

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE SUFFOLK CITY SCHOOL BOARD

Thursday, November 9, 2023 ~ 5:00 P.M.

Suffolk City Hall, 442 W. Washington Street, Suffolk, VA 23434

Board Members Present:

Tyron Riddick, *Chair*
Dr. Dawn Marie Brittingham
Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck
Phyllis Byrum
Karen Jenkins¹
Kimberly Slingluff

Attendance Via Electronic Device

Heather Howell, *Vice Chair*

Administrative Staff Present:

Dr. John B. Gordon III, *Superintendent*
Wendell M. Waller, *School Board Attorney*
Tarshia L. Gardner, *Clerk*
Keesha Johnson, *Deputy Clerk*

OPENING OF PUBLIC MEETING/WORK SESSION

➤ Call to Order:

Chair Riddick called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.²

➤ Motion for Meeting Attendance Via Electronic Device (Vice-Chair Heather Howell)

Attorney Waller read the following motion:

A motion is needed pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act found at Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.3, subsection B.4 to allow Vice-Chair Heather Howell to attend tonight's meeting of the School Board through electronic communication means due to a personal matter because she is attending a conference in Hendersonville, Tennessee and not able to be physically present at tonight's meeting of the School Board.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Dr. Brittingham seconded the motion to approve the electronic attendance of Vice-Chair Howell as read by Mr. Waller.

Upon electronic vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0 / Absent: 2 (Howell, Jenkins). The motion passed by vote of 5 to 0.³

➤ Gifted & Advanced Instruction Update

Dr. Maria Lawson-Davenport, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, provided highlights from the Gifted Program (general screening begins in 2nd grade to ensure that all students have access to gifted programs), Governor's School for the Arts (the number of students enrolled in this program exceeded the cap), and the International Baccalaureate program (seven out of 19 seniors were awarded an IB diploma). She also provided data from the Project Lead the Way Engineering (24 students) and Biomedical Sciences (20 students) programs. Students in

¹ Board Member Jenkins arrived at the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

² Due to technical difficulties, the meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m.

³ Vice-Chair Howell was not available to join the meeting until 7 p.m.

both programs continue to exceed expectations as reflected in the high pass rate for students. Dr. Davenport also highlighted the new Center for Performing and Production Arts. In its inaugural year, 34 students participated in the program. This number increased to 46 students for the 2023-2024 school year. She indicated that the Advanced Placement, and Dual Enrollment programs have expanded due to the increase in student success. Over the past year, 62% of students took the exam; 42% earned a 3 or higher (considered passing and earning college credits when transferring to a college). Several of our students also earned College Board Recognition of “AP Scholars with Honor” (students earned a score of 3.2 or higher on all AP exams and 3 or higher on four or more exams), and “AP Scholars” (students earned a score of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams), throughout their matriculation. Five students earned the distinction of AP Scholars with Honors, and 17 students earned AP Scholars. Dr. Lawson-Davenport expressed pride in the efforts being made to help support students in earning college credits. She also highlighted areas of focus for Advanced Placement, which included continued growth of advanced high school offerings, increased enrollment in college-level courses, equity in gifted services and advanced instruction, and professional development on equity and access from College Board for counselors for administrators, and new teachers. She also stated that six Lakeland High School students earned Academic Honors from the College Board’s National Recognition Program. They include the National African American Recognition Award (NAARA), National Hispanic Recognition Award (NHRA), and the National Rural and Small Town Award (NRSTA) for achieving a certain score on the PSAT, and conducting college searches. This recognition can also be added to a student’s college application.

Board Members asked questions and engaged in dialog. Dr. Lawson-Davenport was commended for her report.

➤ Secondary Course Proposals

Dr. Maria Lawson-Davenport, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, recommended the following courses be amended, by grade level, for the current school year: Data Science, Journalism II, Advanced Composition, Math Analysis, AP Precalculus, AP Statistics, Literacy Strategies for High School I & II, and Literacy Strategies for Middle School Students. She also recommended the following new courses: IB Global Politics, Academic Support, Photography I, Fashion Careers I (pending VDOE approval), Navy JROTC I, II, III, and IV. Dr. Lawson-Davenport shared that with the expansion of the CPPA program, the following courses are being recommended to be added to the catalog: Technology/Electronic Music III, Musical Theatre I, Recording and Production II, Guitar III, Composition and Songwriting, Drama-Stagecraft, Entertainment Design & Technology, and Piano Lab III.

Dr. Lawson-Davenport responded to questions from Board Members and provided additional information. Dr. Gordon also provided additional information regarding goals being met for increasing the number of students enrolling in and successfully completing our more advanced/challenging courses. He stated that our numbers are trending in the right direction.

MEETING RECESS

- There being no additional business in the Work Session, Board Chair Riddick recessed the meeting.

RE-OPENING OF PUBLIC MEETING

- Meeting Called to Order:
Board Chair Riddick called to order the regular public meeting.
- Pledge of Allegiance:
The Lakeland High School Chorus led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Moment of Silence:
A moment of silence was observed by all in attendance.
- Recital of SPS Mission:
Board Member Dr. Brittingham read the Mission Statement of Suffolk Public Schools.
- Musical Selection – Lakeland High School Chorus – Directed by Tiffany Carr:
Dr. Gordon introduced Ms. Tiffany Carr and the Lakeland High School Chorus. The chorus performed several musical selections.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Approval of Agenda:
Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve the agenda.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote (Vice-Chair Howell), the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion Passed by vote of 7 to 0.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS ON AGENDA TOPICS

- Citizen Comments on Agenda Items:
Due to the number of speakers registered to speak, Board Chair Riddick without objection adjusted the time from five (5) minutes to three (3) minutes for each speaker. He also asked that all literature/handouts for Board Members from citizens to be submitted to Deputy Clerk, Keesha Johnson, while the Board Clerk read the statement regarding decorum for registered speakers.

Thirteen registered speakers voiced support for or against the proposed transgender policy (Ordinance 23/24-14).

A citizen also expressed concern with information recorded in the minutes regarding statements made by the Board Chair at a previous meeting, and comments made by Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck.

A citizen also expressed the opinion that citizens were being ejected from meetings or met with disrespect by Board members.

A citizen was permitted to offer prayer for her public comments.

REPORTS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

➤ Good News Report:

Anthonette Dickens, Communications and Community Engagement Officer, highlighted the information contained in the Good News Report. Students Skylar Beckett (2nd grade at EFES), Zoe Booth (4th grade at OES), Kayla Booth (Pre-K at OES), and Laila Watkins (3rd grade at BTWES) were recognized for creatively taking a stance against bullying. They encouraged and empowered their peers to promote kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Dr. Joleen Neighbours, Coordinator of Fine and Performing Arts, was recognized for her accomplishment as being named by the Virginia Music Educators Association, Inc. (VMEA) as a “2023 Outstanding Administrator.”

➤ Calendar of Special Events:

Dr. Gordon highlighted the events listed on SPS website for November/December.

Dr. Gordon reminded all staff to rest during fall break, stay healthy and take care of yourselves as we are in the height of cold and flu season. He also recognized administrators who attended and supported Board Member Jenkins during the funeral services for her mother earlier in the day. Additionally, Dr. Gordon recognized Mrs. Jenkins for being instrumental in helping SPS to secure the TC Energy Grant mentioned in the Good News Report. Dr. Gordon also recognize students whose art work was featured on a couple of food trucks that were on display in the parking lot at the meeting. Students autographed their work on the trucks and posed for pictures before the meeting began.

CONSENT AGENDA

➤ Approval of the Consent Agenda:

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 2 (Dr Brittingham/Slingluff) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 5 to 2.

MEETING RECESS

➤ Board Chair Riddick recessed the meeting for 10 minutes.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

➤ Ordinance 23/24-14 – An Ordinance Amending Chapter 1, Article 6, Section 1-6.2:1 entitled "Definitions; Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Prohibited; Student Privacy and Confidentiality Required; Use of Name and Gender Pronouns; Legal Name and Sex at Birth Required on School Records; Dress and Grooming Codes; Segregating Students Prohibited; Access to Restrooms, Locker Rooms and Changing Facilities; Professional Development and Training; Superintendent to Develop Guidelines" (Transgender Policy) of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-14 as presented.

Board Member Slingluff indicated that her request for additional conversation during a Board work session was ignored. She also stated that based on conversations with constituents, who expressed their disagreement with various aspects of the proposed policy during Town Hall

meetings, she would not support the policy. She also urged fellow members to vote against the policy.

Board Chair Riddick indicated that Board Member Slingluff's comments regarding her request for a work session were inaccurate. He provided clarity regarding the process for adding items to the agenda, including polling the Board and the results of that poll. He indicated that her request was actually submitted too late as it should have been submitted when the item was presented for first reading. Therefore, the matter could possibly have been added to the agenda as a work session discussion at the Board's next meeting.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham expressed her disagreement with the proposed policy and indicated that the model policy should be adopted and the law followed.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck indicated that the law is determined by the courts, not the Governor and that the Board follows the law. Dr. Brooks-Buck explained that students who are uncomfortable using facilities will have the right to use other facilities, which is contrary to the false narrative that is being told. She also indicated that sufficient time has passed for adequate discussion of the policy as it has been a topic for months.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 4 / Nay: 3 (Vice-Chair Howell, Dr. Brittingham, Slingluff) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 4 to 3.

- Ordinance 23/24-15: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 1, Article 5, Section 1-5.9 entitled "Filing a Formal Complaint of Discrimination; Investigation; Action by Superintendent; Appeal" of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board

Board Chair Riddick asked the board if they would agree to take the remaining ordinances together or if they would like to take them separately.

Board Members Slingluff and Dr. Brittingham recommended addressing each ordinance separately.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-15 as presented.

Board Members Slingluff and Dr. Brittingham expressed their concern that there are inequities in the proposed policy. The policy changes will not give employees sufficient time to file a grievance. Timelines should be distributed equitably.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck stated that during the Policy Review Meeting, the question was asked how many days would be equitable and a set number of days were never recommended for the process. She indicated that either side had the same amount of days in the proposed policy. There were no inequities found with the proposed policy changes during policy review.

Additional discussion/questions ensued between Board Members. Board Chair Riddick provided clarity as to the process and the floor was open for a motion.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham moved and Board Member Slingluff seconded the motion to send Ordinance 23/24-15 back to the Policy Review Committee for amendments based on the conversation by members to produce a more robust policy.

Additional discussion was had by Board Members.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 4 / Nay: 3 (Dr. Brooks-Buck, Byrum, Riddick) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 4 to 3.

- Ordinance 23/24-16: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 1, Article 6, Section 1-6.12 entitled “Abusive work environments prohibited; retaliation against employees who make allegations also prohibited” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board
Board Member Slingluff moved and Board Member Dr. Brittingham seconded the motion to send Ordinance 23/24-16 back to the Policy Review Committee for revision of timelines and certified mail.

Discussion ensued between Board Members regarding information being sent via certified mail versus emails with read receipts.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 3 / Nay: 4 (Dr. Brooks-Buck, Byrum, Jenkins, Board Chair Riddick) / Abstain: 0. The motion failed by vote of 4 to 3.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-16 as written.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 2 (Dr. Brittingham, Vice Chair Howell) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 5 to 2.

- Ordinance 23/24-17: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 1, Article 8, Section 1-8.7 entitled “Comprehensive Plan Required” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board
Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-17 as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 1 (Dr. Brittingham) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 6 to 1.

- Ordinance 23/24-18: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 2, Section 2-2.1 entitled “Powers and duties generally” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board
Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-18 as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 1 (Dr. Brittingham) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 6 to 1.

- Ordinance 23/24-19: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 2, Section 2-2.7 entitled “School Board Standing Committees; Foundations; Special Committees” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board
Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-19 as presented.

Board Members Slingluff and Dr. Brittingham expressed their concern with the policy. They felt that the policy, as written, would promote overreach by the Board Chair.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 2 (Dr. Brittingham, Slingluff) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 5 to 2.

- Ordinance 23/24-20: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 4, Section 2-4.2 entitled “Meeting Participation by Electronic Communication and definitions; when allowed; Must Be Recorded in Minutes; Quorum Required; Limit on number of meetings for personal reasons; when State of Emergency declared by Governor” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-20 as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 7 to 0.

- Ordinance 23/24-22: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 8, Section 2-8.2 entitled “Late Appearances Defined; Notice Requirement” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-22 as presented.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham expressed her concern with the policy. She felt that the policy infringed on citizens First Amendment rights.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 4 / Nay: 3 (Dr. Brittingham, Slingluff, Howell) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 4 to 3.

- Ordinance 23/24-23: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 8, Section 2-8.3 entitled “Public Speakers Before the School Board” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-23 as presented.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham expressed her concern with the policy. She felt that the policy infringed on citizens First Amendment rights. She does not agree with the decorum statement read before speakers can speak. She felt that speakers should be allowed to say whatever they wish.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck disagreed with the Board Member Dr. Brittingham’s concern. She indicated that School Board meetings are business meetings and should be conducted with decorum and civility in order to accomplish the business of the board.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 1 (Dr. Brittingham) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 6 to 1.

- Ordinance 23/24-24: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 9, Section 2-9.2 entitled “Definitions” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-24 as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 7 to 0.

- Ordinance 23/24-25: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 9, Section 2-9.3 entitled “Special Nepotism Rules regarding School Board Members and Superintendent; Limited Exception; Substitute Teacher Employment; Direct Supervisory and/or Administrative Relationship Prohibited” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board
Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-25 as presented.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham expressed her concern with the policy. She felt that the policy presented the possibility of a conflict of interest.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 2 (Dr. Brittingham, Slingluff) / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 5 to 2.

NEW BUSINESS

- Appropriation Increase #1 2023-2024
Mrs. Forsman, Chief Financial Officer, presented information on the budget. She explained the current adopted budget versus the appropriation increase needed due to the approval of the General Assembly’s finalized budget.

Board Member Byrum moved and Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck seconded the motion to approve the Appropriation Increase #1 2023-2024 as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 7 to 0.

- Citizen Advisory Committee Members Update
Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve the Citizen Advisory Committee Members Update as presented. [Title I Parent Advisory Committee: Samantha LeGrand (replacing Vernecia Fentress) and Candace Taylor-Tysinger (replacing Leslie Brennan)]

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 7 to 0.

- VDOE Authorization of Signature in Absence of Division Superintendent
Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve the VDOE Authorization of Signature in Absence of Division Superintendent as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 7 to 0.

- 2024-2025 Proposed Courses
Board Member Byrum moved and Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck seconded the motion to approve the 2024-2025 Proposed Courses as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 7 to 0.

- Resolution 23/24-16: A Resolution Supporting Military Children and Families Adopted by the School Board for the City of Suffolk, Virginia

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to Resolution 23/24-16 as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 7 to 0.

- Resolution 23/24-17: A Resolution of the School Board for the City of Suffolk, Virginia Honoring the Life of Parris D. Carson for His Faithful Commitment and Dedication in Enriching the Lives of Children in the City of Suffolk and Beyond

Board Member Byrum moved and Board Member Jenkins seconded the motion to approve Resolution 23/24-17 as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 7 to 0.

The resolution was presented to the family of Parris Carson while the clerk read the resolution. Mrs. Carson and the Carson family were excited and grateful for the honor. Ms. Sherie Carson shared her feelings towards the passion shown at the meeting from citizens who were concerned with policies being approved by Board. She encouraged parents to talk to and listen intently to their children to understand and acknowledge how they feel about the matter versus not being open to any other opinion outside of your own. She agreed with a citizen who stated that gender-neutral facilities should be a part of new schools to accommodate all students as this is what is being done in the private business sector.

- Resolution 23/24-18: A Resolution of the School Board for the City of Suffolk, Virginia making a Bid Award to Heartland Construction Inc., for the Renovation of the Lakeland High School Auditorium and Authorizing the Board Chair and School Superintendent to Enter into a Contract for the Lakeland High School Auditorium Renovation

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Resolution 23/24-18 as presented.

Board Member Slingluff was concerned with the lack of information/documentation found to support the allocation of money for this project in previous CIPs. Mrs. Forsman explained that funds were derived for the project from the State who awarded grant funds for one-time special projects. Dr. Gordon added that this grant funding came up three years ago and was set aside to be used for this particular project.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0. The motion passed by vote of 7 to 0.

- Ordinance 23/24-21: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2, Article 8, Section 2-8.1 entitled “Early Appearances; Suffolk Community Defined; Five Minutes and not less than Three Minutes for Presentation; When More than Fifteen Speakers” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck explained why the policy was being presented to the Board for possible vote on first read.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham expressed her concern with practices being used to drive policy formation versus policy being used to determine practices.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck stated that the policy was presented to the Board for first read and adoption however, the Board has the discretion to take the additional time to review the policy and cast their vote at second reading.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham moved and Board Member Slingluff seconded the motion to add Ordinance 23/24-21 to next month's (December) School Board Meeting agenda for a vote.

Additional conversation ensued between Board Members.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 3 / Nay: 4 (Dr. Brooks-Buck, Byrum, Jenkins, Riddick). The motion failed by vote of 4 to 3.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-21 as presented.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 2 (Dr. Brittingham, Slingluff). The motion passed by vote of 5 to 2.

- Ordinance 23/24-26: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 10, Article 5, Section 10-5.1 entitled "Public Appearances before the School Board; time limits for public comments; public participation at special or call meetings" of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board
Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 23/24-26 as presented.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham expressed her concern with voting on the policy at the first reading.

Upon electronic/roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 2 (Dr. Brittingham, Slingluff). The motion passed by vote of 5 to 2.

Board Member Jenkins left the meeting after this vote (9:45 p.m.)

- Ordinance 23/24-27 through Ordinance 23/24-36
These items are information only and no Board Member had any questions or concerns.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS ON NON-AGENDA TOPICS

- Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items:
The Clerk read the statement regarding decorum for those scheduled to speak.

Registered speakers shared their concerns and comments on a variety of topics including, equity for all students, their disapproval/support of the transgender policy and the Board's failure in making good decisions, COVID vaccinations being used as experiments, and the distrust, hatred, disrespect, and discontent of the School Board. Citizens also discussed their support for prayer and faith-based speech at meetings, concerns regarding the lack and disregard of parental rights, and concerns regarding SPS's abuse of tax payer's money. A speaker also shared information projects and activities that support the Wounded Warrior

Veterans Day project and how the PTA will match monetary donations collected for the organization.

Registered speakers Mary Anderson, Chad Fowler, David Hall, and Dr. Deborah Wahlstrom were not present to address the Board.

BUSINESS BY BOARD MEMBERS

➤ Comments and Reports by School Board Members:

Board Members were each given three (3) minutes to speak and they discussed the following:

- The Legislative Committee Report.
- Disappointment with the meeting, language used when referencing children, and the Board's lack of protection of students by passing the transgender policy.
- All Members sincerity with wanting what's best for all children.
- A Member's vote on the transgender policy and how votes are not against a child, but against a policy.
- Appreciation for all who attended the meeting, the LHS chorus, guitar students, and director, Ms. Tiffany Carr, and Dr. Neighbours and her recognition.
- Thankfulness for students and coaches for an outstanding athletic fall season, and expressed a special shout-out to the NRHS cheerleaders and their coach, Amanda Lyons.
- Concern that SPS' is not doing its best for and not focused on students. Work must be done to provide students with the best education possible.
- Ten percent of students are doing phenomenal, 10% of students are almost beyond repair and hope due to learning challenges, 80% of students are just floating along.
- Hope that the Board will function successfully moving forward, and not just provide lip service regarding student achievement.
- Thanked Ms. Oneill, the PTA and parents at NSES for partnering with the school for the success of students as they are an example of parents who really want to work with the school. Also thankful for Veteran activities at NSES in support of Veteran's Day.
- Students are doing very well as reflected in the \$34 million in scholarships received by students. This amount is not being accomplished by just 10% of students.
- To really be a part of your child's life, talk with your child because parents should have a strong bond/connection with their child.
- Those who bear false witness and threaten SPS with lawsuits, are they really praying for SPS?
- Appreciated being able to attend the meeting virtually.
- Condolences to Mr. Carson's family and thankful for Mr. Carson's service to students and the community.
- Possibility of having single-stall bathrooms for the safety of all students in the future.
- Acknowledged growth of a Board Member.
- Encouraged parents to join their child's PTA and to get involved in activities sponsored by the PTA.
- Be a blessing to teachers and students.
- Looking forward to the VSBA Annual Convention.
- Commended Board Member Jenkins for dedication to her duties on the Board as she attended the meeting after attending services for her deceased mother earlier in the day. Sincere thoughts and prayers are with her and her family.
- Attended the ground breaking of the new JFKMS.

- Requested that the Policy Review Committee consider a policy which clearly defines the role of the Board and Superintendent regarding ground-breaking ceremonies, construction of schools, and ceremonial projects.
- Policies are not made for people but for positions, so that the board can continually move forward.
- Thankful for the peaceful meeting, and respect that can be shown by all.
- God bless and have a good evening.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Accident Report – October 2023
- Capital Projects Financial Statement
- Financial Report October 31, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

➤ Adjournment of Meeting:

Board Chair Riddick adjourned the November 9, 2023 School Board Meeting at 10:50 p.m.

Tyron Riddick, *Board Chair*

Tarshia L. Gardner, *Board Clerk*