



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

The West40 ISC #2 Governing Board Meeting was held on Friday, September 19, 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, Ms. Kylie Lindquist and Ms. Mary Rita Moore

Present After Roll Call: Dr. Leah Gautier and Ms. Dana Wesolowski

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

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

Also present: Ms. Suzy Dees, Mr. Mike Czerniawski, Ms. Lezlie Fuhr, Ms. Lefvia T. Marrero, Dr. Sonya Spaulding, Dr. Jayme Tighe, and Ms. Christi Tyler

II. Approval of August 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes: It was moved by Dr. Kopta and seconded by Ms. Lindquist 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, Ms. Kylie Lindquist and Ms. Mary Rita Moore

Nays: None The motion carried without dissent.

III. Presentations:

Professional Learning Team - Ms. Suzy Dees, Mr. Mike Czerniawski, and Dr. Sonya Spaulding
The Professional Learning Team provided an overview of their recent work and upcoming priorities. The team highlighted how they utilize the *Learning Forward Standards* framework, emphasizing its continued role in guiding practice and ensuring that educator learning leads to

improved student outcomes. Using this approach, they support the adults in our systems in their beliefs, behavior,s and ways of being, which ultimately result in improved student outcomes.

Service Highlights (2024–2025)

The team reported strong engagement across the region during the past year, noting that 21,764 educators were trained, 63 administrator academies were held, and 1,979 events were facilitated. The team also demonstrated steady growth in district engagement across the West40 region, with data showing progress toward full participation by 2024–2025.

Regional and Statewide Reach

Beyond the immediate region, the Professional Learning Team supported initiatives across Area 1 counties—including Chicago Public Schools, DuPage, Lake, North Cook, South Cook, and Will counties. At the statewide level, West40 staff contributed to PEAC, the Educator Pipeline Group, and the Statewide Framework for Success, further expanding the organization’s influence.

Programs and Supports (2025–2026)

The team outlined professional learning opportunities planned for the current year, including:

- **Leadership Supports** such as the IPA School Leaders Paradigm, executive coaching, and continuous improvement structures.
- **Teacher Workshops** covering Danielson 2022, educator wellbeing, literacy and STEM content, early childhood compliance, and trauma-informed practices.
- **Paraprofessional Empowerment** sessions addressing communication tools, chronic absenteeism, de-escalation, and best practices.
- **Mentoring & Induction** strategies to strengthen teacher pipelines through mentor development, district-aligned frameworks, and the West40 Mentor Network.
- **Custom Coaching** options, including instructional coaching, co-teaching initiatives for ELL and SpEd, and support for classroom ecology, AI matrices, and school-based mental health screeners.

The presentation concluded with a call to continue fostering strong relationships and encouraging educators to access West40 support. The team expressed appreciation for the opportunity to “walk alongside” districts in supporting students and staff.

Board member, Ms. Lindquist thanked the Professional Learning Team and shared her appreciation for the partnership, particularly with Dr. Sonya Spalding and Dr. Julie Morris. She reflected that the PL team has become a true part of her school team, recalling earlier days when collaboration felt limited. Ms. Lindquist highlighted how Dr. Morris and Dr. Spaulding invested time to understand their staff, fit seamlessly into their culture, and provided

customized support. She also expressed gratitude for the team's presence in school buildings, noting the value of their direct engagement with staff and the meaningful impact on school improvement efforts.

Financial Report: Ms. Christi Tyler

The Board received the updated financial statements through August 2025. Revenues now reflect the first Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) payments for FY26, with the recent \$5.75 increase providing an additional \$261,197 each month.

On the expenditure side, August included the first payments for completed summer projects, such as the new parking lot, fencing, and first-level interior doors. A portion of these costs was offset by the School Maintenance Grant. August also marked the beginning of full salary and benefits expenses for all staff.

Ms. Tyler noted that revenues and expenditures are tracking as expected for this stage of the fiscal year and expressed readiness to address any board questions regarding the district's financial position.

Assistant Executive Director Report: Dr. Jayme Tighe

Community Support & Staff Wellbeing

Dr. Tighe began by addressing recent tragic and challenging events affecting local communities, including a fatal domestic violence incident within one of our own school districts. In addition, the visible presence of ICE in the area has created heightened fear and anxiety among students, families, and staff. She emphasized West40's continued commitment to prioritizing safety, well-being, and trauma-informed support for all those impacted. Advocates and coordinators are actively collaborating with districts to provide wraparound services, resources, and crisis support, while leadership is focused on ensuring that staff also have access to mental health resources and ongoing safety support during this difficult time.

Report on Behalf of Dr. Mark Klaisner

Dr. Tighe presented the Executive Report in Dr. Mark Klaisner's absence due to his participation in the AESA Leadership Advocacy Days in Washington, D.C.

Legislative & Advocacy Updates

On behalf of Dr. Klaisner, Dr. Tighe shared updates from the AESA Leadership Advocacy Days. Dr. Klaisner met with Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin, as well as congressional staff and education officials, to discuss key issues including E-rate, Medicaid, McKinney-Vento, and Title funding. Plans are underway to host a legislative panel at West40 with participation from state and federal representatives.

New Initiatives & Program Expansion

Dr. Tighe highlighted several new initiatives and ongoing projects reported by Dr. Klaisner:

- **Embroidery Shop:** Now operational and in the future, providing internship opportunities for students in the Senior Plus program, focusing on career skills such as graphic design and business planning.
- **Data Center:** Development continues in partnership with a Texas education agency to provide affordable and secure data storage solutions.
- **Media Services:** Communications support is now available for districts, ranging from family communication strategies to referendum materials and video production.
- **Global Connections:** Plans are in place for a student trip to China in April, with most expenses covered by the host country.
- **Data App:** A new student support tracking system will begin pilot testing in early 2026, with statewide rollout planned for the fall.
- **AI Pilot:** A new AI-based instructional support platform is being piloted at Berwyn South, with future expansion anticipated.

Chicago Public Schools Collaboration

West40 remains committed to supporting Chicago Public Schools despite challenges related to funding freezes and communication delays with ISBE. Efforts are underway to rehire staff to fulfill obligations under an IGA, while continuing to provide support as a CPS-approved learning partner on a fee-for-service basis.

Student Programs & Services

Student programming continues to grow, including new services for grades K–3 and expanding enrollment. Work is ongoing to renew non-public school recognition contracts and enhance program evaluation through structured walkthroughs.

Strategic Planning

Dr. Tighe reported that West40 is in the fifth and final year of its current five-year strategic plan, which includes 13 active goals. Key priorities include:

- Developing new adequacy targets for alternative education programs to strengthen long-term funding.
- Exploring the integration of artificial intelligence into educational services.
- Collaborating with other school districts to expand the capacity of the Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP), focusing on increasing program availability and improving student access across the regions outside of West40.
- Launching development of the next strategic plan (2026–2031), with cabinet teams

analyzing seven key data sets. A draft will be presented in spring 2026 for board approval.

West40 Connect

The new *West40 Connect* initiative launched on August 14 to strengthen internal communication and collaboration. Quarterly virtual meetings provide staff updates across departments, share organizational progress, and allow space for feedback and discussion.

LEAD Program

Dr. Tighe shared updates on the new *LEAD Program*, created in response to staff feedback requesting more professional growth opportunities. The program includes three development tracks:

1. **Aspiring Site Coordinator Mentorship Program:** For advocates seeking advancement into site coordinator or area director roles.
2. **Lead from Where You Are:** Open to all staff, focusing on communication, decision-making, and leadership skills.
3. **New Leaders:** Provides foundational training in evaluation, feedback, and leadership skills for new leaders.

Additional Updates

- **New Hires:** 34 new staff members joined West40 on August 21, with additional hiring ongoing.
- **Recognition:** Dr. Mike Popp received the *Friends of Education* award from the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS) for his statewide contributions to policy and student advocacy.
- **Conferences:** Upcoming events include Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) next week, the Joint Annual Conference (JAC) in November, and the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESAs) conference in December.

IV. Public Comment:

No one chose to speak.

V. Adjourned: Member Dr. Ed Condon moved, seconded by Ms. Dana Wesolowaski. Be it resolved, the West40 ISC# 2 Governing Board hereby adjourned at 8:52 a.m.

The next West40 Governing Board Meeting will be held on Friday, December 12, 2025, at 8:00 a.m., at 415 Lexington Street, Maywood, IL 60153.