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Board Business Meeting

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Agency: [Cleveland Metropolitan School District](#)

Date: Jan. 28, 2025

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Summary

- The board approved funding for Second Step, an initiative for social and emotional development.
- More than \$6 million was authorized for transportation services.
- Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) is gearing up for [long-term facilities planning](#).

Follow-Up Questions

- Why does the calendar for the upcoming school year (2025-2026) take until May to come out?
- What is coming in this long-term planning?

Notes

At 6:41 p.m., Board Chair Sara Elaquad called the session to order. Eight [members](#) were present during the roll call. Diana Welch Howell was absent.

The board stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and approved the minutes from their last meeting.

Elaquad introduced Warren Morgan for the CEO update.

Morgan said, "2025 is moving fast in a lot of the work that we're doing."

January is school board appreciation month. The district shared a token of their appreciation with the board last week. He has certificates from the state school board association to recognize the school board members' dedication to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

Morgan shared his gratitude and respect for all the school board members. "They lead

our district," he said, initiating a round of applause.

This semester is a very busy time for the district. They are tracking progress toward their goals. Morgan mentioned that they will soon have an update about winter testing.

"We're proud of the progress that we made, but we have a lot of work to do," he said.

The state has new college and career-ready measures that will be a part of their report card for the first time this year.

"Our work remains focused on every kid, every scholar, every school, every neighborhood," Morgan said. The district is working toward ensuring excellence and gearing up to do long-term planning. "This is a very important process," Morgan mentioned.

He added that they are looking to include community voices in the process. Morgan concluded his update by saying he looks forward to sharing what he's learned and hearing input from the community.

Elaqad next introduced the public comment period, saying the period would last no longer than 40 minutes. All participants had to sign up through an online request form and had three minutes to speak.

Elaqad introduced Samuel White, Angela Panzarelli and Monique Kinsey, but none of them was present.

Andrea Dockery-Murray was the first speaker present. She is a visual arts teacher at John Adams College and Career Academy. "I posed the question in October about the status of year-round schools," Dockery-Murray said. She mentioned that they would like the 2025-2026 school calendar to be released "sooner rather than later" so they can make necessary adjustments and modifications. She asked that the board present the 2025-2026 school calendar before May. "Many of us want to get our minds together," Dockery-Murray said.

She emphasized the importance of planning ahead due to the dwindling number of educators and substitutes that can pick up the slack of absent teachers.

"Having a calendar in front of us really will give us the opportunity to plan our summers and the upcoming school year. I would like to attend a family reunion or maybe a wedding of a particular cousin, but now I'm torn because I don't know what to do," she continued.

Next, Melissa Mertel introduced herself as a 9th and 10th grade English language arts teacher from John Adams College and Career Academy. Mertel spoke about the potential of offering more vocational education programs in the district. Mertel said that when she graduated from high school, there was a big push to go to college, but she noted the growing difficulty of finding good plumbers and mechanics. Mertel said there should be more vocational education opportunities.

Mertel pointed out that the district doesn't have opportunities in cosmetology. "I have students who have their own business cards, who do hair and makeup out of their house," Mertel said. It would be nice if the district had programs that prepared students for the state cosmetology board exam. Mertel said CMSD is losing students to other districts with these programs.

Mertel also explained that if students choose to go to cosmetology school after high school, "these run \$16,000 to \$20,000 a year," not including supply fees. If the district provided these programs, it would alleviate the cost of getting licensed.

Mertel also advocated for more transition-to-work programs for special needs students, "especially our severe intellectually disabled student population." Mertel mentioned that these students are put in elective classes when they should gain skills to prepare them for life after high school.

Elaqad ended the public participation period and said they would be moving on to consider 10 resolutions on the [agenda](#) in the categories of Board of Education, finance, operations, and equity and culture. Elaqad said all but two of the resolutions were discussed at the Jan. 14 work session.

Resolution 6.01 appoints Elaqad and Board Member Midori Lebrón to the Ohio School Board Association's Board of Trustees. Elaqad will serve until Feb. 28 and Lebrón will serve from March 1 until Dec. 31. Elaqad mentioned that the resolution clarifies that the expenses of their participation will be reimbursed by the Ohio School Board Association. The motion to adopt the resolution passed with eight votes.

Resolution 6.02 formally authorizes the CEO to implement long-term facilities planning with the following principles: centering students in decision-making, embracing data, driving toward equity, engaging with the community, learning from history, acting courageously, and supporting students and staff through the change.

Morgan thanked the board for their direction in long-term planning and said he looks forward to engaging with the community. Elaqad thanked Morgan and the board for their

work. The motion to adopt the resolution passed with eight votes.

Resolution 7.01 accepts grants from the Cleveland Foundation, Cleveland School of The Arts Board of Trustees, Cuyahoga County, Families First Health Services LLC, Marilyn Shea-Stonum and Gary Stonum, Step By Step Family Services LLC, the George W. Codrington Charitable Foundation, and the Chef Ann Foundation. The resolution also authorizes the CEO to spend the funds following the conditions of the grants. The motion to adopt the resolution passed with eight votes.

Next, the board considered Resolutions 8.01 and 8.02 together. 8.01 authorizes up to \$240,000 to complete construction at the Lake Center fueling depot. According to Morgan, the district operates two fueling sites, one on East 49th Street and one at Lake Center. In 2022, the board authorized \$1 million to improve the depots. That funding fell short of what was needed to ensure both sites can fully operate.

8.02 amends a previous resolution that authorized contracts with transportation services for students attending non-public charter, community, and non-public schools and cab and van suppliers transporting special education students, foster students and homeless students. The additional amount is not to exceed about \$6.85 million.

Morgan said more than \$3 million is needed to pay the transportation companies to complete the 2024-2025 school year. Due to a driver shortage, CMSD had to realign bus routes. Another \$3 million is needed to pay for increased cab and van obligations.

The motion to adopt 8.01 and 8.02 passed with eight votes.

Next, the board considered Resolutions 9.01, 9.02, 9.03, 9.04, and 9.05 together. Morgan said these are routine monthly talent and equity resolutions. 9.01 authorizes 81 new hires. 9.02 authorizes the reclassification of 50 employees. 9.03 accepts 53 retirements, resignations and separations with employees. 9.04 authorizes additional compensation for 123 employees. Morgan mentioned that additional information is attached to these resolutions on the [agenda](#).

9.05 authorizes the purchase of licenses and materials for Second Step, not exceeding \$165,528.

According to Morgan, Second Step is an initiative to implement an "evidence-based classroom program designed to facilitate youth social and emotional development." The goal is to guide students through self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making. The middle school program also included bullying prevention. Morgan also mentioned that they are working with the

Cleveland Teachers Union on implementation.

The board passed the motion to adopt all five resolutions with eight votes.

With no old business, Elaqad announced the next regular board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 6:30 p.m. at Garrett Morgan High School.

The board then moved into the [executive session](#), which lasted about an hour.

After returning, the board adopted a resolution to terminate a teaching employee for violating district rules.

Next, they adopted a resolution to adopt the CEO's 2024-2025 school year goals. According to Elaqad, the board uses the goals to evaluate the CEO's performance. The goals include, by summer 2025, at least 65% of classrooms are implementing the new high-quality English language arts curriculum, at least 1% growth in student proficiency, submit a long-term plan for CMSD that will go into effect for the 2026-2027 school year, improve the rate of 9th grade students on track to graduation by at least 1%, the executive leadership team complete all high impact tasks, and average student attendance will increase by at least 0.5%.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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