

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE SUFFOLK CITY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, December 8, 2022 ~ 5:00 P.M.
King's Fork Middle School, 350 King's Fork Road, Suffolk, VA 23434

Board Members Present:
Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck, *Chair*
Heather Howell
Karen Jenkins
Lorita Mayo
Tyron Riddick
Sherri Story¹

Attendance via Electronic Device (Upon Board Approval):
Phyllis Byrum, *Vice Chair*²

Administrative Staff Present:
Dr. John B. Gordon III, *Superintendent*
Wendell M. Waller, *School Board Attorney*
Tarshia L. Gardner, *Clerk*
Keesha Hicks, *Deputy Clerk*

OPENING OF PUBLIC MEETING/WORK SESSION

- Call to Order:
Board Chair Dr. Brooks-Buck called the meeting to order.

- Motion for Meeting Attendance Via Electronic Device (Phyllis Byrum):
Attorney Waller read the following motion:

A motion is needed pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.3, Subsection B.1. to allow Vice Chair Phyllis Byrum to participate in tonight's meeting of the school board through electronic communication means from 1596 Great Fork Road, Suffolk, Virginia, 23438, due to a temporary medical condition that prevents Vice Chair Byrum's physical attendance at tonight's meeting.

Member Mayo moved and Member Jenkins seconded the motion to approve virtual attendance for Mrs. Byrum as read by Mr. Waller.

Upon a roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0 / Absent: 1 (Story). The motion Passed by vote of 5 to 0.

- SEAC Annual Report:
Dr. Branch introduced Katie Morse, SEAC Chair who presented the 2021-2022 Annual SEAC Report. Mrs. Morse highlighted the committee's accomplishments for 2021-2022 and the goals/meeting dates for the coming 2022-2023 school year. The report also included information regarding the need for improving the transition process of students moving between academic levels (ex. Students going from middle to high school.)

¹ Board Member Story arrived at 5:05 p.m.

² Due to technical difficulties, Vice-Chair Byrum was absent during various times in the meeting.

Board members asked questions, made comments, and thanked Mrs. Morse for her report.

➤ Career and Technical Education (CTE) Report:

Dr. Gordon introduced Andre' Skinner, Director of Career and Technical Education, who presented the CTE Report. Mr. Skinner highlighted the following:

- Career & Technical Education Advisory Council
 - Functions
 - 2022-2023 Membership
- Student Events & Business Participants
- Competency Attainment Rates (96% of the students identified as completers passed the credentials' tests)
- Technology & Equipment Updates

Mr. Skinner indicated that 96% of the students identified as completers passed their industry credentialing tests. This was a significant score and a big accomplishment for the students and the division as they were recovering from the pandemic.

Board members made comments and thanked Mr. Skinner and his team for their hard work and commitment to the students in the CTE program.

MOTION TO GO INTO A CLOSED MEETING

➤ Attorney Waller read the following motion:

A motion is needed to go into a Closed Meeting to discuss the following item and subject pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia (1950) as amended:

The discussion or consideration of a student disciplinary matter that would involve the disclosure of information contained in the student's scholastic record and more specifically a student appeal from a recommendation imposing a long-term suspension.

Which is authorized by Section 2.2-3711 A.2 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

Vice-Chair Byrum moved and Member Mayo seconded the motion to approve the motion to go into a closed meeting as read by Mr. Waller.

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

RECONVENE IN PUBLIC MEETING

➤ Meeting Call to Order:

Board Chair, Dr. Brooks-Buck reconvened the public meeting.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

- Attorney Waller read the following motion:

A Resolution of Certification of the Closed Meeting of December 8, 2022, 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.

Board Member Howell moved and Member Mayo seconded the motion to approve the Certification of Closed Meeting as read by Mr. Waller.

Upon a roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0 / Absent: 1 (Byrum)². The motion Passed by vote of 6 to 0.

HOLIDAY PRESENTATION

- Dr. Gordon introduced instructors and students from the Center for Performance and Production Arts at Lakeland High School who performed holiday music.

Board Members thanked the students for their performance, vocals and instrumentals. They also thanked Dr. Neighbours and Mr. Wilson for their work with the musical programs and students.

MEETING RECESS

- Board Chair Dr. Brooks-Buck recessed the meeting.

RECONVENE IN PUBLIC MEETING

- Meeting Call to Order:

Board Chair, Dr. Brooks-Buck called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

- Meeting Call to Order:
Board Chair Dr. Brooks-Buck called the meeting to order.

- Public comments regarding the 2023-2024 Operating Budget
There were no citizens signed up to speak at the Public Budget Hearing. There being no speakers, Board Chair Dr. Brooks-Buck adjourned the Public Budget Hearing portion of the meeting.

RE-OPENING OF PUBLIC MEETING

- Meeting Call to Order:
Board Chair, Dr. Brooks-Buck called the meeting to order.

- Pledge of Allegiance:
Board Member Mayo lead all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ACTION ON CLOSED MEETING ITEMS

- Student Appeal #22/23-1
Board Member Jenkins moved and Member Story seconded the motion to deny Student Appeal #22/23-1.

Upon a roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0 / Absent: 1 (Byrum)².
The motion Passed by vote of 6 to 0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Approval of Agenda:
Member Story moved and Member Howell seconded the motion to approve the agenda as presented.

Upon a roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0 / Absent: 1 (Byrum)².
The motion Passed by vote of 6 to 0.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS ON AGENDA TOPICS

- Citizen Comments on Agenda Items:
No speakers signed up to speak.

REPORTS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

- Good News Report:
Anthonette Dickens, Community Engagement Officer, highlighted the following good news/events that occurred throughout the division:
 - Spotlight (Food & Nutrition Truck Art Contest Winners - Hannah Parker, Channing Douglas, Jade Pagan Abreu. Dr. Whiting honored the student winners with a certificate; LHS Students participated in the Annual Youth Essay Competition - Raven Cooper, Alexis Perkins, Hailey Raines, Jerkiya Savage. Students were awarded a medal and certificate for their winning essays.) OES Students participated in the National STEM Day Challenge; SPS Staff received Free Turkeys!

- Athletics & Activities (NRHS, KFHS)
- Fine & Performing Arts
- Grants & Awards
- SPS In the News (Suffolk News Herald, WTKR News Channel 3)
- Awards & Recognitions (November Teacher Spotlight, “Shiny Floor” Competition – 2022 Cafeteria Floor Contest, Board Member Farewell!)

Board Members Mayo and Story were honored with flowers and a plaque for their years of service. Members expressed gratitude for their dedication to the students, staff, and community of SPS.

- Calendar of Special Events:
Dr. Gordon highlighted the events that are listed on SPS website for December and January.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of the Consent Agenda:
Member Mayo moved and Member Jenkins seconded the motion to accept the Consent Agenda 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.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Ordinance 22/23-17: An Ordinance Adding Chapter 8, Article 24, Section 8-24.5 Entitled “Purpose of Policy; Definitions; Superintendent to Develop Guidelines for Identification; Notice to Parents; List of Sexually Explicit Materials Maintained and Parent Right to Review Materials; Defer to Parents; Parent May Change Their Decision” of the Policies of the Suffolk City School Board – Second Reading

Members did not agree with the use of the word “Reasonable” in Section C of the ordinance. They preferred to use the language in the model policy. Discussion/clarification ensued.

Member Riddick moved and Member Jenkins seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 22/23-17 with the amendment (replacing the wording in Section C of the policy with the verbiage from the model policy, “...and whether a parent would reasonably consider the instructional content harmful to their child.”)

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

At this time, Dr. Gordon provided information contained in the Personnel Report by introducing Mrs. Jessica Joyner as the new Coordinator of Special Education. Mrs. Joyner will be replacing Julie Masters who will be retiring as of January 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

- Scheduling of 2023 School Board Organizational Meeting for 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 4, 2023 at King's Fork Middle School

Vice Chair Byrum moved and Member Jenkins seconded the motion to accept January 4, 2023 at 6 p.m. for the reorganizational meeting 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.

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:

- Carl Jackson – (Re: Clear Backpacks / EverDriven Transportation) Mr. Jackson was appreciative of the safety precaution initiated with the clear backpacks. Suggested that the private sector should consider creating designer, clear backpacks to possibly make the initiative more popular. He was also thankful for the EverDriven program as this was helpful to his daughter who participates in the IB program. This program allowed his daughter to enter her program in a timely manner.

BUSINESS BY BOARD MEMBERS

- Comments and Reports by School Board Members:

Board Members Story and Mayo expressed their gratitude for being able to serve as School Board Members over the past four years. They thanked their constituents and expressed appreciation to Dr. Gordon and his staff, and all involved in moving the division forward. Both Member Story and Mayo looked forward to their next journey and the success of Suffolk Public Schools.

Board Members congratulated Members Story and Mayo for their service, and expressed their joy in working with them. They were proud to have built friendships over the past four years and enjoyed working on various projects to build the best school division possible. Members wished Mrs. Story and Ms. Mayo well and success in their future endeavors. Board Members also thanked Dr. Gordon and the entire SPS family for their dedication and commitment to the students, staff and community. They congratulated the students, faculty and staff highlighted in the Good News Report and wished everyone a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holiday, and safe New Year.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Financial Report: Capital Projects
- Financial Report November 2022
- Accident Report November 2022
- Adult Education Report
- Pupil Teacher Ratio
- SPS Pharmacy

ADJOURNMENT


➤ Adjournment of Meeting:

There being no further business or questions, Board Chair Dr. Brooks-Buck asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Member Riddick moved and Member Mayo 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 Dr. Brooks-Buck adjourned the December 8, 2022 School Board Meeting at 9:53 p.m.


Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck, *Board Chair*


Tarshia L. Gardner, *Board Clerk*



8
1000

