

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE SUFFOLK CITY SCHOOL BOARD**  
**Thursday, January 12, 2023 ~ 5:00 P.M.**  
**Suffolk City Hall, 442 W. Washington Street, Suffolk, VA 23434**

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**Board Members Present:**

Tyron Riddick, *Chair*  
Heather Howell, *Vice Chair*  
Dr. Dawn Marie Brittingham  
Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck  
Phyllis Byrum  
Karen Jenkins  
Kimberly Slingsluff

**Administrative Staff Present:**

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

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**OPENING OF PUBLIC MEETING/WORK SESSION**

➤ Call to Order:

Board Chair Riddick called the meeting to order.

➤ SPS Pharmacy:

Dr. Gordon gave an overview of the program which is set to begin around Fall 2023. Wendy Forsman, Chief Financial Officer, provided an historical perspective, overview of how the program works, and costs/savings associated with the pharmacy. She also highlighted the following:

- On-Site Rx, Inc.
- Pharmacy team
- Proposed deliveries

Board Members asked questions and were excited that the program is finally coming to Suffolk Public Schools. They thanked Mrs. Forsman and her team for their hard work in making the SPS Pharmacy a reality for the division.

➤ Calendar Presentation:

Dr. Branch shared information from the 2023-2024 calendar committee including their process, timeline, calendar options, and recommendation. The committee recommended Option 1 for the 2023-2024 school year. Dr. Branch indicated that the committee worked collaboratively to come up with the options presented.

**MEETING RECESS**

- Board Chair Riddick recessed the meeting.

## **RECONVENE IN PUBLIC MEETING**

- Meeting Call to Order:  
Board Chair Riddick called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.
  
- Pledge of Allegiance:  
A small group of King's Fork High School students who attended the meeting led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

Vice Chair Howell requested to add to the agenda under New Business a discussion regarding "Board Development and Training".

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck amended her motion to approve the agenda with the discussion of "Board Development and Training" added to New Business.

Upon a roll-call vote, 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:  
The Clerk read the statement regarding decorum for those scheduled to speak. The speakers shared the following:
  - Dr. Deborah Wahlstrom – Purchase Cards and Policies – **NO SHOW**

## **REPORTS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT**

- Good News Report:  
Anthonette Dickens, Community Engagement Officer, highlighted the following good news/events that occurred throughout the division:
  - Spotlights (Destination 2028 Creating Achievers: From Classroom to Community; Chronic Absenteeism Reduced Division-Wide; New SPS Website/Mobile App Coming January 2023; English-Language Learner Partnership with WAVY-10)
  - Fine & Performing Arts
  - SPS In the News (WTKR News Channel 3; WAVY-TV 10)
  - Awards & Recognitions (Dr. Gordon named National School Public Relations 2022 Superintendent to Watch; Grants and Awards; December Teacher Spotlight)
  
- Calendar of Special Events:  
Dr. Gordon highlighted the events that are listed on SPS website for January/February.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### ➤ Approval of the Consent Agenda:

Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Member Jenkins seconded the motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### ➤ There was no unfinished business.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ➤ WHRO Presentation

Mr. Bert Schmidt, President/CEO of WHRO presented highlights from the various programs from WHRO. Those highlights included eMediaVA, WHRO Education Professional Development, Online Courses, Student advisory board, African American History Course, Batten Environmental Education Initiative, PBS Kids Writing Contest, WHRO Public Media Spelling Bee, The Great Computer Challenge, Ms. Martha Reads. WHRO focuses on families and early learners which yields a great return on investment.

Board Members asked questions and thanked Mr. Schmidt for the great work he and his team does for our students and families.

### ➤ Calendar Presentation

Member Dr. Brittingham moved and Vice Chair Howell seconded the motion to approve the 2023-2024 Calendar Option 1 as presented.

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

### ➤ Approval of Special Meeting of the School Board for the Superintendent's 2023-2024 Proposed Budget Presentation (February 23, 2023, 6 p.m., City Council Chamber)

Vice Chair Howell moved and Member Dr. Brittingham seconded the motion to schedule a Special Meeting of the School Board on February 23, 2023, 6 p.m. at City Council Chamber for the Superintendent's 2023-2024 Proposed Budget as presented.

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

### ➤ Scheduling of Joint Meeting with City Council: 3 p.m., February 1, 2023 at City Council Chambers

Member Dr. Brittingham moved and Member Dr. Brooks-Buck seconded the motion to approve a Joint Meeting of the School Board with City Council on February 1, 2023, 3 p.m. at City Council Chamber as presented.

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

- Resolution 22/23-9: A Resolution of the School Board of the City of Suffolk, Virginia, Adopting a Code of Ethics for Members of the Suffolk City School Board  
Member Dr. Brook-Buck moved and Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Resolution 22/23-9, a Code of Ethics for Board Members as presented.

The Clerk read the Code of Ethics.

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

- Resolution 22/23-10: A Resolution of the School Board of the City of Suffolk, Virginia Adopting a Code of Conduct for the Clerk of the Suffolk City School Board  
Vice Chair Howell moved and Member Dr. Brooks-Buck seconded the motion to approve Resolution 22/23-10, a Code of Conduct for the Clerk of he School Board as presented.

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

- Ordinances 22/23-18 through Ordinance 22/23-75  
Ordinances 22/23-18 through Ordinance 22/23-75 were informational / first reading items only. There were no questions regarding the ordinances.
- Discussion on Board Members Development and Training  
Board Members agreed to developmental training from VSBA in order to become a more impactful board. This additional training will assist the board in becoming a Board of Distinction and a Master Board. Members agreed to receive training in Charlottesville at VSBA's office. The clerk will provide additional information/training sessions to members at a later date.

## **PUBLIC SPEAKERS ON NON-AGENDA TOPICS**

- Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items:  
The Clerk read the statement regarding decorum for those scheduled to speak. The speakers shared the following:
  - Travis McKinney – A better way to spend \$27 million. Mr. McKinney did not agree with the way the division was spending money. He also does not agree with virtual learning as it is a failure.
  - Jaer Ashan Anderson – The use of the appointed \$11 million from the 27 million dollars associated with the ARP/ESSR II funds; to help encourage tutoring provided by a select group of college students who are majoring in early education or teaching - to help with the "SPS" educational program. Mr. Anderson suggested that the money be spent on academic tutoring programs and socio emotional learning.
  - Desmond Rawls – KFHS Marching Band & other activities. Mr. Rawls was upset that 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in middle schools are no longer able to participate in the marching band and other high school activities.
  - Kirstyn O'Neill - Pod Squad, a program we developed at NSES. Parents from NSES were thinking outside of the box and created the Pod Squad. This squad is a revolving list of volunteers who help out in the cafeteria on a daily basis. Whether it be for five minutes or an hour, those volunteers are welcomed.

Board Member Riddick provided clarification regarding 7<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in high school activities and indicated that Dr. Gordon will be back in touch with follow-up information.

### **BUSINESS BY BOARD MEMBERS**

➤ Comments and Reports by School Board Members:

Board Members thanked Board Chair Riddick for his leadership, the constituents for allowing members to serve, and for attending the meeting and for providing a voice to the division. Members also congratulated Dr. Gordon for being selected by the National School Public Relations Association as a 2022 Superintendent to Watch. Board Members thanked Dr. Gordon for putting SPS on the national stage, for moving the division forward in the right direction, and for thinking outside of the box.

Board Members congratulated the teachers highlighted in the Good News Report, Mrs. Forsman and Mr. Littlefield for their hard work propelling the division to the top. They also congratulated the Bookkeepers for a job well done with a perfect audit. Members also thanked Ms. O'Neil for her and her teams help in volunteering at NSES and for being creative with recruiting volunteers. They thanked speakers for working together with the division and sharing their thoughts to make SPS better.

Members agreed that they are not about just pointing out problems, but are excited to come together to work out solutions. They sent thoughts and prayers to Richneck Elementary School and wished them a speedy healing. The Board agreed to always be willing to come together to get the job done as they are all in the position to take care of students together.

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

- Accident Report
- Capital Projects Financial Statements
- Financial Report December 31, 2022

### **ADJOURNMENT**

➤ Adjournment of Meeting:

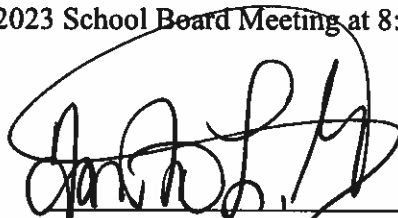
There being no further business or questions, Board Chair Riddick asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Member Dr. Brittingham seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

- Board Chair Riddick adjourned the January 12, 2023 School Board Meeting at 8:46 p.m.

  
Tyron Riddick, Board Chair

  
Tarshia L. Gardner, Board Clerk

