

**ELLSWORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
School Library
Ellsworth, Minnesota
Monday, January 26, 2026
6:00 p.m.**

1. Call to order and roll call.
2. Approve meeting agenda.
3. Nominations for and election of chairperson (Following election the chairperson will conduct the remainder of the organization meeting)
4. Nominations for and election of vice chairperson
5. Nominations for and election of clerk/treasurer
6. Set day of week, and time of day for 2026 regular board meetings
7. Designate official newspaper to use for publication of legal notices and school board minutes (currently Nobles County Review) Action Item
8. Designate official bank to be used for depository of school district funds, checking and savings account, and investments (currently Security Savings Bank, Ellsworth Office) Action Item
9. Designate official legal counsel. (Currently Knutson, Flynn & Deans). Action Item.
10. Appoint standing committees. Action Item
 - a. Negotiations
 - b. Buildings & Grounds
 - c. Buses
 - d. Sports:
 - e. Education/Meet & Confer
 - f. Policy & Budget
 - g. MSHSL representative
 - h. MSBA legislative liaison
 - i. Safety Committee representative
 - j. Integration Collaborative representative
 - k. Staff Development representative

11. Set per diem allowances (currently \$45 for Chairman, \$40 for Directors per meeting, and \$25 per Director for each negotiations session) Action Item

12. Student Council

13. EPTO

14. Consent Agenda Consider/Approve

14.1 Minutes of regular board meeting on December 17, 2025.

14.2 Student Activity Fund

14.3 Treasurer's Report

14.4 Donations:

15. Administrative Reports

15.1 Principal

a. Student Count

b.

c.

15.2 Superintendent

a. School Board News

b.

16. Action Items:

16.1 Consider/approve monthly bills

16.2 School Building rental agreement

16.3 Weight room use agreement

16.4 MOU - Visas/Green Card

16.5 Sale of surplus equipment - 3D Printer

16.6 Personnel

a. Contract - Diane Lutmer - Paraprofessional

b. Contract - Melanie Harson - Teacher

17. Buildings & Grounds:

a.

b.

18. Adjournment

**ELLSWORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
School Library
Ellsworth, Minnesota
Wednesday, December 17, 2025**

The regular meeting was called to order by Chairperson Ryan Heikes at 6:00 p.m. A roll call revealed all members present.. The Board of Education opened the meeting by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Staff present: Amy Labat, Bill Strom, Darcey Groen, Craig Gaul, Jenni Gaul, & Lori Romans.

Visitors: None

A motion was made by Jenniges and seconded by Harms to approve the meeting agenda with one addition. Motion carried.

Lisa Lynn reported on these items for EPTO: Christmas Movie event - had a great turnout & gave \$300 to the giving tree.

A motion was made by Lynn and seconded by Jenniges to approve the Consent Agenda items:

- Minutes of the regular school board meeting on November 17, 2025.
- Student Activity Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Donations: \$40 from Barbara Engel, CAF America - \$1,000 grant for music, \$50 from City of Ellsworth for FACS week, \$25 from Colette Smythe for FACS week.

Motion carried.

Ms. Labat presented the following items: Thanksgiving project, activities for Friday before Christmas break, music concerts were great, & music groups performed at the nursing home.

Mr. Strom presented a written report and asked if the board had any questions.

Darcey Groen presented the bills. A motion was made by Jenniges and seconded by Lynn to approve the bills as presented. Motion carried.

Mr. Strom presented information on ESST/Sick days.

Mr. Strom presented a legal analysis of Employee Visa & Green Card Acquisition. A motion was made by Lynn and seconded by Lefdal that the School Board directs the Superintendent to work with the school attorney to create a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding repayment of immigration costs. That the MOU include for discussion purposes between the district and Ellsworth Education Association (EEA) the at least, but not limited to, the following:

- 1) A statement limiting the scope of who this applies to and what situations (J1 visas, H1B, Green Card (permanent resident)
- 2) A statement that the School District will work with TCI and the teacher to apply for the change in status.

- 3) The agreed-upon cost contribution of the School District and the teacher.
 - a) Up front payment by the district for costs (100% 75% 50%)
 - b) Payback provisions from the teacher to the school district
- 4) Any consequences the teacher, the School District, and the Union agree should occur should the teacher leave the School District's employment.
 - a) To provide a positive reference for an employee departing before the agreed-upon date,
 - b) Potential recovery of liquidated damages related to departing before the agreed-upon date
 - c) Provision that would allow it to recover a sum in small claims court if an employee resigns
 - d) Other related costs

5) A statement that the contents of the MOU should not be interpreted as a past practice.
A roll call vote was taken. The following voted in favor: Jenniges, Lynn, Lefdal, Lenz & Heikes.
The following voted against: Harms. Motion carried.

Darcey Groen presented a gym rental request submitted by Mike Lewis for January 1. A motion was made by Harms and seconded by Lefdal to approve the request as submitted. Motion carried.

Ms. Labat presented a resignation submitted by Madison Walters, Paraprofessional. A motion was made by Lenz and seconded by Jenniges to accept the resignation submitted. Motion carried.

Ms. Labat presented a contract with Emma Jacobsma as Paraprofessional. A motion was made by Lefdal and seconded by Lenz to approve the contract with Emma Jacobsma. Motion carried.

The following items were discussed for buildings & grounds: doors, water fountain by the gym, & HVAC system controls.

There being no further business Chairperson Ryan Heikes called for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Lefdal and seconded by Lenz to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellsworth District 514 School Board Clerk