

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING AND WORKSHOP
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
LAKE FOREST COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 115
300 SOUTH WAUKEGAN ROAD, LAKE FOREST, IL 60045
SEPTEMBER 16, 2025**

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, September 16, 2025, and called to order at 4:54 p.m. by President John Noble.

PRESENT: Jenny Zinser, Member
Amy Connell-Donohue, Member
Gail Gamrath, Member
John Noble, President

LATE ARRIVAL: Dewey Winebrenner, Member (6:41 p.m.)
Anne Geraghty Helms, Vice - President (6:08 p.m. - Virtual)

ABSENT: Robert Silvay, Member

STUDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVES:

Kostantinos "Kosta" Vitzilaios
Elizabeth Specketer

CABINET PRESENT:

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

ADMINISTRATION/STAFF PRESENT:

Tiana Tolver, Board Clerk
Patrick Sassen, Associate Principal
Ryan Abrams, Instructional Director of MYSS and Science
Jeff Summy, Instructional Director of Mathematics
Stephen Dunn, Instructional Director of Social Studies
Pete Nadler, Director of Special Education
Corey Holmer, Educational Technologist
James Juliano, Educational Technologist
Laura Grigg, Educational Technologist

GUESTS: Jerry Lavin, District 67 Board Member

EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF A WHOLE

Dr. Lenart introduced the student body representatives for the 25-26 school year, Kostantinos “Kosta” Vitzilaos, Josie Irvin, and Elizabeth Specketer. Josie will be joining the meeting later in the evening.

She discussed the goals for the year. There are three common themes for improvement: Strengthening Executive Functioning and Study Skills Across All Grade Levels; Improving the Transition from Middle School to High School; Especially in Academic Rigor and Placement; and Enhancing Communication and Awareness of Available Resources.

Discussion held on how to solicit more feedback from stakeholders about current work to improve teaching and learning.

Gemini and AI Tutors

Mr. Salus along with the Educational Technologists covered the use of artificial intelligence in the district; “From Pilots to Practice”. The topics covered were lessons learned in the prior school year, summer work and professional development, standardization for the current school year, student support, and community and professional engagement.

Members of the board asked questions and discussion ensued. Student board representatives provided their insight and experience with AI at the high school.

Scout Seminar

Ryan Abrams and Steve Dunn covered the Scout Seminar: Freshman Transition Done Right. Scout Seminar was created to prevent gaps in transition. Survey results from freshman students and their families show that over 90% would prefer a freshman transition program. Goals, defining success, and curriculum were discussed. A pilot program, Design Your Future, is scheduled to begin this Winter and conclude in the Spring.

Members of the board asked questions and discussion ensued.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Zinser and seconded by Mrs. Gamrath that the Board adjourn to Executive Session at 6:11 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); security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of school personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(8); The placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students, 5 ILCS 120/ 2(c)(10); probable or imminent litigation, 5 ILCS 120/ 2(c)(11); and meeting with internal auditor regarding internal control weaknesses, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(29).

Votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: Gamrath, Noble, Helms, Zinser, Connell-Donohue
Nays:
Absent: Silvay, Winebrenner

The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: Mr. Winebrenner moved, seconded by Ms. Connell-Donohue that the Board of Education, Lake Forest Community High School District 115 return to Open Session at 6:53 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 6:53 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT AT ROLL CALL WERE:

John Noble, President
Gail Gamrath, Member
Jenny Zinser, Member
Dewey Winebrenner, Member
Anne Geraghty Helms, Vice-President (Virtual)
Amy Connell-Donohue, Secretary

ABSENT: Robert Silvay, Member

STUDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVES:

Kosta Vitzilaos
Josie Irvin, Student Body President
Elizabeth Specketer

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
Brittany Tjardes, Director of Fiscal Services/CSBO
Whitney Draegert, Director of Business Operations/CSBO
Janene Kessler, LFHS Music Department

GUESTS: Lana Hernandez, Student Spotlight Recipient

WORKSHOP

Communications Update

Melissa Oakley provided an update on the ongoing initiatives within the Communications Department. Discussion held by the Board on the recent enhancements in community outreach, noting that these improvements were in direct response to a prior request from the Board. The department has not only met but exceeded expectations in this area.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

LFHS UPDATES: STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Lenart introduced the new Student Spotlight segment that will take place this year to recognize a student that exhibits exemplary behavior aligning to the District's mission, vision, and values. There were seven nominees, this month's spotlight recipient is Lana Hernandez. She was nominated by Janene Kessler of the Music Department, who also had the honor of presenting the award.

BUDGET HEARING

Motion: A motion was made by Mr. Winebrenner and seconded by Ms. Zinser that the Board of Education, Lake Forest Community High School District 115, adjourn to the 2025-2026 Final Budget Hearing at 7:29 p.m.

Votes were cast as follows:

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

Nays:

Absent: Silvay

The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN FROM BUDGET HEARING

Motion: Mr. Winebrenner moved, seconded by Mrs. Gamrath that the Board of Education, Lake Forest Community High School District 115 return to Open Session at 7:45 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 7:45 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT AT ROLL CALL WERE:

Anne Geraghty Helms, Vice-President (Virtual)

Jenny Zinser, Member

Amy Connell-Donohue, Secretary

John Noble, President

Dewey Winebrenner, Member

Gail Gamrath, Member

ABSENT: Robert Silvay, Member

STUDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVES:

Kosta Vitzilaos
Josie Irvin, Student Body President
Elizabeth Specketer

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
Brittany Tjardes, Director of Fiscal Services/CSBO
Whitney Draegert, Director of Business Operations/CSBO

GUESTS: None

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

None

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP REPORT

Dr. Montgomery, in collaboration with Erin Lenart, Assistant Superintendent/Principal, Renee Fitzsimmons, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, and Accountability presented the District Leadership report. Topics covered include LFHS 90th Anniversary, Phase 1 Construction Update, LFHS Reads, Book Talk, Homecoming 2025, Scout Up ID On, School Report Card Preview, National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists, LFHS Open House, and LFHS Theater.

The student board representatives introduced themselves;

The full presentation can be found on the District website.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

LIAISON REPORTS

TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804

Dr. Montgomery reported there is a TrueNorth meeting tomorrow. A reorganization plan will be presented, the plan is to ensure the needs of students are met. Thanks to everyone who is working behind the scenes to find the best solution.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of 2025 - 2026 Final Budget

Motion: Mrs. Gamrath moved, seconded by Ms. Zinser that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve the 2025-2026 Final Budget.

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

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

Nay:

Absent: Silvay

The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval To Waive First Reading Of Press Issues 118 And 119

Motion: Mr. Winebrenner moved, seconded by Mrs. Gamrath that the Lake Forest Community High School District 115 Board of Education, Lake Forest, Illinois approve the Waive First Reading Of Press Issues 118 And 119.

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

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

Nay:

Absent: Silvay

The motion was carried unanimously.

Approval of PRESS Issues 118 and 119 - Second Reading

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 PRESS Issues 118 and 119 - Second Reading.

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

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

Nay:

Absent: Silvay

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 Disbursements, Payrolls, and Financial Statements, June and July 2025
2. Approval of Human Resources Report
 - Hires
 - Resignations
 - Retirements
 - Leaves of Absence
 - Changes of Assignments
 - Stipends | Activities | Additional Assignments
3. Minutes of a Regular Meeting and Workshop, August 12, 2025
4. Approval of Policy Committee Charter 2025-2027

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 Consent Agenda Items, as presented.

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

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

Nay:

Absent: Silvay

The motion was carried unanimously.

FOIA REQUESTS*

Justin Wenig | 1 of 1 | Completed

Parents Care | 1 of 1 | Completed

Frank McCormick | 1 of 1 | Completed

Matt Kuhlman | 1 of 1 | Completed

Owen Wang | 1 of 1 | Completed

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Friday, September 19, 2025

LFHS Pep Rally - 2:30 p.m.
Competition Gym

Saturday, September 20, 2025

Building Tours of LFHS: Places and Spaces You
Remember Well at LFHS East Campus - 10:00 a.m.

LFHS All - Alumni Parking Lot Party - 1:00 p.m.
Gorton Center

Homecoming Dance - 7:00 p.m.
Lake Forest High School

Monday, October 13, 2025

No School for Students and Staff/District Office
Closed in Observance of Columbus Day

Tuesday, October 14, 2025

Finance and Operations
Committee of a Whole - 5:00 p.m.

Board of Education Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
LFHS West Campus Board Room

[Upcoming Events at Lake Forest High School](#)

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mrs. Gamrath seconded by Ms. Connell-Donohue to adjourn the meeting.

On Voice Vote, motion carried.

President Noble declared the meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

John Noble, President Date

Amy Connell Donohue, Secretary Date