

**Board OF EDUCATION**  
**COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 64**  
**Minutes of the Special Board of Education Meeting held at 7 p.m.**  
**March 6, 2024**  
**Franklin School - Gymnasium**  
**2401 Manor Lane, Park Ridge, IL 60068**

Board president Pearl called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Other Board members in attendance were Monica Milligan, Gareth Kennedy, Matt Doubleday, Phyllis Lubinski, Demetri Touzios and Rachel Georgakis. Also attending were: Superintendent Dr. Ben Collins, Dr Adam Parisi, Chief School Business Official, Noel Mendoza, Director of Facilities, Alicia Schmeisser, Director of Student Services, Frank Borkowski, Assistant Director of Facilities, Kristin Williams, Principal of Franklin Elementary School, Chris Lilly, Communications Specialist, and Christine Bednarek, Assistant to the Superintendent. There were also 5 members of the public in attendance.

Board of Education meetings are videotaped and may be viewed in their full length from the district's website at <http://www.d64.org>. The agenda and reports for this meeting are also available on the website or through the District's Office at 8182 W Greendale Ave, Niles, IL 60714.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**OPENING REMARKS FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD**

Dr. Pearl Thanked Franklin for hosting and stated it was a special meeting and we would be focusing on the Facilities Plan.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**TOUR OF FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Dr. Collins suggested we start with the presentation and discuss a few slides prior to taking the tour. The Board was in favor.

Dr. Pearl stated that the purpose of the meeting was to determine if there were items that the board did not want to go to the Community Task Force.

Dr. Collins started by walking the board through the elementary enrollment capacity. He stated that in most of the schools the square footage is adequate however it is not allocated in a cohesive manner. Member Kennedy asked what is the average shortfall of hitting the max capacity? Ms. Williams stated that was extremely accurate and that while they have rooms that can provide capacity they are not always at ideal number of sections and when they go over section numbers they need to pull certain programs out of spaces and into hallways. It is not always cut and dry and there is an unanticipated piece with enrollment.

Alicia Schmeisser explained the Student Services proposal for special programs. She stated that the team believed Carpenter School would be best suited for the SEL program because it is a smaller school, located in a neighborhood, which is a one story building. In addition the building offers spaces that can preserve dignity for these students. In addition having a principal who was a former social worker with extensive experience in this area would be a benefit. Looking at the Life Skills program it would be best suited at Emerson. That being said you would want a school that feeds into that school which is why Franklin was identified for the elementary Life Skills program. In addition the one level building is ideal to fit the needs of those students.

Member Georgakis asked if the SEL program for middle school students was in the plans for Lincoln? She also asked where the functional life skills early elementary students would be located? Typically students are not placed into the programs until 3rd grade and they are integrated in general classrooms until that time.

Member Kennedy asked if students fit into more than one category? No, typically students are assigned by the most presenting need for students who may straddle more than one area. He stated he was concerned about busing students between buildings and that recent feedback from special education parents was that they didn't feel like they had a home school.

Kristin Williams then addressed the needs at Franklin. She stated that the homerooms are currently at capacity. The four special education teachers are sharing space which sometimes requires them to utilize the hallways from time to time due to overcrowding. This is a similar situation for the three intervention teachers as well as the EL teachers. While providing services for students this often presents challenges as well as the quality of the instruction. And while Franklin is excited about housing the Life Skills program they are not currently equipped to support those students at this time. For instance, there is not a classroom currently containing a restroom. Lastly, there is no mother's room at Franklin and currently they are using a conference room as the mother's room.

Dr. Collins stated the architects have amended the plans and cut the addition down to about half the size which resulted in the lower costs.

Member Doubleday wondered if we have historical data on how often the schools have gone over capacity and if we have to perhaps look at boundaries in certain areas. While the data is not readily available it is something that can be looked into. Every year Ms. Williams has been at Franklin; they have been over capacity and sharing spaces.

Member Georgakis stated she was concerned that the neediest learners were pushed into hallways for instruction and would like to know if that is happening at all the schools or only specific schools. Right now Franklin and Field are the two schools dealing with this issue.

Dr. Pearl mentioned that she remembered the former CSBO stating that the next school that would need to be looked at was Franklin.

Dr. Collins stated that given the services being offered it is imperative that these be dedicated spaces.

Member Kennedy stated that perhaps we need to think outside the box when sharing spaces. Ms. William stated that oftentimes these rooms are never empty and they are utilized from the start of the day until the end of the day. And the flexible spaces at the school are typically used for meeting type rooms and not instructional spaces. Member Pearl stated that we need to remember that these plans will change, but what we are hearing from the board is that we prioritize the need for spaces for special education and specialize groups so we have spaces for those groups. Member Kennedy said he agreed with that but that we need to also focus on the other items and how we prioritize as the cost of adding space is costly. Member Doubleday credited the team for the work they have done reducing the costs by one third already. Member Milligan stated that we don't necessarily want to pass the lowest number possible or is the approach to ask the experts what will pass, or do we want to pass something that will draw folks to the district. Member Doubleday stated he is not necessarily for the lowest number possible but perhaps the highest number necessary and that it also needs to be explainable to the community. Member Kennedy stated he likes the highest number necessary and it also has to be the highest number necessary that will pass. Dr. Pearl stated that the number is not the decision today however, what the board wants to go to the task force.

The group then took a tour of Franklin Elementary School.

At 8:25 board member Touzios had to leave the meeting.

When the group returned from the tour Ms. Williams said she was grateful for the opportunity to show the board Franklin.

### **MASTER FACILITIES PLAN UPDATE**

The group returned from the tour and walked through the elementary school plans.

Carpenter has an alternate from what the group saw previously. Since there is already a renovated space that would only need a restroom added, locating the SEL program there would lower the costs. Member Kennedy asked if this is renovating space that was just built. Dr. Collins said yes, however, it was only adding a restroom. Member Kennedy said last time the board didn't have time to scrutinize the plans like they do this time so he was thankful for that. Ms. Schmeisser said this location helps minimize transitions as well as it is located in an area with less noise and activity. Member Milligan asked if this would relocate C of C? Yes, however C of C can relocate to any space. Member Kennedy asked about the auditorium area and the plans for it to be usable space. Dr. Collins stated that there are foundation issues which would need to be addressed and then we would look to finish the space as usable space. Carpenter's HVAC was replaced in 2020-21. Member Kennedy asked about the fencing proposed and is this a safety issue as it diminished the welcomeness of the school. Ms. Schmeiser stated that with the proposal of the SEL program there any deterrent for students who may want to run is helpful.

Washington's renovation for the SLC program would be adding three ADA toilets to existing rooms. Mr. Mendoza stated that it would only require raising plumbing. Dr. Collins stated that the dollar amount will be lower however we are not sure how much yet. Member Kennedy asked about fencing again. Dr. Collins mentioned that the area is a high community walking area and they are often walking dogs and a lot of times people do not pick up after their dogs which result in students running through that dog waste. Member Lubinski asked if they would be locked on weekends? Dr. Collins said no, it would still be welcoming however provide a barrier while students are having recess. Member Milligan stated fencing from a safety aspect makes sense however for other reasons like demarcation of property we may want to get feedback on that. Dr. Collins suggested that often vegetation is used as well to clarify spaces.

At Field we are currently looking at the attic space and trying to determine what can be done in that space. In addition, the HVAC needs may require disruption of the rooms below however we are not sure at this point. First we need to determine how much the space can support weight wise. Field has had steady enrollment and seems that it will remain that way. At this point we are waiting to see what the structural engineer says regarding the attic space. That will take a few weeks to figure out. The other option is adding a second floor on the previous addition. Member Georgakis asked if this will take care of the issue with students being serviced in the halls. Dr. Collins said it is his understanding that this additional space should meet all the needs.

Dr. Collins said Roosevelt is mainly mechanical, lighting, and energy efficiency type work that would be happening.

Member Milligan asked if the facilities at the elementary schools are offering equitable learning opportunities for students or if this is something we should be looking at? She said prior to finalizing the plans that in terms of programming she would like to be sure the schools are equitable. In addition with deferred maintenance we would want to be sure we are addressing the issues. And lastly, that we are providing adequate spaces for special education and other specialized learners.

Next the board watched a video of proposed playground updates offering accessibility to all students. In the examples there is ramp access and the entire surface is poured allowing students to easily navigate the entire surface. Dr. Collins stated that historically these spaces were updated with funding from PTOs however, it was added into the plans. Member Georgakis pointed out that the playground at Jefferson was removed from the costs. Member Kennedy stated he felt that the PTOs could still raise funds to update the playground and he thought it would be a hard sell on a

referendum. Member Doubleday commented that it was a systemic issue across the district and if we have a chance to fix it we should definitely be looking at it. Member Georgakis agreed and stated that the entire community uses the playgrounds not only our students and that one of the driving principles is meeting the needs of all students which is tied to the strategic plans and that not all areas have the same ability to raise funds. Member Kennedy asked if there is rubber on all services or pathways and what are the environmental impacts. Mr. Gauthier responded that whether it was rubber or another type of path, i.e. you would also need to account for drainage. Member Georgakis stated that using only paths does not make the entire playground accessible for all students and there is a trade off for all decisions. Dr. Collins said this still needs to go in front of the task force and that these playgrounds are probably the most used community spaces in the district and getting the task force opinions would be important. Member Kennedy said he would rather prioritize funding in the classroom over playgrounds. Dr. Pearl said when you come to look for a community these playgrounds are visible and send a message as to what is important in the community. Member Lubinski asked about adding vegetation and trees to the plan. Member Kennedy also mentioned the heat retention of the surfaces potentially burning students. Mr. Mendoza mentioned the pathways can create tripping hazards as well when going from one surface to another.

Some of the Emerson updates include new science rooms by adding prep spaces, a new CTE suite, adding a mother's room and a band room addition. Member Doubleday asked what is included in a new CTE suite? This would include things like 3D printers, CAD, and things like AI and the latest technological opportunities. Member Georgakis asked about the band additions at both schools and the discrepancy in square footage. Dr. Collins stated once we get into the planning of the spaces that may change.

For the Lincoln updates the Phase 1 plans are currently covered by the \$10 million bond issuance. Dr. Parisi stated that the planning is underway to have the SEL and SLC areas completed for the start of the 2025-26 school year. Dr. Collins mentioned that Ms. Schmeisser wrote a grant that was awarded which will provide \$600,000 toward the project. Dr. Parisi stated we will pursue any and all rebates and refunds available to us throughout the process.

Dr. Collins stated that now that we are going into Phase 1 things will be moving quickly and he would like to propose a meeting for the Finance and Facilities Committee before the April board meeting who would then report back to the entire board with the decisions. The entire board would then see the bidding documents when awarding the contracts as well. Which would then push the closed session to the end of the meeting.

Dr. Collins gave a quick update on the community engagement task force which currently sits around 30-35 attendees and we've been working with Paul Hanley on this process. He told the board how impressed Paul was with the quality of Chris Lilly's video and how he said he was not used to seeing such a quality product. The board then watched the video. Member Lubinski asked if we would be sharing the video? Yes, after the task force meeting we will have a webpage that will have the videos and a lot more information that will help with directing people as to where they can find information.

Dr. Collins thanked Member Lubinski for her work getting together the Realtor Luncheon that would take place that Friday and said he was very interested to hear what they would have to say.

Dr. Pearl said she felt they all had a better understanding of the facilities plan and wanted to be sure the board was agreeable to everything presented that evening going to the task force. Member Lubinski said she thought everything was good to go to the task force. Member Kennedy said after seeing what they saw that evening on the tour of Franklin he wondered if we had enough and he wanted to be sure we had all needs included in the plan before taking it to the task force. Member Lubinski said she appreciated the entire team and this was a much different experience from previous experiences. Member Kennedy and Dr. Pearl agreed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:13 p.m., it was moved by Board Member Kennedy and seconded by Board Member Georgakis to adjourn the regular meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Signed Date: March 21, 2024.

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President

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Secretary