which includes funds from the last bond sale. Year-to-date earned interest on all cash accounts for the month was \$1.6 million. The interest rate on all cash accounts for April was 2.5%. The total balance of cash and investments was \$158.7 million. The District also showed recorded County sales tax proceeds received during April of \$1.1 million. These are from the January collection period. The total collection of sales taxes since 2019 is \$68.5 million.

Mr. Miller then shared a graph with monthly sales tax collection information. He noted that the tax received in April was significantly lower than the sales tax receipts received in March. He reported that historically, the District sees the highest collections in the months leading up to Christmas, with a drop in January. The proceeds from the January collection period are received in April, hence the drop between March and April. He indicated that this is the first year that the District's January collection period exceeded \$1 million in proceeds.

Mr. Miller next shared graphs comparing the percentages of expenditures by month in FY25 to averages from FY23 and FY24 in the Education Fund, as well as in the Education, Operations and Maintenance, and Transportation funds combined. He noted that as of April 30, 2025, expenditures for FY25 are lower than the averages from FY23 and FY24.

CONSENT ACTION ITEMS

11.1 Approval of Consent Action Items

Approval of consent action items as listed in the agenda.

Resolution: The Superintendent recommends approval of the consent action items 11.2 through 11.8 as described in the corresponding resolutions.

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member **(Buffy Lael-Wolf)** Moved, Member **(Sarah Blissett)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'The Superintendent recommends approval of the consent action items 11.2 through 11.8 as described in the corresponding resolutions'.

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **7** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 7 - 0**

Those voting "aye":	Austin, Barnett, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf, Miller
Those voting "no":	None

11.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session and Regular Meeting of May 5, 2025, and the Executive Session and the Special Meeting of April 30, 2025

Resolution: WHEREAS, the Board of Education of Springfield School District 186 reviews the minutes of the regular session and the executive session of the previous Board Meetings; and

WHEREAS, copies of these sets of minutes were distributed to the Board in the board packet prior to this meeting;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the aforementioned sets of regular session and executive session minutes and directs the Secretary to include them in the official records of the Board of Education meetings.

11.3 Approval of Payroll and Bills Payable

Resolution: That the Board of Education approves payroll and bills payable as shown in the attached report.

11.4 Approval of Agreement with Informed K12

Resolution: WHEREAS, the District uses workflow management system; and

WHEREAS, the Informed K12 is able meet the needs of the district at a price lower than the current system;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves a three year agreement with Informed K12 at a total cost of \$45,000 per year for FY26, FY27, and FY28.

11.5 Approval of a Contract with Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

AVID is a school-wide College and Career Readiness System that prepares students for life after high school. Springfield School District 186 utilizes AVID's College and Career Readiness Framework to ensure all K-12 students are provided with a foundation of rigorous academic preparedness, student agency, and opportunity knowledge.

The AVID Elective class, housed in the middle and high schools, instills skills and behaviors for academic success, develops strong organizational skills, provides intense support with tutorials and strong student/teacher relationships, creates a positive peer group for students, and develops a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination. The AVID Elective class structure allows its students to experience AP and Dual Credit courses with the support necessary for success.

During the 2025-2026 school year, AVID will be provided in twenty-three elementary schools (including Ball-Charter), seven middle schools (including Ball-Charter), three high schools, and alternative programs.

Resolution: WHEREAS, AVID and Springfield Public School District 186 have previously signed an AVID agreement to support AVID programming; and

WHEREAS, schools are eager and committed to participate in the continued development of the AVID System for the 2025-2026 school year;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the AVID Contract Agreement for the 2025-2026 school year for a total of \$110,724.00. to be paid from budgeted funds and authorizes the Superintendent to execute the necessary documents on behalf of the Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Springfield Ball-Charter School is included in the AVID Contract Agreement and will pay \$4,734.00 for their portion.

11.6 Approval of an ISBE Learning Partner Agreement for Southeast High School with the Illinois Principals Association

Southeast High School is a school identified as a Comprehensive School in need of school improvement on the 2023 School Report Card. Grant funds are used in part to engage ISBE and district-approved learning partners to support their school improvement work. Southeast has chosen the Illinois Principals Association to provide the Illinois Performance Evaluation - Initial Teacher Evaluation Training for 20 participants.

Cost: \$5,100 plus trainer travel

Resolution: WHEREAS, Springfield Public School District 186 has developed Work Plans for School Improvement; and

WHEREAS, Southeast High School has identified a need for support in coaching participants on initial teacher evaluation training; and

WHEREAS, Illinois Principals Association is an approved IL School Improvement partner that can provide this training;

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves an agreement with Illinois Principals Association for a total amount of \$5,100 plus trainer travel to be paid from Title I School Improvement 1003(a) funds.

11.7 Approval of a Consultant Agreement with Linda Borkenhagen and Educational Technology Leadership, LLC for Math Number Worlds Program

The Special Education Curriculum Specialists would like to continue a partnership with an independent consultant, Linda Borkenhagen, for Number Worlds PD, which we provide to new teachers every year. Number Worlds is our alternative math curriculum for special education students. This independent consultant previously worked at McGraw Hill and has been our trainer since we purchased Number Worlds for our elementary and middle school instructional classrooms. Continuing with this consultant will ensure continuity in our teacher professional development and support as well as student learning as a result of teacher expertise in teaching the program.

Cost: \$2,000

Resolution: WHEREAS, Linda Borkenhagen provides on-site training services for Number Worlds; and

WHEREAS, District 186 desires to increase the effectiveness of special education math instruction;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the agreement between Springfield Public School District 186 and Linda Borkenhagen and Educational Technology Leadership, LLC at the cost of \$2,000 to be paid from Title II.

11.8 Approval of the Student and Family Handbook for the 2025-2026 School Year

That the Board of Education approves the reviewed and revised Student and Family Handbook for the 2025-2026 school year.

Resolution: WHEREAS, it is required to review the Student and Family Handbook annually; and

WHEREAS, a committee consisting of parents, administrators, teachers and secondary students reviewed and revised the Student and Family Handbook for the 2025-2026 school year;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the newly reviewed and revised Springfield Public Schools Student and Family Handbook for the 2025-2026 school year.

ROLL CALL ACTION ITEMS

12.1 Approval of Personnel Recommendations

Resolution: The Superintendent recommends the adoption of the Personnel recommendations as presented.

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member **(Sarah Blissett)** Moved, Member **(Kristin Barnett)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'The Superintendent recommends adoption of the Personnel recommendations as presented.'

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **7** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 7 - 0**

Those voting "aye":	Austin, Barnett, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf, Miller
Those voting "no":	Austin on page 2, letter B, number 1 and Addendum I(a), Miller on Addendum I(a)

12.2 Approval of a Resolution to Change SCOPE Fees

Resolution: WHEREAS, Project SCOPE, an extended care program, has experienced increasing costs of various goods and services associated with its operations; and

WHEREAS, the revenues needed to operate the SCOPE program have not kept pace with the expenditures;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the increase in SCOPE fees effective at the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year as described in the attached proposal.

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member **(Sarah Blissett)** Moved, Member **(Buffy Lael-Wolf)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'WHEREAS, Project SCOPE, an extended care program, has experienced increasing costs of various goods and services associated with its operations; and

WHEREAS, the revenues needed to operate the SCOPE program have not kept pace with the expenditures;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the increase in SCOPE fees effective at the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year as described in the attached proposal.'

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **7** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 7 - 0**

Those voting "aye":	Austin, Barnett, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf, Miller
Those voting "no":	None

12.3 Approval of Travel Expenses for Board Members (State Conference)

Resolution: That the Board of Education approves travel expenses as follows for the IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference from November 21-23, 2025:

Erica Austin
Registration - 540.00
Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100

Kristin Barnett
Registration - 540.00
Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100

Sarah Blissett
Registration - 540.00
Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100

Ken Gilmore
Registration - 540.00
Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100

Buffy Lael-Wolf
Registration - 540.00
Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member **(Buffy Lael-Wolf)** Moved, Member **(Kristin Barnett)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'That the Board of Education approves travel expenses as follows for the IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference from November 21-23, 2025:

Erica Austin
Registration - 540.00
Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100

Kristin Barnett
Registration - 540.00
Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100

Sarah Blissett
Registration - 540.00
Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100

Ken Gilmore
Registration - 540.00

Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100

Buffy Lael-Wolf
Registration - 540.00
Hotel - \$825
Transportation - \$100'

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **7** Nay: **1**. The motion **Carried. 7 - 1**

Those voting "aye": Austin, Barnett, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf
Those voting "no": Miller

ANNOUNCEMENTS

13.1 Next Regular Meeting — Monday, June 2, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. — Board Room

13.2 Upcoming District Events

May 26 – No School – Memorial Day
June 7– High School Graduation at the Bank of Springfield Center
11:00 a.m. - Lanphier High School
2:00 p.m. - Southeast High School
5:00 p.m. - Springfield High School

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Austin declared the meeting adjourned until Monday, June 2, 2025. The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Erica Austin, President

Julie Hammers, Board Secretary

Dated: June 2, 2025