



**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

J.B Pritzker
Governor

**Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice School District #428
Board of Education Meeting Minutes
Minutes -January 16th, 2026**

Robert D. Vickery
Acting Director

- CALL TO ORDER** 1.0 The regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by Acting Director, Robert Vickery on Friday, January 16th at 9:34 a.m. via Webex.
- ROLL CALL** 1.1 The following Board Members were present: President, Robert Vickery, Board Member Jennifer Vidis, Board Member Briana Morales, Board Member Kristian May Stewart and Board Member David Green.
- Others present: Tresa D. Dunbar, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Kimberly Kimbrough, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Dr. Bambi Bethel-Leitschuh, Assistant Superintendent of Extended Educational Services, Melissa Cory, Director of Special Education, Noah Boudreau, CTE
- CONSENT AGENDA** 2.0 As follows.
- APPROVAL OF AGENDA** 2.1 Quorum was confirmed. Board Member Kristian May Stewart motioned for approval of agenda. Board Member Jennifer Vidis second the motion. Motioned passed.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2025 MEETING** 2.2 Quorum was confirmed. Board Member David Green motioned for approval. Board Member Briana Morales second the motion. Motion passed.
- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** 3.0
- PRESIDENT'S REPORT** 4.0 Dr. Bethel will provide an update on the progress of the Extended Educational Services offered to individuals within the Department of Corrections and highlight any recent developments, challenges, or improvements in program delivery.
- Monarch Youth Center is now fully operational, currently serving twelve young people. While the school is not yet fully staffed, classes are underway.

After nearly two years away, the staff of Maya Angelou High School will soon return to their Warrenville campus. Building repairs are close to completion, paving the way for their move back.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S
REPORT**

5.0 As follows.

**SCHOOL
DISTRICT #428**

***2026 Professional Development
Annual Retreat***

DR. TRESA D. DUNBAR

5.1 The IDJJ School District #428 Annual Professional Development Retreat will take place from April 29, 2026 through May 1, 2026. This retreat serves as a districtwide training opportunity, with this year's focus centered heavily on instructional practices and Special Education. It provides a dedicated space for staff to come together, build connections, reaffirm standards and expectations, and strengthen the district's existing structures of excellence. The retreat will also support collaborative planning around goals, objectives, and actionable steps that will guide the district's work moving forward.

An invitation has been extended to the Board of Education, and their participation is strongly encouraged so they can share in the experience and deepen their connection with the district.

**SCHOOL
DISTRICT #428**

Human Resources Update

DR. TRESA D. DUNBAR

5.2 The district has received approval to post positions for a Registrar, Literacy Specialist, and Behavioral Interventionist, and the Northern Region Literacy Interventionist Administrator has already begun their work.

By June, the district expects to be fully staffed with educators who will provide direct student support. Increasing permanent instructional staff will also reduce the district's reliance on substitutes, who have played a key role in sustaining approximately 80% attendance.

The overarching goal of the Literacy Specialist is to strengthen instructional capacity across the district. Previously, much of the instructional model relied on Connexus, but the district is now shifting toward direct instruction, formerly referred to as blended learning. This transition emphasizes more active, teacher-led engagement and consistent academic support. The Literacy Specialist will play a central role in this shift by helping educators deepen their content knowledge, enhance instructional practices, and maintain effective progress monitoring for youth.

**ASST. SUPERINTENDENT 6.0
UPDATE**

***IDJJ SD#428 Spotlight Newsletter
Language Live Updates***

**DR. KIMBERLY
KIMBROUGH**

The 2025–2026 IDJJ School District *Spotlight Newsletter* was presented to the Board. This publication is shared districtwide to help keep staff informed and connected. It features celebrations, key dates, and updates on activities taking place across the schools.

Language Live is a research-based literacy program designed to support students who are learning to read. The program has been relaunched at Thurgood Marshall and Maya Angelou, and educators across the district now have students actively enrolled.

**ASST. SUPERINTENDENT 6.1
UPDATE**

***Extended Educational Services
Program Annual Report 2025***

**DR. BAMBI BETHEL-
LEITSCHUH**

The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) School District #428 Extended Services High School Program began identifying eligible individuals in custody between the ages of 18-21 for a high school diploma. There were two pilot facilities, IL River and Shawnee Correctional Center.

The High School Diploma Program (HSDP) is a partnership between IDJJ and Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide eligible individuals in custody with opportunity to earn a high school diploma from SD#428 as an adult with DOC. The program is voluntary. It is on state statutes whereby IDJJ SD#428 is responsible to support individuals both general education and special education through their time with DOC if they are 18 through 22 years of age. Individuals who were found during their high school year to have a disability and individuals who were close to graduation were offered an extension of the academic credit recovery program.

An organizational chart was shared to outline the teaching and non-teaching staff who support the program. This clarified roles, reporting lines, and how instructional, compliance, and operational responsibilities are distributed across the team. The program operates under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Tresa Dunbar as part of School District #428.

Several positions are still pending posting and hire. A registrar and an Educational Technology Coordinator are expected to be in place by March 2026, strengthening the program's capacity for enrollment management, data systems, and instructional technology.

As the program expands, several challenges have emerged such as classroom enrollment, technology, staffing and classroom procedure between IDJJ and DOC. To address these issues, ongoing meetings are held with DOC leadership, facility administrators, legal teams, and procurement. This coordination is essential to ensure that instructional environments, compliance requirements, and resource needs are consistently met across facilities.

The High School Diploma Program (HSDP) currently serves 176 students, of whom 87 have active IEPs, reflecting a substantial population requiring specialized support. To date, seven students have successfully graduated, demonstrating early progress and the program's potential impact.

**DIRECTOR OF
SPECIAL
EDUCATION**

6.2

*Review of Special Education Data
IL Transition Conference
High School Diploma Program-
Special Education Process*

MRS. MELISSA CORY

The Special Education population has grown compared to last year, and the number of students with specific learning disabilities continues to rise. Bringing Literacy Specialists on board now aligns well with these increasing needs. Many outdated IEPs are being revised, and more students are on track to graduate with a high school diploma. A significant number of youths arrived already out of compliance, and some have since fallen out of compliance due to staffing shortages. Despite these challenges, the dedication and hard work of the Special Education staff are clearly recognized and appreciated.

In October, the Special Education team attended the Illinois Transition Conference, where they received professional development focused on transition planning, IEP development, and job-readiness skills. This training has contributed to stronger, more comprehensive support for students.

With appropriate staffing now in place, IEPs have been brought up to date, and students have been successfully enrolled in the high school program at the Department of Corrections. Ongoing meetings ensure that goals are set thoughtfully and that each student's educational needs are addressed with care and consistency.

DIRECTOR OF CTE

7.0

*CTE/Vocational Education
Program Updates January 2026*

The Nova Driving Program is scheduled to resume in February across the northern facilities, expanding hands-on skill development for participating youth. A new SimLog unit will also be purchased, allowing the simulation-based training program to operate at Warrenville, Harrisburg, and PEACE in St. Charles.

Victory XR headsets have been purchased. The program will be implemented at Warrenville, Pere Marquette, Monarch, and PEACE in St. Charles. These additions broaden access to immersive instructional tools that support both academic and vocational learning.

CORE Learning Exchange will continue at Chicago and PEACE, with surveys available for students to indicate interest and be placed in the appropriate program. This helps ensure that enrollment aligns with student goals and readiness.

Greater West Town will resume operations at Chicago and expand to PEACE in St. Charles, increasing opportunities for youth to engage in workforce-aligned training.

**BOARD DISCUSSION
ITEMS**

8.0

None

ADJOURNMENT

9.0

A motion to adjourn was made by Board Member David Green. Board Member Kristian May Stewart then followed with a second motion. The motion passed. No Objections. President Vickery concluded the meeting at 10:42a.m.