



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

The West40 ISC #2 Governing Board Meeting was held on Friday, December 12, 2025 at 8:00 a.m., at 415 Lexington Street, Maywood, IL 60153. Board President Dr. Kelsall called the meeting into order at 8:02 a.m.

I. Present: Dr. Jennifer Kelsall, Dr. Ed Condon, Dr. Kirstin Kopta, Dr. Paula DiDomenico, Dr. Leah Gautier, Ms. Mary Rita Moore, and Ms. Kathleen Tomei

Present After Roll Call: Dr. Aldo Calderin and Ms. Dana Wesolowaski

Not Present: Ms. Kylie Lindquist and Ms. Eileen Piper-Simpson

President Kelsall declared a quorum for the West40 ISC #2 Governing Board meeting at 8:03 a.m.

Also present: Katie Elvige, Lezlie Fuhr, Joe Gage, Dr. Mark Klaisner, Rene Makris, Lefvia T. Marrero, Christi Tyler and Cara Wiley

II. Approval of October 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes: It was moved by Dr. Kristin Kopta and seconded by Ms. Mary Rita Moore 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 Gautier, Ms. Mary Rita Moore, and Ms. Kathleen Tomei

III. Presentations:

Grants Team Report – Ms. Cara Wiley, Director and Ms. Katie Elvidge, Associate Director

The Grants Team provided an overview of its structure, values, and scope of work, including grant writing and consulting, program implementation, compliance, and post-award management in support of West40's mission.

Since October 2022, the team has secured \$30.2 million through competitive grants and IGAs, including \$809,000 in Area 1 McKinney-Vento funding (three-year award), and manages \$1.6 million annually in formula funding.

Grant-funded initiatives have expanded services across West40 and the state, including:

- 49,000+ students receiving access to mental health screening
- 14,457 students directly served through after-school, school-based mental health, and behavioral health grants
- 3,654 individuals supported through grant-funded professional development and training

Staffing impacts include 12 new school support personnel in districts and 39 West40 staff positions funded through grants, totaling \$2.85 million in salary support

The team established 95 grant partnerships, served 38 West40 entities and 56 additional districts statewide, partnered with 6 higher education institutions, and supported 12 early childhood programs

For FY26, the team has supported 8 competitive grant submissions. Pending awards could generate approximately \$3 million annually to support behavioral health, school safety, and out-of-school-time programming

The team reported that the funding landscape is becoming more competitive, with increased emphasis on data-driven decision-making, sustainability, compliance, AI, and digital transformation, and outlined plans to expand district support through targeted trainings and resources

Financial Report: Ms. Christi Tyler

- Updated financials through November 2025 were reviewed. The fund balance continues to grow, reflecting a strong overall financial position.
- A notable increase in expenses was reported, driven by reimbursable costs associated with the School-Based Mental Health (SBMH) grant. This increase was offset by a corresponding rise in revenue, including \$760,000 in SBMH reimbursements for October, resulting in no adverse impact.
- To strengthen investment earnings, \$4 million has been transferred to the PTMA account to take advantage of higher interest rates.
- Open enrollment for health benefits recently concluded. Medical insurance costs increased by 39% following plan review and negotiations. Brokers indicated this is likely

a reset year with expectations of stabilization next year.

- To mitigate future cost increases, the organization is exploring additional options, including potential participation in a health benefits cooperative.
- Workforce demographics were briefly noted, with many employees in advocate roles being relatively young, which may be a factor in recruitment, retention, and benefits planning. Further review of this area was identified as a future consideration.

Executive Director Report: Dr. Mark Klaisner

- Updates were provided on statewide systems of support and accountability, including preparation for Illinois' proposed new designation model. Work is underway to help districts understand how new accountability measures may impact them, with a statewide focus on continuous improvement for *all* districts, not only those identified as struggling.
- West40 is playing a leadership role statewide by supporting communities of practice, developing tools and resources for school improvement, and contributing to succession planning and leadership development efforts across ROEs.
- L.E.A.D. a three-tier leadership development framework is being implemented to support:
 - Staff leading from their current roles
 - Emerging leaders exploring career pathways
 - First-year leadersThis work supports internal succession planning and long-term organizational sustainability.
- Additional leadership development efforts are expanding to advanced leadership competencies, including cabinet-level and executive leadership preparation.
- Global education initiatives are expanding rapidly, with five international trips planned this spring involving students, staff, and board members. The initiative emphasizes global learning, cultural exchange, and innovation, with plans to grow virtual and in-person opportunities in future years. These efforts are designed to break even financially while advancing West40's entrepreneurial goals.
- A new intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the Will County ROE was announced, positioning West40 to provide staff expertise and services to districts related to school safety through ROE/ISC partnerships.
- The second ALOP Summit has been announced following strong participation and feedback from the inaugural event.
- West40 has developed a new data application to support ALOPs, with plans to share it more broadly across the state and nationally to improve data use and program effectiveness.

- West40 continues to explore artificial intelligence (AI) applications to support districts, aligned with emerging federal priorities and recent national policy developments.
- West40 was featured in a newly released national publication, *STEM Century: It Takes a Village to Raise a 21st Century Graduate*, with a dedicated chapter highlighting the West40 STEM approach. The book has already achieved bestseller status in multiple categories.
- Board discussion included interest in potentially expanding leadership development opportunities to district leaders, reinforcing West40's role in building regional and statewide leadership capacity.

IV. Public Comment

No one chose to speak.

V. Adjourned:

Member Ms. Kathleen Tomei moved, seconded by Dr. Ed Condon. Be it resolved, the West40 ISC# 2 Governing Board hereby adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

The next West40 Governing Board Meeting will be held on Friday, January 16, 2026, at 8:00 a.m., at 415 Lexington Street, Maywood, IL 60153.