

FORD HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 169
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026

The public hearing meeting was called to order by presiding officer, President Ester Viverette – **at 10:03 a.m.**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (*recited by all in attendance*)

Upon roll call the following members were present:

Present: Mrs. Ester Viverette, Mr. Mark Mitchell, Ms. Jessica Gray,
Mr. Samuel J. LaWrence, III
Absent: Mr. James Coleman, Mrs. Lera Cook, Mr. Joe Louis Sherman
Also Present: Dr. Gregory T. Jackson, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Coretta D. Jackson, Assistant Superintendent of
Business Administration & Operations
Dr. Sharon P. Rivers, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum
& Instruction
Mrs. LaDonna Harris, Executive Assistant
Mr. David Wright, Director of Technology
Mr. William Gleason, Legal Counsel (By phone)
Ms. Ollie Gill, Principal at Medgar Evers Primary Academic Ctr.
Ms. Latasha Buchanan, Coordinator of Special Education
Mr. Damaus Viverette, Director of Buildings and Grounds

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

There were none.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC (2 Minutes)

There were none.

AGENDA

Board President Ester Viverette called for a motion to approve the agenda at **10:05 a.m.**

Motioned/**LaWrence**; Seconded/**Mitchell** - to approve the agenda.

Roll Call: Ayes: E. Viverette, M. Mitchell, J. Gray, S. LaWrence, III.,
Nays: None
Absent: L. Cook, J. Coleman, J. Sherman
Abstain: None
4 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent, 0 abstain, 0 present – motion carried.

MINUTES

President Ester Viverette called for a motion to approve the minutes of the public hearing and regularly scheduled board meeting of **January 6, 2026** and to approve the *Special Meeting on January 14, 2026*.

Motioned/**LaWrence**; Seconded/**Mitchell** - to approve the minutes of **January 6, 2026** Regular and Closed Session and the *Special Meeting on January 14, 2026*.

Roll Call: Ayes: E. Viverette, M. Mitchell, J. Gray, S. LaWrence, III.,
 Nays: None
 Absent: L. Cook, J. Coleman, J. Sherman
 Abstain: None
 4 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent, 0 abstain, 0 present – motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

None.

CLOSED SESSION

President Ester Viverette called for a motion and second to *enter* into a closed session to discuss matters of student personnel. The following were asked to leave the room during closed session: Ollie Gill, Latasha Buchanan and Damaus Viverette.

Motioned/**Mitchell**; Seconded/**Gray** to *enter* into closed session at **10:08 a.m.**

Roll Call: Ayes: E. Viverette, M. Mitchell, J. Gray, S. LaWrence, III.,
 Nays: None
 Absent: L. Cook, J. Coleman, J. Sherman
 Abstain: None
 4 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent, 0 abstain, 0 present – motion carried.

President Ester Viverette called for a motion and second to *end* a closed session.

Motioned/**Mitchell**; Seconded/**Gray** to *end* the closed session at **10:42 a.m.**

Roll Call: Ayes: E. Viverette, M. Mitchell, J. Gray, S. LaWrence, III.,
 Nays: None
 Absent: L. Cook, J. Coleman, J. Sherman

Abstain: None
4 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent, 0 abstain, 0 present – motion carried.

President Ester Viverette called for a motion and second to *resume* the regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Motioned/*LaWrence*; Seconded/*Mitchell* to *resume* the regularly scheduled Board meeting at **10:42 a.m.**

Roll Call: Ayes: E. Viverette, M. Mitchell, J. Gray, S. LaWrence, III.,
Nays: None
Absent: L. Cook, J. Coleman, J. Sherman
Abstain: None
4 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent, 0 abstain, 0 present – motion carried.

PART A - REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

SUPERINTENDENT JACKSON reminded members of the Board of Education that they were in advance receipt of his report. **SUPERINTENDENT JACKSON** went on to discuss personnel authorizations including a retirement letter from Mrs. Ann Armstrong, the hiring of a new substitute teacher, Ms. Danetta Manning and a Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) request on behalf of Mr. Michael Dreixler.

SUPERINTENDENT JACKSON also requested authorizations to approve the revisions of both the current and upcoming school year calendars to include election days, the Annual Investment report received from the Bloom Township Treasurer and the awarding of E-rate contracts for three (3) years to Sentinel Technologies of Downer's Grove and to AT & T of Chicago, IL

SUPERINTENDENT JACKSON then asked for favorable consideration and approval of his report and asked if there were any questions. **There were none.**

Motioned/*LaWrence*; Seconded/*Mitchell* - to approve **PART A - REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT** as submitted:

Roll Call: Ayes: E. Viverette, M. Mitchell, J. Gray, S. LaWrence, III.,
Nays: None
Absent: L. Cook, J. Coleman, J. Sherman
Abstain: None

4 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent, 0 abstain, 0 present – motion carried.

I. CLOSED SESSION

- A. THAT PURSUANT TO THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FORD HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 169 WILL GO INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING: (1) THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION, DISCIPLINE, PERFORMANCE OR DISMISSAL OF A SPECIFIC EMPLOYEE OF THE PUBLIC BODY (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)); (2) COLLECTIVE NEGOTIATING MATTERS BETWEEN THE PUBLIC BODY AND ITS EMPLOYEES (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)); (3) STUDENT DISCIPLINARY CASES AND/OR MATTERS RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9) AND 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(10); AND (4) LITIGATION AGAINST, AFFECTING OR ON BEHALF OF THE PUBLIC BODY (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)).**

II. FOR YOUR AUTHORIZATION

A. PERSONNEL

LETTER OF RETIREMENT(S)

- a. **MS. ANN MARIE ARMSTRONG**, Teacher – Medgar Evers Primary Academic Center, has submitted a Letter of Intent to Retire, at the conclusion of the **2025 - 2026 School Year**.

APPOINTMENT(S)

- a. Authorization is sought to appoint **MS. DANETTA MANNING**, as a **Substitute Teacher**, Ford Heights School District 169, **effective, Monday, January 26, 2026** (*Administratively approved*) for the 2025-2026 School Year - **\$185.00 per day**

(Any new appointment(s) shown above are pending receipt of all personnel required documents and Illinois State Police and FBI criminal background clearance.)

B. FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT REQUEST (FMLA) for Family Member

Authorization is sought to retro-approve a Family Medical Leave (FMLA) request submitted by **MR. MICHAEL DREIXLER**, Teacher at Cottage Grove Upper Grade Center, effective Monday, January 26, 2026 consistent with Ford Heights School District 169's FMLA **Policy 5.185**.

C. APPROVAL OF THE REVISED 2025-2026 PUBLIC SCHOOL CALENDAR (REFERENCE #1)

Approval is sought to approve the revised **2025-2026 ISBE** School Calendar for the **current 2025-2026** School Year that has been revised to include the Illinois Primary Election on Tuesday, March 17, 2026. This will be a non-attendance day for students.

NOTE: The School Year began on **Wednesday, August 6, 2025**, and will end on **Friday, May 29, 2026**. The calendar represents **185 days**, inclusive of **five (5) emergency days**. If no emergency days are used, school will end **Thursday, May 21, 2026**.

TEACHER INSTITUTE DAYS

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

Thursday, August 7, 2025

Friday, August 8, 2025

Monday, May 18, 2026

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Friday, October 24, 2025

Friday, March 27, 2026

EMERGENCY DAYS

Friday, May 22, 2026

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

Thursday, May 28, 2026

Friday, May 29, 2026

**D. APPROVAL OF THE REVISED 2026-2027 PUBLIC SCHOOL CALENDAR
(REFERENCE #2)**

Approval is sought to approve the revised **2026-2027 ISBE** School Calendar for the **2026-2027** School Year to include election dates.

The School Year will begin on **Wednesday, August 12, 2026**, and will end on **Friday, June 4, 2027**. The calendar represents **185 days**, inclusive of **five (5) emergency days**. If no emergency days are used, school will end **Thursday, May 27, 2027**.

Attached herewith is copy of the official School Calendar; the following will take place on dates noted below:

TEACHER INSTITUTE DAYS

Wednesday, August 12, 2026

Thursday, August 13, 2026

Friday, August 14, 2026

Monday, May 24, 2027

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Friday, October 30, 2026

Friday, April 9, 2027

EMERGENCY DAYS

Friday, May 28, 2027

Tuesday, June 1, 2027

Wednesday, June 2, 2027

Thursday, June 3, 2027

Friday, June 4, 2027

E. ACCEPT FORD HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 169'S ANNUAL INVESTMENT REPORT: (DELIVERED UNDER SEPARATE COVER)

Accept Ford Heights School District 169's Annual Investment Report from **Bloom Township** as submitted and listed below, for Fiscal Year ending *June 30, 2025*. Enclosed herewith for your acceptance is the following financial report. It is:

**F. AWARDING OF E-RATE CONTRACT – 2026- 2029
 (REFERENCE #3)**

Authorization is being sought to award ERATE Contract to the qualified/chosen vendors for a three (3) year contract for the (2026-2029) school years as listed below:

BID NUMBER 2026-01 – USAC E-Rate Telecommunication and High-Speed Ten Gigabyte Internet Access Lines – *AT&T of Chicago, IL* for a three (3) year contract in the amount of **\$364,549.68**

BID NUMBER 2026-02 – E-Rate Eligible Telecommunications, Managed Internal Broadband Services – *Sentinel Technologies, Inc. of Downers Grove, IL* for a three (3) year contract in the amount of **\$115,376.40**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

A. Monthly Enrollment (As of January 31, 2026)

MEDGAR EVERS SCHOOL

PRE-K	60	KDG	45
GRADE 1	45	GRADE 2	58
GRADE 3	50	GRADE 4	39
		TOTAL	297

COTTAGE GROVE:

GRADE 5	32	GRADE 6	43
GRADE 7	34	GRADE 8	37
		TOTAL	146

TOTAL DISTRICT	OUT OF DISTRICT	GRAND TOTAL
443	18	461

REPORT OF CONTACTS (ATTENDANCE OFFICES):

MEDGAR EVERS:

HOME VISITS	TELE. CONTACTS	PARENT CONF.	LETTERS SENT HOME
0	430	5	8

COTTAGE GROVE:

HOME VISITS	TELE. CONTACTS	PARENT CONF.	LETTERS SENT HOME
0	212	2	3

B. APPROPRIATIONS' REQUEST (REFERENCE #4)

Members of the Board, please take note that on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, an appropriations' request was emailed and mailed to House Speaker Emanuel (Chris) Welch, Senator Napoleon Harris, III and Representative Thaddeus Jones in an attempt to secure more funding for various Capital projects at our various school sites. Attached herewith is a copy of the correspondence that went out to each of those government officials.

C. PROPERTY TAX APPEAL (SEPARATE COVER)

Members of the Board, enclosed under a separate cover is an invoice and an Appraisal Report from Petrarca, Gleason, Boyle & Izzo pertaining to the Industrial Land Real Property located at 1201 State Street in Chicago Heights, IL 60411. As you are fully aware, Petrarca, Gleason, Boyle & Izzo represents Ford Heights School District 169 as an intervenor in appeal proceedings pertaining to this matter.

PART B - ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

MRS. CORETTA JACKSON reminded members that they were in advanced receipt of her report.

MRS. CORETTA JACKSON asked the Superintendent for favorable consideration and approval of her report and asked if there were any questions. **There were none.**

Motioned/*LaWrence*; Seconded/*Mitchell* - to approve **PART B - ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS** Report as submitted:

Roll Call: Ayes: E. Viverette, M. Mitchell, J. Gray, S. LaWrence, III.,
 Nays: None
 Absent: L. Cook, J. Coleman, J. Sherman
 Abstain: None
 4 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent, 0 abstain, 0 present – motion carried.

I. FOR YOUR AUTHORIZATION

A. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (\$492,658.07)

B. PAYROLL SUMMARY (for the month of Jan. 2026) as detailed below:

January 9, 2026	\$234,488.21
January 23, 2026	<u>\$257,230.88</u>
Total	\$491,719.09

C. PETTY CASH (\$113.00)

D. BUILDING RENTAL

Authorization is requested for the use of the following:

- A. Annual Easter Event – Elouise Robinson
 Date: Saturday, April 4, 2026

PART C - ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

DR. SHARON P. RIVERS expressed to members that they were in advance receipt of her report.

DR. SHARON P. RIVERS then asked the Superintendent for favorable consideration and approval of her report and asked if there were any questions. **There were none.**

Motioned/*Mitchell*; Seconded/*Gray* - to accept **PART C - ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION** Report as submitted.

Roll Call: Ayes: E. Viverette, M. Mitchell, J. Gray, S. Lawrence, III.,
 Nays: None
 Absent: L. Cook, J. Coleman, J. Sherman
 Abstain: None
 4 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent, 0 abstain, 0 present – motion carried.

I. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

A. DISTRICTWIDE SPELLING BEE

The 2025–2026 Spelling Bee brought excitement and pride as Semarion Edwards (8th grade), Semir Lee (7th grade), and Janiyah Collins (3rd grade) advanced to the District Spelling Bee—what a remarkable achievement for the siblings! Though they did not take home the trophy, their dedication and spirit shone brightly.

A huge congratulations to 7th grader Taylor Daniel, who triumphed as the districtwide Spelling Bee Champion, rising above twenty-four talented contestants from Medgar Evers and Cottage Grove. The energy was electric during the intense 18 round finale, where Taylor and 5th grader Atniel Blackwell delivered a thrilling, hard fought showdown. She will now compete in the 16th Annual South Cook Intermediate Service Center Scripps Spelling Bee held at Southland Preparatory Charter High School, on Thursday, March 5, 2026, with the snow date on Friday, March 6, 2026, Southland Preparatory Charter High School located at 4601 Sauk Trail in Richton Park. Registration is from 6:00 - 6:45 p.m. with the Bee beginning promptly at 7:00 p.m.

B. 5ESSENTIAL SURVEY

5Essentials is an evidence-based system designed to drive improvement in schools nationwide—it reliably measures changes in a school organization through the 5Essentials Survey and provides individualized, actionable Reports for each school. The 5Essentials system is based on more than 20 years of research by the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research on five components found to be critical for school success:

- **Effective Leaders:** The principal works with teachers to implement a clear and strategic vision for school success.
- **Collaborative Teachers:** Teachers collaborate to promote professional growth.
- **Involved Families:** The entire school staff builds strong relationships with families and communities to support learning.
- **Supportive Environment:** The school is safe and orderly. Teachers have high expectations for students and support students to realize their goals. Classmates also support one another.
- **Ambitious Instruction:** Classes are academically demanding and engage students by emphasizing the application of knowledge.

The 5Essentials Survey is taken by all **prekindergarten through 12th-grade teachers** and all **fourth- through 12th-grade students** and usually requires no more than **30 minutes** to complete. The information collected through the survey is rigorously reviewed and analyzed to generate a 5Essential Report for each school. The 5Essentials Report includes a breakdown of teacher and student responses and, most importantly, provides a comprehensive picture of the school environment based on five essential areas critical for school improvement in a meaningful context of similar and successful schools. *The 5Essentials Survey is completely confidential and voluntary.*

The overall **STUDENT** response rate is **95%** for the 2025 Illinois 5Essentials Student Survey. *The respondent minimum and response rate threshold of 50% has been met for this survey.*

STUDENT response rates for schools in Ford Heights SD 169:
Cottage Grove Upper Grade Center: 90%
Medgar Evers Primary Academic Center: 100%

The overall **TEACHER** response rate is **90%** for the 2025 Illinois 5Essentials Teacher Survey. *The respondent minimum and response rate threshold of 50% has been met for this survey.*

TEACHER response rates for schools in Ford Heights SD 169:
Cottage Grove Upper Grade Center: 92%
Medgar Evers Primary Academic Center: 87%

The overall **PARENT** response rate is **16%** for the 2025 Illinois Parent Survey. *The respondent minimum and **response rate threshold of 20%** has been met for this survey.*

PARENT response rates for schools in Ford Heights SD 169:
Cottage Grove Upper Grade Center: 20%
Medgar Evers Primary Academic Center: 11%

The survey window for school year 2025-2026 will be open from **February 3rd through March 13, 2026.**

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/5Essentials-Survey.aspx>

C. TECHNOLOGY SURVEY

The Productivity Software Proficiency Questionnaire, also referred to as the Computer Technology Survey, was distributed to all staff members to assess their proficiency with Microsoft Office and Google Workspace applications. The data collected from this survey will be used to inform and guide future professional development initiatives.

D. BLACK HISTORY MONTH DOOR DECORATING CONTEST

The Black History Month Door Decorating Contest will be held on Friday, February 27, 2026. This year's theme, "Celebrating Freedom, Equality, Diversity, and Pride," invites students and staff to collaborate on creative displays honoring the achievements of African Americans. The contest will begin at Medgar Evers and conclude at Cottage Grove. Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place entries.

E. PROGRAMS ON SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY 2026

- February 5th – Problem Solving Cottage Grove
- February 6th – Parent Meeting
- February 19th – Problem Solving Medgar Evers
- February 20th – Progress Reports Mailed Home

- February 27th – Black History Door Decorating Contest
 - Medgar Evers 9:00 a.m.
 - Cottage Grove 11:00 a.m.

F. **MONTHLY BUILDING REPORTS** (*See references #1-3*)

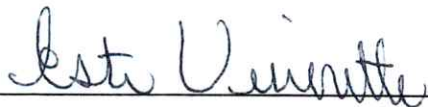
Building reports were submitted by the following personnel:

- ✚ Ms. Ollie Gill, Principal of Medgar Evers P.A.C.
- ✚ Dr. Sharon P. Rivers, Principal of Cottage Grove U.G.C.
- ✚ Mrs. Robin Norris, District-wide Attendance

President Ester Viverette called for a motion to adjourn the regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: 10:49 a.m.

Roll Call: Ayes: E. Viverette, M. Mitchell, J. Gray, S. LaWrence, III.,
 Nays: None
 Absent: L. Cook, J. Coleman, J. Sherman
 Abstain: None
 4 ayes, 0 nays, 3 absent, 0 abstain, 0 present – motion carried.



Mrs. Ester Viverette, President



Ms. Jessica Gray, Secretary
Mr. Samuel J. LaWrence, III.
Secretary, Pro-Tempore