

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MAY 19, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Grant Park Community Unit School District No. 6 Board of Education, Kankakee County, State of Illinois, was held on May 19, 2025 in the Middle School Library.

The meeting was called to order by President Markland at 6:00 p.m.

Members present: Vicki Gawlinski
Christine Horn
Jerry Loitz
Tim Markland
Dave Marshalek
Mike Wells

Member absent: None

Also present: Dr. John Palan, Superintendent
Ms. Tracy Planeta, ES Principal
Mr. Kyle Nevills, MS/HS Principal
Mrs. Sue Anderson, Recording Secretary

Audience of 51

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion was made by J. Loitz, seconded by V. Gawlinski, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

1. Minutes of the regular board meeting of April, 2025, the special board meeting of April 16, 2025 and the reorganization meeting on May 1, 2025.
2. Financial Reports for April, 2025.
3. Direction to pay the May vendor bills in the amount of \$399,418.31.
4. Approval of the April payroll in the amount of \$345,547.23.
5. Approval of Kelly Lara, MS/HS Café Server (\$15.00 per hour).
6. To approve the final 2024-25 calendar as presented.
7. To approve the 2025-26 EC/Sponsor list as presented.
8. Approval of membership to the IHSA for the 2025-26 school year.
9. Approval of Board Policies: 2:260, 4:15, 4:80, 5:20, 5:60-E1, 5:60-E2, 5:100, 6:150, 6:235, 7:10, 7:20, 7:60, 7:70, 7:180, 7:185, 7:190, 7:200, 7:210, 7:250, 7:270, 7:310, 7:315, 7:340.

Roll Call: J. Loitz – yes; V. Gawlinski - yes; C. Horn – yes; D. Marshalek – yes; M. Wells – yes; and T. Markland - yes. Motion carried unanimously.

AUDIENCE TO PERSONS SCHEDULED IN ADVANCE: Sue Crocker addressed the board first by stating she had been a bus driver for 21 years. She went on to say that drivers had a 20% cut in wages, then all drivers joined the union because she said when Dr. Palan became superintendent his goal was to “get his buddies from Cardinal Bus Lines to drive for the district”. Also, she said several times that hours and reports were falsified to the state for IMRF and then suddenly it became okay to be enrolled in IMRF. Dr. Palan asked her multiple times if she was accusing the district office of “cooking the books”. No response from Mrs. Crocker. Her timeline continued and she said the union was gone and drivers were told they wouldn’t have a job this fall. May 1st bids were due from contracting companies and two weeks earlier the district signed with a lease company. Midwest Leasing has a 15,000 mile yearly limit and we probably go over. They also don’t come out to fix buses and will not provide a loaner bus if necessary, according to her. She accused the district and Dr. Palan of receiving gifts under the table from Midwest for doing business with them and said other districts, such as Manteno, also receive these “gratuities”. Dr. Palan asked her if she was accusing him or board members of taking kickbacks from Midwest. She said she saw records of bus driver hours that don’t match up to what they actually drove. Dr. Palan asked if she could provide those records and she didn’t respond.

Fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Hood, and eight members of the Super Service Squad gave a presentation on the community service projects they completed this year. The club focuses on giving back to the community, one good deed at a time. The students highlighted all of their service projects and had a video and pictures to share with the board and audience. This amazing group of 5th graders are learning invaluable life lessons and they were commended for their charitable acts of kindness.

Teachers Tracy Hood and Carol Cademartori were recognized as “Difference Makers in Public Education” by the Kankakee Daily Journal during Teacher Appreciation Week. The newspaper articles detailed their wonderful careers and their contributions to educating students.

ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORTS: Administrators reports are attached. Ms. Planeta reported the 5th Grade Carnival was held on Friday. The students choose every year where the proceeds from the event will go. This year they chose to donate the \$3,500 they raised to the Maldonado family to support them during this difficult time. Mr. Nevills thanked Mrs. Hood and her 5th graders on behalf of the Maldonado family for their support. He also announced that he has secured a HS Math teacher for next year and has been conducting band interviews with many interested candidates.

Superintendent: Dr. Palan’s report included:

1. A Health Life Safety Design and Planning meeting was held recently and the ES HVAC design work has started. Bids will be out this fall and work will be scheduled for the summer of 2026.
2. Property insurance update and quotes were presented to the board in light of Country Companies no longer insuring schools. The increase in premiums will be due to the building replacement cost increase from many years ago.

3. The district received the Financial Profile score from ISBE and was Financially Recognized with a perfect 4.0 score. This score is verified by the auditor each year.
4. April enrollment increased by two over March.

APPROVAL OF TWO YEAR BUS LEASE WITH MIDWEST TRANSIT:

Dr. Palan reiterated the past order of events that led to this decision to stay with Midwest Transit, as the district has in the last ten or so years, including holding a Public Hearing, meeting with the drivers and confirming employment for next year, the ongoing need for extracurricular drivers, sending applications to potential drivers (still only have one application in progress), an additional special needs route next year, the potential need for another activity bus or van, confirming the availability of buses with Midwest and consulting the attorney about pulling the bid. After this discussion, a motion was made by M. Wells, seconded by J. Loitz, to approve the two year lease with Midwest Transit (five new 2026 busses) for an annual cost of \$158,196. Roll Call: M. Wells - yes; J. Loitz - yes; V. Gawlinski - yes; C. Horn - yes; D. Marshalek - yes; and T. Markland – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF OPT OUT OF COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS ENDORSEMENT:

Motion was made by C. Horn, seconded by V. Gawlinski, to approve opting out of College and Career Pathways Endorsement through Illinois State Board of Education due to Partnership with Kankakee Career Center. Roll Call: C. Horn - yes; V. Gawlinski - yes; J. Loitz - yes; D. Marshalek - yes; M. Wells - yes; and T. Markland – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL TO AMEND FISCAL 2025 BUDGET AND PLACE ON PUBLIC DISPLAY:

Due to the ES vestibule project down payment and the MS air conditioning project, the budget will need to be amended but will still be balanced. Motion was made by C. Horn, seconded by D. Marshalek, to amend the fiscal 2025 budget and place the budget on public display prior to final approval. Roll Call: C. Horn - yes; D. Marshalek - yes; V. Gawlinski - yes; J. Loitz - yes; M. Wells - yes; and T. Markland – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

President: No report

Building and Grounds: Some improvement was reported with the water issue in the ES. Work should be completed by the end of June and may entail some additional grading in the parking lot.

Technology: No report

Kankakee Area Special Education Co-op: No report

Kankakee Area Career Center: No report

IASB-Three Rivers Division: No report

Chamber of Commerce: No report

Communications Committee: No report

Student Representatives: May events included: ACT test score results, AP testing in Calculus and Euro History, NHS to Build A Bear and donation to Riverside, Academic Signing, FFA banquet, Senior Picnic, Baccalaureate, Honors Day, Graduation, sports awards, MS state track, BB and SB regionals, and 8th grade promotion.

Board Communications: No report

Finance/Transportation Committee: No report

FFA/Ag Alumni: The group provided three \$1000 scholarships to Ag students; paid for meals for students at events; held the end of year banquet, and will help install lights on the softball garage.

COMMUNITY FORUM AND OTHER: Jim Crocker addressed the board. He started by pointing his finger at Dr. Palan and stating that there were three driver meetings and he was never asked to be in any of those meetings. Dr. Palan said that subs were never a part of those previous meetings. Mr. Crocker then continued saying that his opinion didn't matter and that subs don't matter in this district and asked the audience if they all heard that. Dr. Palan said those were not his words. Dr. Palan said that in the district sub teachers are not invited to faculty meetings either so this was not unusual. Mr. Crocker continued with bringing up the previous superintendent and how the drivers were not getting IMRF at that time. He also accused the district office of falsifying the records and hours. Dr. Palan asked Mr. Crocker if he was alleging that the former superintendent or bookkeeper were falsifying reports to IMRF. At this time, Mr. Crocker looked directly at Ms. Planeta, Transportation Director, and tried several times to get her to admit that she said "he would never work in this district again". When she did not respond to his accusations he said "no response is a response". Mr. Nevills then said to him that board policy states that we cannot respond to public comments. Mr. Crocker then handed Dr. Palan his letter of resignation as a sub driver for the district.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion was made by V. Gawlinski, seconded by J. Loitz, at 7:17 p.m. to go into Executive Session for the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), as amended by P.A. 93-0057.

Roll Call: V. Gawlinski - yes; J. Loitz - yes; C. Horn – yes; D. Marshalek - yes; M. Wells – yes; and T. Markland - yes. Motion carried unanimously.

RETURN TO REGULAR MEETING:

President Markland declared the closed session was over at 7:45 p.m. and the meeting would continue in Open Session.

APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES:

Motion was made by D. Marshalek, seconded by T. Markland, at 7:45 p.m. to approve the Executive Session minutes as read. Roll Call: D. Marshalek - yes; T. Markland - yes; V. Gawlinski – yes; C. Horn – yes; J. Loitz – yes; and M. Wells – yes. Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN:

Motion was made by J. Loitz, seconded by M. Wells, at 7:46 p.m. to adjourn. Voice vote, all yes. Motion carried unanimously.

Jerry Loitz
Secretary

Tim Markland
President