

## SECOND MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES OF THE SUFFOLK CITY SCHOOL BOARD

Thursday, July 24, 2025 ~ 6:00 P.M.

King's Fork Middle School, 350 King's Fork Road, Suffolk, VA 23434

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### Board Members Present:

Heather Howell, *Chair*  
Sean McGee, *Vice Chair*  
Dr. Dawn Marie Brittingham  
Valerie Fields  
Karen Jenkins  
Kimberly Slingluff

### Absent:

Tyron Riddick

### Administrative Staff Present:

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

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## OPENING OF MEETING

- Call to Order:  
Board Chair Howell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- Pledge of Allegiance:  
Vice Chair McGee led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Moment of Silence:  
A moment of silence was observed by all in attendance.
- The Mission of Suffolk Public Schools:  
Board Member Fields read the mission of Suffolk Public Schools.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Approval of Agenda:  
Vice Chair McGee moved and Board Member Jenkins seconded the motion to approve the agenda.

Upon roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 0 / Absent: 1 (Riddick). The motion Passed by vote of 6 to 0.

## PUBLIC SPEAKERS

- No speakers registered to address the Board.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- Ordinance 2025/26-6: An Ordinance Amending Chapter 1, Article 5, Section 1-5.1:2 entitled “Education Equity Defined; Guiding Questions; Equity Goals; Equity Measurements; Key Terms” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board - Second Reading  
Board Member Jenkins moved and Board Member Fields seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 2025/26-6

Discussion ensued regarding report requirements relative to this ordinance, and concerns with the policy.

Upon roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 4 / Nay: 2 (Dr. Brittingham, Slingluff) / Absent: 1 (Riddick). The motion Passed by vote of 4 to 2.

## **MOTION TO GO INTO A CLOSED MEETING**

- Attorney Wendell Waller red the following motion:  
A motion is needed to go into a closed meeting to discuss the following items and subjects pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711:

1. The discussion and/or consideration regarding the performance evaluation of the School Superintendent and any revisions to terms of his employment; and
2. The discussion and/or consideration regarding the performance evaluation of the attorney for the School Board and any revisions to terms of his employment; and
3. The discussion and/or consideration regarding the performance evaluation of the clerk of the School Board and any revisions to terms of her employment.

All of which is authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, found at Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1).

Vice Chair McGee moved and Board Member Slingluff seconded the motion to go into the closed meeting as read by Attorney Waller.

Upon roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 0 / Absent: 1 (Riddick). The motion Passed by vote of 6 to 0.

Board Chair Howell reminded Board Members that personal devices are not allowed in closed meeting, but SPS issued laptops are permitted in the closed meeting area.

## **RECONVENE IN PUBLIC MEETING**

- Meeting Called to Order:  
Board Chair Howell reconvened the public meeting.

## **CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**

- Attorney Wendell Waller read the following certification:  
A Resolution of Certification of the Closed Meeting of July 24, 2025 Pursuant to Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia (1950), As Amended

WHEREAS, the School Board of the City of Suffolk convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, requires a certification by the School Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the School Board of the City of Suffolk hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this resolution of certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the School Board of the City of Suffolk.

Vice Chair McGee moved and Board Member Jenkins seconded the motion to approve the Certification of the Closed Meeting as read by Attorney Waller.

Upon roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 0 / Absent: 1 (Riddick). The motion Passed by vote of 6 to 0.

#### **ACTION ON CLOSED MEETING ITEMS**

- Resolution 25/26-3: A Resolution Approving The Terms and Conditions Of An Addendum To A Contract Of Employment Between The Suffolk City School Board And Dr. John B. Gordon III

Vice Chair McGee read the following motion:

#### **A Resolution Approving The Terms And Conditions Of An Addendum To A Contract Of Employment Between The Suffolk City School Board And Dr. John B. Gordon III**

**Be It Resolved** by the Suffolk City School Board as follows:

**Section 1:** That all terms and conditions of an Addendum dated July 24, 2025 to the Superintendent's Term Contract between the Suffolk City School Board and Dr. John B. Gordon III, be, and the same are hereby approved.

**Section 2:** That the Chair of the School Board is hereby authorized and directed to execute the said Addendum on behalf of the Suffolk City School Board, and the Clerk of the School Board is directed to duly attest the same.

Vice Chair McGee moved and Board Member Jenkins seconded the motion to approve Resolution 25/26-3 as read by Vice Chair McGee.

Upon roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 1 (Dr. Brittingham) / Absent: 1 (Riddick). The motion Passed by vote of 5 to 1.

- Resolution 25/26-4: A Resolution Approving The Terms and Conditions Of An Addendum To A Contract Of Employment Between The Suffolk City School Board And Wendell M. Waller

**A Resolution Approving The Terms And Conditions Of An Addendum To A Contract Of Employment Between The Suffolk City School Board And Wendell M. Waller**

**Be It Resolved** by the Suffolk City School Board as follows:

**Section 1:** That all terms and conditions of an Addendum dated July 24, 2025 to a Contract of Employment between the Suffolk City School Board and Wendell M. Waller be, and the same are hereby approved.

**Section 2:** That the Chair of the School Board is hereby authorized and directed to execute the said Addendum on behalf of the Suffolk City School Board, and the Clerk of the School Board is to duly attest the same.

Vice Chair McGee moved and Board Member Fields seconded the motion to approve Resolution 25/26-4 as read by Vice Chair McGee.

Upon roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 1 (Dr. Brittingham) / Absent: 1 (Riddick). The motion Passed by vote of 5 to 1.

- Terms and Conditions of Employment Between The Suffolk City School Board And School Board Clerk Tarshia L. Gardner

Board Member Dr. Brittingham moved and Board Member Jenkins seconded the motion to approve a three percent (3%) salary increase and a \$5,000 bonus for the School Board Clerk.

Upon roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 0 / Absent: 1 (Riddick). The motion Passed by vote of 6 to 0.

**BUSINESS BY BOARD MEMBERS**

- Comments and Report by School Board Members:

Board Chair Howell shared that beginning with the August 14, 2025 school board meeting, board members will be allowed to provide comments/remarks for up to five (5) minutes during “Business by Board Members,” which is consistent with the set time limit for public speakers. Additionally, “Business by Board Members” will only be a part of the first monthly meeting as that agenda is business heavy. The item will no longer appear on the agenda for the second monthly meeting.

Board Members congratulated the Superintendent, Attorney Waller, and the Clerk for their successful job performance. They made comments regarding summer academy, summer commencement, football practices, back to school preparations, and conference attended. Board Members encouraged constituent participation and communication, and wished students and staff a happy, restful, and energized summer break as they looked forward to the new school year. Board Members also shared concerns regarding a policy violation regarding a lack of respect between members.

## ADJOURNMENT

➤ Adjournment of Meeting:

There being no further business, Board Chair Howell adjourned the Second School Board Monthly Meeting of July 24, 2025 at 10:27 p.m.

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Heather Howell, *School Board Chair*

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Tarshia L. Gardner, *Board Clerk*