

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE SUFFOLK CITY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, April 6, 2023 ~ 5:00 P.M.
Suffolk City Hall, 442 W. Washington Street, Suffolk, VA 23434

Board Members Present:

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

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:**

The meeting of the Policy Review Committee delayed the start of the meeting of the School Board. Chair Riddick called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

➤ **LEAD SPS:**

Dr. Stenette Byrd III, Chief of Schools, with the assistance of Dr. Karen Sanzo of Old Dominion University, provided information regarding Suffolk Public Schools partnership with ODU. Through the LEAD SPS-ODU Aspiring Leaders Cohort, participants can graduate from the program with a Master's degree and or an Education Specialist degree. This partnership will develop and foster leadership qualities in students via live courses which will be taught virtually via Zoom, on site in SPS, or at ODU's Tri Cities Center. The SPS-ODU Cohort is student-centered where students are able to develop a robust network of educational peers and be a part of a strong community of educational leaders. The estimated cost of the program is \$14,200 per credit tuition and additional fees including books and SLLA. However, tuition rates may change based on board of visitors.

Board Members asked questions and were excited about the partnership between Old Dominion University and Suffolk Public Schools.

➤ **Special Education Annual Plan:**

Ms. Towanda Shirley, Director of Special Education, presented information regarding the Special Education Local Annual Plan for the 2023-2024 school year that will be submitted to the Virginia Department of Education by May 12, 2023. The application must be submitted annually in order to receive federal funds for special education under Title VI-B of IDEA 2004. These funds must be used only for the provisions of special education services and related services to students with disabilities.

According to the annual spending plan, IDEA Part B, Section 611: For school-ages children, the plan will pay the salary and benefits for some special education teachers, some special education teacher assistants, job coaches, and bus assistants. The application allocation is

\$3,346,438. For IDEA Part B, Section 619: Children ages 3-5 years, the plan will pay the salary and benefits for a special education (preschool) teacher. The application allocation is \$66,816. Ms. Shirley recommended that the Board approve the Annual Plan and application.

Board Members asked questions and thanked Ms. Shirley for her presentation.

MEETING RECESS

- There being no further questions, Board Chair Riddick recessed the meeting.

RECONVENE IN PUBLIC MEETING

- Meeting Call to Order:
Vice-Chair Howell called the meeting to order and presided over the remainder of the meeting. Due to a previously scheduled event, Board Chair Riddick left the meeting during recess.

PRESENTATION

- Recognition of Honor Graduates – Nansemond River High School
Dr. Shawn Green, Principal, introduced his staff and expressed pride in the honor graduates from Nansemond River High School. Dr. Green was supported by Assistant Principal, Mr. Denzel White, while Kimberlie Reid, School Counseling Director, and Chauna Phiri, School Counselor introduced 192 honor graduates.

Board Members congratulated the graduates, teachers, parents, and all extended family that were involved in their student's success. Members wished the students well and look forward to the great things they will accomplish in the world.

There being no further comments, Vice-Chair Howell ended this segment of the meeting.

RE-OPENING OF PUBLIC MEETING

- Meeting Call to Order:
Vice-Chair Chair Howell called to order the regular public meeting.
- Pledge of Allegiance:
Member Dr. Brooks-Buck led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Recital of SPS Mission:
Member Dr. Brittingham read the Mission of Suffolk Public Schools.
- Musical Selection – KFMS Chorus:
The chorus from King's Fork Middle School, under the leadership of Ms. Cassie Doty, performed at the meeting. The Board enjoyed the musical selections and thanked the students for their outstanding performance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Upon electronic vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0 / Absent: 1 (Riddick).
The motion Passed by vote of 6 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 following speakers shared their comments:

- Dr. Deborah Wahlstrom (Minutes) – Dr. Wahlstrom did not speak regarding the topic she indicated however, she made comments regarding actions of the Superintendent.

REPORTS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

➤ Good News Report:

Melvin Bradshaw, Community Engagement Facilitator, highlighted the following good news/events that occurred throughout the division:

- Career Switcher Program
- Rookie Teacher of the Year – Rhonda Alexander, Kindergarten Teacher at NSES
- Alumni Spotlight – Ty Rivers, former NRHS Baseball Player
- Nutrition Services in Washington, DC
- PBIS Program
- Community Resources – Field Trips in the Classroom
- NRHS DECA Chapter – State Leadership Conference
- Courtney Toran, Senior, NRHS – was accepted in over two-dozen colleges and universities and received over \$700,000 in scholarships.
- WoodsmenLife Chapter 2 of Suffolk – Elephant’s Fork Elementary School
- Mobile Dairy Classroom – Eleven Elementary Schools at SPS participated in this event.
- Parents and Partners Event at KFMS
- Collaborative Monsters
- Champions Together Event – Special Education
- Congratulations to the All-State Team Basketball Selections
- Awards & Recognitions – March Teacher Spotlight
- Community Donation (Sierrah Chavis, Director of Education with the United Way of South Hampton Roads (Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Isle of Wight) was excited to continue the partnership between the United way and Suffolk Public Schools. Mrs. Chavis presented a check to Dr. Gordon totaling \$72,000.

➤ Calendar of Special Events:

Dr. Gordon highlighted the events listed on SPS website for April/May.

CONSENT AGENDA

➤ Approval of the Consent Agenda:

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

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

- Approval of Church Lease: Tabernacle Christian Church – Worship Service; Holy Redeemer International COGIC – Sunday Service; The Mount Suffolk – Church Services

Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve the lease for Tabernacle Christian Church, Holy Redeemer International COGIC and The Mount Suffolk as presented.

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

- Local Plan and Budget for Career and Technical Education – 2023-2024

Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve the Local Plan and Budget for Career and Technical Education 2023-2024 as presented.

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

- Special Education Annual Plan 2023-2024

Member Slingluff moved and Member Dr. Brittingham seconded the motion to approve the Special Education Annual Plan 2023-2024 as presented.

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

- Resolution 22/23-15: A Resolution of the School Board for the City of Suffolk, Virginia Approving a Bid Award to GTR Turf to Construct a Turf Field at King’s Fork High School Pursuant to a Written Invitation to Bid Issued by Suffolk Public Schools

Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Resolution 22/23-15 as presented.

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

- Ordinances 22/23-79 through Ordinance 22/23-86 (information items only, no vote required)
Board Members had no questions or concerns at this time.

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 following speakers shared their comments:

- Shaneva Holland (The protocol or process for conflict resolutions and/or investigations at KFMS) – NO SHOW
- Charles F. Brown (The necessity of teamwork and the importance of diversity in solving difficult problems in moving Suffolk Public Schools toward a more perfect school district in achieving greatness for all our students in Suffolk Public Schools.) Mr. Brown

- recommended that the Board, Superintendent, and public work together for the best interest of the students of Suffolk Public Schools.
- Teresa Anderson (The negative recent publicity of our city, and the need for additional security personnel in our schools.) Ms. Anderson felt that the need is great for additional security personnel to be placed in all schools.
- Janet McKinney (Conduct Unbecoming) Mrs. McKinney did not agree with the comments made by the Superintendent written in a newspaper interview.
- Kenneth Madison (Race in the City of Suffolk) Mr. Madison agreed that there is a race issue within the City of Suffolk.

BUSINESS BY BOARD MEMBERS

- Comments and Reports by School Board Members:
 - Congratulated the honor graduates of NRHS.
 - Thanked the KFMS chorus for their performance.
 - Thanked Dr. Gordon and his team for all of their hard work and dedication to the division.
 - Encouraged the public to become involved with the school division, to attend meetings, and voice their opinion by signing up to speak at meetings.
 - Encouraged everyone to work together.
 - Wished all a good, happy, and safe evening.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Accident Review Report – March 2023
- Capital Projects Financial Statement
- Mayor Mike Duman’s Letter of Support for JFKMS Replacement Project
- Due to Spring Break, the April 12, 2023 School Board Meeting was rescheduled to April 6, 2023. Therefore, the following Financial Reports for March 2023 are currently unavailable, and will be included on the May 11, 2023 meeting agenda:
 - Payment of Bills and Payroll – March 2023 (Consent Agenda)
 - Financial Report March 2023 (Information Item)

ADJOURNMENT

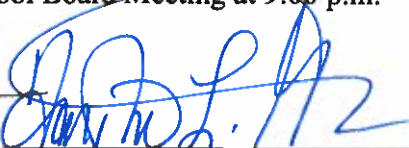
- Adjournment of Meeting:
There being no further business or questions, Vice-Chair Howell asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Member Dr. Brittingham moved and Member Slingluff seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

- Vice-Chair Howell adjourned the April 6, 2023 School Board Meeting at 9:00 p.m.


~~Heather Howell, Board Vice Chair~~
 Tyrone Riddick, Board Chair


 Tarshia L. Gardner, Board Clerk

