MEETING MINUTES OF
THE GOVERNING BOARD OF
WEST40 INTERMEDIATE SERVICE CENTER #2

The West40 ISC #2 Governing Board Meeting was held on Friday, August 15, 2025 at 8:00 a.m., at 415 Lexington Street, Maywood, IL 60153. Board President Dr. Kelsall called the meeting into order at 8:01 a.m.

I. Present: Dr. Jennifer Kelsall, Dr. Ed Condon, Dr. Kirstin Kopta, Dr. Leah Gauthier, and Ms. Kylie Lindquist

Present After Roll Call: Ms. Dana Wesolowski

Not Present: Dr. Aldo Calderin, Ms. Mary Rita Moore, Ms. Elieen Piper-Simpson, and Ms. Kathleen Tomei

President Kelsall declared a quorum for the West40 ISC #2 Governing Board meeting at 8:02 a.m.

Also present: Ms. Heidi Bellm, Mr. Stuart Brown, Dr. Paula DiDomenico, Ms. Lezlie Fuhr, Lefvia T. Marrero, Dr. Jayme Tighe, and Ms. Christi Tyler

Present Via Zoom: Dr. Mark Klaisner

II. Approval of Election of Officer:
At the request of Dr. Mark Klaisner, the Board confirmed that its three current officers will continue in their positions for the upcoming school year.

On call of the roll, the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Dr. Jennifer Kelsall, Dr. Ed Condon, Dr. Kirstin Kopta, Dr. Leah Gauthier and Ms. Kylie Lindquist

Nays: None The motion carried without dissent.

Dr. Klaisner announced that Mr. Stuart Brown has stepped down from the Board after his years of committed service. He has accepted the position of Coordinator of Global Connections at West40 working alongside Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) to advance education with a global impact.

III. Approval of Dr. Paula DiDomenico:
A motion was made by Ms. Kyle Linquist and seconded by Dr. Leah Gautier to approve the appointment of Dr. Paula DiDomenico as a member of the West40 ISC #2 Governing Board.

On call of the roll, the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Dr. Jennifer Kelsall, Dr. Ed Condon, Dr. Kirstin Kopta, Dr. Leah Gauthier and Ms. Kylie Lindquist

Nays: None The motion carried without dissent.

Dr. Paula DeDominico was appointed to fill Mr. Brown's position on the Board. She brings extensive experience in education as a teacher, instructional coach, adjunct professor, and school board member.

IV. Approval of May 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes: It was moved by Dr. Ed Condon and seconded by Dr. Leah Gautier that the West40 ISC#2 Governing Board approves the minutes as presented.

On call of the roll, the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Dr. Jennifer Kelsall, Dr. Ed Condon, Dr. Kirstin Kopta, Dr. Paula DiDomenico, Dr. Leah Gauthier and Ms. Kylie Lindquist

Nays: None The motion carried without dissent.

V. Presentations:
Financial Report: Ms. Christi Tyler
Ms. Tyler reported that the final FY25 revenue and expense spreadsheet, along with the initial FY26 projections, had been shared with the Board. It was noted that FY25 ended in June with a balance of just over $4.6 million, which falls below the three-month reserve target. However, without the $9.8 million debt certificate repayment in FY25, reserves would have exceeded the target by $7.6 million.

For FY26, highlights include a $5.75 million increase in Evidence-Based Funding to serve 691 additional students, a $340,000 Afterschool Program Grant, a $675,000 Cook County Behavioral Health Grant, and a $2.0 million School-Based Mental Health Grant that sunsets December 31, 2025. Additional revenue includes $2.5 million in professional support to districts.

On the expenditure side, Ms. Tyler reported that employee salaries are projected to increase by $3.5 million due to salary adjustments and service expansion, and employee benefits are estimated to rise by $550,000 due to plan changes and additional staff. The Level of Care Grant reflects a reduction of $4.0 million.

Overall, the projected ending fund balance for FY26 is $8.0 million, which represents approximately 3.85 months of operating expenses. The beginning revenue and expenditure report for FY26 was also provided and will be updated at each Board meeting to reflect current actual amounts.

Assistant Executive Director Report: Dr. Jayme Tighe
Strategic Planning
Dr. Tighe provided an overview of West40's Five-Year Strategic Plan, noting that the organization is currently in the fifth year of implementation. Cabinet members will collaborate with leaders on 17 identified goals and commitments for the year. Key areas of focus include continued collaboration with statewide partners, board policy work led by Dr. Popp, and the CES/STAT team's finalization of the Emergency Operations Plan. Additional initiatives involve exploring the use of AI both internally and in partnership with schools and districts, as well as conducting an internal needs assessment in collaboration with the Communications, Grants, Professional Learning, and Innovation teams to address department-specific needs. Programming at St. Joseph's continues under the leadership of Lezllie Fuhr, and opportunities to expand ALOP capacity to serve additional students will be explored. Finally, efforts will be made to refine onboarding processes to ensure the success of the student advocates.

At the same time that Year Five actions are being implemented, West40 will also be working on the next iteration of the strategic plan to ensure the next fiscal year begins with a fully enacted plan for Years Six through Ten. Data will be collected, analyzed, and synthesized from students, staff surveys, and external evaluators such as AESA and Goshen. In September, the Cabinet will review data reports from five focus groups—Cabinet, Governing Board, Student Advocates, Regional Safe School, and the Main Office—to celebrate what has gone well over the past four years and to explore priorities for the future. Findings and themes will be developed from the data collected through the focus groups to ensure a completed strategic plan is in place by the end of the year.

Dr. Tighe concluded her report and facilitated the Governing Board focus group, which was conducted following the adjournment of the meeting at 8:25 a.m.

West40 Leadership Development: LEAD Program

The LEAD program will be led by Dr. Tighe and Dr. Sonya Spaulding. Ms. Renee Makris, Senior Director of Student Programs and Ms. Gina Sierra, Administrator Academy presenter, together will monitor and evaluate each track of the program.

Executive Director Report: Dr. Mark Klaisner

Dr. Klaisner recognized Mr. Brown for his outstanding service as a board member. He shared that Mr. Brown consistently engages with reports, asks thoughtful follow-up questions, and brings enthusiasm to the work. He also emphasized the unique value in having Mr. Brown—an experienced educator—join from another area while continuing to contribute meaningfully to West40's initiatives. Mr. Brown has taken a lead role in supporting global partnerships, including hosting dignitaries from Korea in collaboration with Ms. Heidi Bellm, as part of follow-up work from the spring trip. The event was highly successful, despite Mr. Brown being only a few days into his role at the time. Dr. Klaisner also noted that Mr. Brown has also begun working with the AESA Global group, the national organization that connects offices like West40 across the country and is expanding into global education efforts. West40 is the first office to commit to this work, and AESA leadership has expressed excitement about the partnership and Mr. Brown's role in helping establish global opportunities for educators, students, and communities. Dr. Klaisner shared his strong confidence in Mr. Brown's leadership and presented him with a token of appreciation for his service on the board, recognizing his unwavering commitment.

Mr. Brown responded with gratitude, noting how meaningful the opportunity is to serve on this board, which he described as distinctly different and deeply rewarding. He reflected on the importance of global connections, especially in today's climate, and shared his excitement to help lead these efforts with West40. He thanked the board for their support and encouragement.

Dr. Klaisner concluded by sharing that board members should have received a copy of the annual report, which by statute is required to be provided around October 1. Although it has not yet been widely distributed, the report was prepared by Ms. Bellm and her team to provide a comprehensive update on West40's work. Dr. Klaisner noted it will be shared with superintendents on September 3 and then more broadly used to highlight the organization's progress and impact. He closed by thanking the board for their engagement and invited any additional comments or questions.

VI. Public Comment:

Ms. Heidi Bellm thanked the Board for their ongoing support.

VII. Adjourned: Member Dr. Kristen Kopta moved, seconded by Ms. Dana Wesolowaski. Be it resolved, the West40 ISC# 2 Governing Board hereby adjourned at 8:25 a.m.

The next West40 Governing Board Meeting will be held on Friday, October 17, 2025, at 8:00 a.m., at 415 Lexington Street, Maywood, IL 60153.