

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
LAKE FOREST COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 115  
300 SOUTH WAUKEGAN ROAD, LAKE FOREST, IL 60045  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026**

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Lake Forest Community High School District 115, County of Lake, State of Illinois, was held on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, and called to order at 4:37 p.m. by President John Noble.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

|                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Jenny Zinser, Member                  | Robert Silvay, Member                 |
| Amy Connell - Donohue, Secretary      | Dewey Winebrenner, Member (4:53 p.m.) |
| Anne Geraghty Helms, Vice - President | John Noble, President                 |

**ABSENT:** Gail Gamrath, Member

**CABINET PRESENT:**

Matthew Montgomery, Superintendent  
Jennifer Hermes, Chief Operating Officer/CSBO  
Melissa Oakley, Chief Communications Officer  
Jordan Salus, Chief Technology Officer  
Renee Fitzsimmons, Assistant Superintendent of TLA  
Erin Lenart, Assistant Superintendent/LFHS Principal  
Phil Georgia, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

**ADMINISTRATION/STAFF PRESENT:**

Tiana Tolver, Board Clerk  
Brittany Tjardes, Director of Fiscal Services/CSBO  
Whitney Draegert, Director of Business Operations/CSBO  
Jessica Kleitsch, Staff Accountant  
Stephen Dunn, Instructional Director  
Peter Lubliner, English Teacher  
Frank Lesniak, Assistant Principal of Student Operations  
Laura Grigg, Educational Technologist  
Blaine Lakin, Math Teacher  
Kristen Carlson, Instructional Director

**STUDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVES:**

Kosta Vitzilaios  
Josie Irvin, Student Body President  
Elizabeth Specketer

**GUESTS:** Tom Andreesen, Community Member  
Elizabeth Hennessy, Raymond James & Associates

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF A WHOLE**

Student BOE Mixer Feedback 2025/2026

Dr. Lenart discussed the key themes and topics from the recent Student/Board Mixer. A document was shared that highlights the practical steps the District has taken during the 2025-2026 school year in response to the 2025 mixer and includes a brief update from the 2026 mixer to show where student feedback has shifted.

Dr. Montgomery discussed the Cates report and recommendations.

Members of the Board participated in discussion and asked questions. Student Board representatives provided their experiences.

AI and Academic Integrity

Discussion held on the use of artificial intelligence by administrative staff and students. Students shared the good and bad of AI based on their experience.

Administrative staff and teachers presented on AI use and academic integrity. Discussion held on developing a plan for expectations and boundaries with students, families, and educators; as well as the plan to communicate. Members of the Board asked questions and discussion ensued. Mr. Andreesen provided an update as a member of the community.

**FINANCE AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE OF A WHOLE**

County School Facilities Sales Tax

Elizabeth Hennessy discussed the County School Facility Sales Tax. As of May 2026, a group of Lake County school districts, in coordination with the Regional Office of Education for Lake County, are actively exploring and pursuing the placement of a 1% County School Facility Sales Tax referendum on the November 3, 2026 ballot. If approved by voters, the 1% tax on general merchandise could provide funding for school facility improvements, safety upgrades, and additional student support resources, including mental health professionals. Members of the Board asked questions and discussion ensued. The Board is encouraged to share any additional questions via email.

Year-End Projections

Brittany Tjardes and Whitney Dragert provided an overview of the year-end projections. Members of the Board asked questions and discussion ensued.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion:** A motion was made by Ms. Zinser and seconded by Ms. Connell-Donohue that the Board adjourn to Executive Session at 6:58 p.m. to discuss matters related to the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body, or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony or a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)

Votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: Connell-Donohue, Zinser, Noble, Silvay, Helms, Winebrenner

Nays:

Absent: Gamrath

The motion carried unanimously.

**ADJOURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion:** Mr. Winebrenner moved, seconded by Ms. Zinser that the Board of Education, Lake Forest Community High School District 115 return to Open Session at 7:22 p.m.

On Voice Vote, motion carried.

**REOPEN REGULAR MEETING:**

President Noble called back to order the Regular Meeting of the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois, at 7:23 p.m.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT AT ROLL CALL WERE:**

Dewey Winebrenner, Member

John Noble, President

Anne Geraghty Helms, Vice-President

Jenny Zinser, Member

Amy Connell-Donohue, Secretary

Robert Silvay, Member

**ABSENT:** Gail Gamrath, Member

**STUDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVES:**

Kosta Vitzilaios

Josie Irvin, Student Body President

Elizabeth Specketer

Ethan Farrell, Student Body Vice-President

**CABINET PRESENT:**

Matthew Montgomery, Superintendent

Jennifer Hermes, Chief Operating Officer/CSBO

Melissa Oakley, Chief Communications Officer

Erin Lenart, Assistant Superintendent/LFHS Principal

Phil Georgia, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Renee Fitzsimmons, Assistant Superintendent of TLA

**ADMINISTRATION/STAFF PRESENT:**

Tiana Tolver, Board Clerk

Ashleigh Malec, Director of Student Activities

Tim Burkhalter, Athletic Director

Deb Schneider, LFHS Teacher

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Board and members of the community recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**LFHS UPDATES: STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

Dr. Lenart gave an update on this month's spotlight and the nominees. This month's spotlight recipient is Penelope "Ellie" Villanueva. She was nominated by Deborah Schneider, who also had the honor of presenting the award.

**Student Resource Officer Resolution**

**WHEREAS**, Officer Mark Long has faithfully served as the School Resource Officer for Lake Forest Community High School District 115 since May 2021, following his service as School Resource Officer for Lake Forest Elementary School District 67 from May 2019 to May 2021;

**WHEREAS**, Officer Long has demonstrated a deep commitment to the safety, well-being, and success of all students, staff, and families through his visible presence, approachability, and dedication to building positive relationships across the LFHS community;

**WHEREAS**, Officer Long has gone beyond the traditional responsibilities of his role by actively engaging in school life, attending athletic events, dances, and large school gatherings, and participating in student-led activities, including the talent show and student films;

**WHEREAS**, Officer Long has contributed meaningfully to the educational experience of students by serving as a guest speaker in classrooms to share his perspective and foster thoughtful dialogue around important topics;

**WHEREAS**, Officer Long has built strong, trusting connections with students by embodying the role of law enforcement officer, mentor, and educator, serving as a role model and supportive adult presence within the school community;

**WHEREAS**, Officer Long has strengthened the collaborative partnership between the Lake Forest Police Department and Lake Forest Community High School District 115, helping to bridge relationships between youth and law enforcement while exemplifying a shared commitment to student safety, community engagement, and mutual respect; and

**WHEREAS**, the District 115 Board of Education recognizes that Officer Mark Long's dedication, integrity, and work ethic, which defined his time in our schools, will serve as a strong foundation for his continued success;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education expresses, for itself as well as for the parents, guardians, students, staff, faculty, and citizens of Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, and Knollwood, its sincere gratitude to Officer Mark Long for his outstanding service as School Resource Officer and wishes him all the best as he returns to his role with the Lake Forest Police Department.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

President Noble thanked the community and Board for their continued support. There will be no report this month.

**DISTRICT LEADERSHIP REPORT**

Dr. Montgomery, in collaboration with Drs. Lenart, Fitzsimmons, and Georgia presented the District Leadership report. The topics were Educational Insights, Construction Update, 2026 LFHS Foundation Grant Day, APT Presents Scouts Forward & LFHS 101, Living Our Portrait Worship, Tri-District Board | Student Mixer, Joint Board Coffee, Beyond the Budget: Business Services, Staffing Update, ACT Testing, State Report Card Update, Academic Year Start Date Survey, 2026 National Merit Scholarship Finalists, LFHS First Semester Honor Roll, and Upcoming Events.

The full presentation can be found on the District website.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**REPORTS**

The Student Engagement Annual Report provided by Ashleigh Malec and Tim Burkhalter. Student Board Representatives spoke on their experience at the high school throughout the years in extracurricular activities. A full report can be found linked to the agenda.

**LIAISON REPORTS**

Ed-Red and Legislative Update

Mr. Noble will provide a formal report in May around current work being done in legislation.

TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804

Dr. Montgomery reported that the next meeting will be tomorrow for the Executive Board.

**ACTION ITEMS**

Adoption of Resolution for School Resource Officer, Mark Long

Motion: Ms. Helms moved, seconded by Mr. Winebrenner that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois adopt the Resolution for School Resource Officer, Mark Long

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Helms, Silvay, Connell-Donohue, Zinser, Noble, Winebrenner

Nay:

Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of Administrative & Confidential/Exempt Compensation

Motion: Ms. Helms moved, seconded by Ms. Connell-Donohue that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve Administrative & Confidential/Exempt Compensation.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Noble, Silvay, Helms, Zinser, Winebrenner, Connell-Donohue

Nay:

Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

Recommendation to Approve the Installation of Stage Pit Extensions and Safety Netting-East Campus RMA

Motion: Ms. Connell-Donohue moved, seconded by Ms. Zinser that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve the Recommendation to Approve the Installation of Stage Pit Extensions and Safety Netting-East Campus RMA.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Zinser, Noble, Winebrenner, Helms, Connell-Donohue, Silvay

Nay:

Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for Shared Services with D65, D67 and D115

Motion: Ms. Zinser moved, seconded by Ms. Connell-Donohue that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for Shared Services with D65, D67 and D115.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Winebrenner, Silvay, Noble, Helms, Connell-Donohue, Zinser

Nay:

Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of Contract for Band and Orchestra Trip for Spring Break 2027

Motion: Mr. Silvay moved, seconded by Ms. Connell-Donohue that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve the Contract for Band and Orchestra Trip for Spring Break 2027.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Helms, Zinser, Connell-Donohue, Silvay, Winebrenner, Noble

Nay:

Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing Notice of Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teacher Not in Final Probationary Year

Motion: Ms. Connell-Donohue moved, seconded by Ms. Zinser that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve the Resolution Authorizing Notice of Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teacher Not in Final Probationary Year.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Helms, Zinser, Noble, Silvay, Connell-Donohue, Winebrenner

Nay:

Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing Honorable Dismissal of Non-Tenured Teachers Not in Final Probationary Year

Motion: Ms. Zinser moved, seconded by Ms. Helms that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve the Resolution Authorizing Honorable Dismissal of Non-Tenured Teachers Not in Final Probationary Year.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Zinser, Silvay, Winebrenner, Helms, Noble, Connell-Donohue

Nay:

Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

Resolution Authorizing Honorable Reduction of Non-Tenured Teachers Not in Final Probationary Year

Motion: Ms. Helms moved, seconded by Ms. Connell-Donohue that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve the Resolution Authorizing Honorable Reduction of Non-Tenured Teachers Not in Final Probationary Year.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Silvay, Winebrenner, Zinser, Noble, Connell-Donohue, Helms

Nay:

Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA\***

*\*Any item may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of a Board Member.*

1. Approval of Monthly Financial Report - January 2026
2. Approval to Waive 1st Reading of Policy 5:60 (PRESS Issue 118)
3. Approval of Second Reading of Policy 5:60 (PRESS Issue 118)
4. Approval of Referendum Phase I Furniture Purchase
5. Approval of Siemens Building Automation Contract Renewal 2026-2027
6. Approval of Quest Food Management Services Renewal 2026-2027
7. Approval of GSF Custodial Contract Renewal 2026 - 2027
8. Approval of 2026 - 2027 Student Fees
9. Approval of 2026 - 2027 Textbook Recommendations
10. Approval of District Consolidated Plan 2026 - 2027
11. Approval of Human Resources Report
  - Hires
  - Resignations
  - Retirements
  - Dismissals
  - Leaves of Absence

- Changes of Assignments
- Stipends | Activities | Athletic Assignments
- 12. Approval of 2026-2027 Board Meeting Calendar
- 13. Release of Executive Session Minutes December 2024 - November 2025
- 14. Minutes of an Executive Session, December 11, 2025
- 15. Minutes of a Regular Meeting and Workshop, December 11, 2025
- 16. Minutes of an Executive Session, February 3, 2026
- 17. Minutes of a Regular Meeting and Workshop, February 3, 2026

**Motion to Table Consent Agenda Items Thirteen and Seventeen:** Ms. Connell-Donohue moved, seconded by Mr. Winebrenner that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois table Consent Agenda Items Thirteen: Release of Executive Session Minutes December 2024 - November 2025 and Seventeen: Minutes of a Regular Meeting and Workshop, February 3, 2026.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Noble, Silvay, Helms, Zinser, Winebrenner, Connell-Donohue  
Nay:  
Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

**Motion:** Ms. Helms moved, seconded by Ms. Connell-Donohue that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve the remaining Consent Agenda Items, as presented.

Votes were taken by roll call. Votes were cast as follows:

Aye: Winebrenner, Connell-Donohue, Helms, Silvay, Zinser, Noble  
Nay:  
Absent: Gamrath

The motion was carried unanimously.

**FOIA REQUESTS\***

- Giancarlo Terlotta | 1 of 1 | Completed
- Jim Karr | 1 of 1 | Completed
- Clearfront Alliance | 1 of 1 | Completed
- Kevin O'Mara | 1 of 1 | Completed
- Parents Care | 4 of 4 | Completed
- Philippe Melin | 4 of 4 | Completed

*\*FOIA Requests will not be made available on the website until completed*

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

