

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE SUFFOLK CITY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, September 21, 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 Slingsluff

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.¹

➤ Capital Improvement Plan 2025-2034 Discussion

Mrs. Forsman, and Mr. Napier presented and explained the 2023-2033 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and how it works, its funding sources, recommended changes, and the facilities study. The following recommendations were suggested:

- Move Operations Facility Phase II Funding to years 2030-2032.
- Switch Priority #4, the replacement of Forest Glen Middle School with Priority #5, the replacement of Elephant's Fork Elementary School (due to the 13 mobile units being used at that location that are over 30 years old and have an estimated cost of \$1.6M.)

Board Members asked questions. Board Chair Riddick recessed the meeting for 10 minutes to allow Board Members to rank their priorities on a copy of the CIP form.

The Meeting was called to order by Board Chair Riddick. The Clerk read each members suggested rank order by indicating the Board Member by name while the Deputy Clerk, the Board Chair, and the Superintendent tallied the results and Mr. Riddick then read the following results:

1. John F. Kennedy Middle School
2. Northern Shores Elementary School
3. College and Career Academy at Pruden
4. Elephant's Fork Elementary School
5. Kilby Shores Elementary School
6. Tie between Forest Glen Middle School and Nansemond Parkway Elementary School (one of these will become #7)
- 7.
8. Nansemond River High School
9. John Yeates Middle School

¹ The meeting was delayed due to technical difficulties.

10. Operations Center

Board Members engaged in additional discussion/questions. Board Chair Riddick explained how the growth of the city affects the school division and the capacity of schools. He suggested an in-depth infrastructure plan, agreed to by the School Board and City Council, regarding anticipated school growth. Suffolk Public Schools is a vital part of the City of Suffolk's growth.

Members provided their preference regarding the tie between Forest Glen Middle School and Nansemond Parkway Elementary School. Their preferences were as follows:

- Member Slingluff - #6 FGMS
- Member Jenkins - #6 FGMS
- Member Brittingham - #6 FGMS
- Vice Chair Howell - #6 FGMS
- Member Brooks-Buck - #6 FGMS
- Member Byrum - #6 FGMS
- Chair Riddick - #6 FGMS

The Clerk read the following order as suggested by the School Board:

1. John F. Kennedy Middle School
2. Northern Shores Elementary School
3. College and Career Academy at Pruden
4. Elephant's Fork Elementary School
5. Kilby Shores Elementary School
6. Forest Glen Middle School
7. Nansemond Parkway Elementary School
8. Nansemond River High School
9. John Yeates Middle School
10. Operations Center

There being no further discussion or questions, 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:
Board Chair Riddick led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Recital of SPS Mission:
Vice-Chair Howell read the Mission Statement of Suffolk Public Schools.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Upon 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:

Due to the number of speakers registered to speak, Board Chair Riddick adjusted the time from five (5) minutes to three (3) minutes for each speaker.

The Clerk read the statement regarding decorum for those scheduled to speak. The following speakers shared their comments:

As the Clerk called the first speaker to the podium, Member Dr. Brittingham called a Point of Order. Dr. Brittingham objected to the form and process for individuals signing up to speak indicating that the neither the form nor process had been approved by the Board. She felt that the process suppressed free speech and the process was enacted improperly. She also cited the discrepancy in the deadline time for speakers to register to speak. According to the website, the deadline is noon the day before the meeting for "Agenda Topic" speakers and noon the day of the meeting for "Non-Agenda Topic" speakers versus the policy with indicates a deadline of 5 p.m. the day of the meeting for "Non-Agenda Topic" speakers.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham made the motion to allow citizens who were prevented from being signed up because of the form and process being out of order, they be allowed to speak, if they chose to do so, either at the agenda timeframe or the non-agenda timeframe due to the fact that the School Board has violated the policy and process by enacting a new form and process without the School Board previously adopting it.

Attorney Waller provided clarity as to the difference in the deadline times listed in two different places in the policy. He indicated that the Clerk allowed citizens to register to speak who contacted the Clerk after 12 noon. Therefore, he was not aware of anyone who contacted the Clerk that was denied the opportunity to address the Board.

The Board Clerk, Ms. Gardner, clarified that all persons who contacted her and wanted to register to speak (unless it was after she left the office headed to set up for the meeting) were not denied the opportunity to register. During this time, the Clerk checked her email to ensure that no citizen who requested to speak via email, was missed from being registered to speak. While the clerk was checking emails, Attorney Waller provided additional information regarding agenda speakers (early appearances) and non-agenda speakers (late appearances), and the requirement for speaking and the differences in the times for each group to notify the clerk of their request to speak. He also specified that the error in time only pertained to "Non-Agenda Topic" speakers and not "Agenda Topic" speakers. Mr. Waller also indicated that the form was prepared under the authority of the Board Chair to assist him in his role and responsibility to maintain order of the School Board meeting. He added that before the form was put into place, citizens were asked to provide their name, address, and topic(s) when signing up to speak. The only new information required on the form was that speakers were to provide a "brief description" explaining their topic. This would enable the Board Chair to know if a speaker was on topic or not. This form was developed to assist the Chair in maintaining order of the meeting. After the clarification, the Clerk called the first speaker to the podium.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham again called a Point of Order stating that her point of order was not properly addressed. She restated her motion, (to allow any citizens who was prevented from being signed up because of the form and process being out of order, that they may be allow to speak, if they chose to still speak, at either the agenda time or the non-agenda time due to the fact that the School Board has violated its policy and process by enacting a new

form and process without the School Board previously adopting it), which was seconded by Board Member Slingluff.

Discussion ensued between Board Members who felt that the process of having to download, complete and submit the form was not feasible for all citizens as the form was a “read only” file. However, Attorney Waller provided additional clarification as to the form and the Clerk verified that the form was a fillable document that did not have to be downloaded. The Clerk again reemphasized that all citizens were given the opportunity to sign up and address the Board. The Clerk read Board Member’s Dr. Brittingham’s motion to allow any citizens who was prevented from being signed up because of the form and process being out of order, that they be allowed to speak, if they so choose to still speak either at the agenda timeframe or the non-agenda timeframe due to the fact that the School Board has violated both its policy and process by enacting a new form and process without the School Board previously adopting it.

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

1. Travis McKinney - Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Chapter 37, Code of Virginia. Mr. McKinney felt that the online form to sign up to speak was a deterrent to free speech, denies equal access for the public, and is an example of the government prior restraint. He also felt that the trusted adult program is a FOIA violation.
2. Anita Fisher - Access of Single Bathrooms. Ms. Fisher felt that the transgender policy will further limit / hinder a teacher’s access to bathrooms.
3. Janet McKinney - Minutes of the August 2023 Suffolk School Board Meeting. Mrs. McKinney felt the comments by Board Chair Riddick regarding the voting record and comments by Dr. Brooks-Buck regarding the case in Loudoun County are inaccurate and considered misinformation.
4. Patricia Holloman - School Board’s Transgender Policy. Ms. Holloman supported the transgender policy.
5. Cyndi Petrich - Superintendent's Proposed Policy. Ms. Petrich does not agree with SPS transgender policy, but supports the Virginia Department of Education’s policy version.
6. Christella Williams - Trans Related Issues. Ms. Williams does not agree with the transgender policy. She felt that the response to gender dysphoria is not correct and that parents should not be excluded from the student’s decisions.
7. Harrison Storms - Objection to the 2023 Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Model Policy on Transgender Students. Mr. Storms encouraged the School Board to continue using the current policy based on the 2021 model as the proposed 2023 VDOE Model Policy violates federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity.
8. Derrick Grant - Model Policy. Mr. Grant supports the transgender policy. He asked the Board to adopt the policy, to support the safety of all kids because they should all have access to a safe learning environment, and should be treated with kindness, love and respect.
9. Carly Bosco - Personnel Report and Ordinance 23/24-14. Ms. Bosco was concerned with the high number of long-term substitutes in the classrooms and encouraged administrators to continue providing support to substitute teachers. She also supported the transgender policy indicating that every student is worthy of a school environment that recognizes them for who they are and that all students should be given an opportunity to thrive.

10. Kirstyn Oneill - Protecting Our Transgender Kids and How The Policy Is A Great Step In The Right Direction. Ms. Oneill was disappointed with the comments made against transgender students and a Board Member. She felt that the policy is great for all students especially those students who cannot freely speak to their parents regarding their sexuality.
11. Joella Barone - The Superintendent's Transgender Policy Recommendations. Ms. Barone felt that proposed policies are in direct opposition to the VDOE model policy and that the addition of mental wellness and mental health creates loopholes that will allow division administrator to act as they see fit.
12. Theresa Anderson - Transgender Policy, VDOE Model Policy Review Committee, Student Well Being. Ms. Anderson disagrees with the transgender policy. She stated that males who are born with a penis are boys and females born with breast are girls and that mutilating a child's body does not change who they are, and these changes puts biological boys and girls at a disadvantage in sports.

REPORTS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

➤ Good News Report:

Anthonette Dickens, Communications and Community Engagement Officer, highlighted the following good news/events that occurred throughout the division:

- 2023 New Teacher Orientation – New SPS and city officials welcomed over 200 new teachers to the division.
- Alumni Highlight: Where Are They Now? – Becca Biery, 2011 graduate of LHS and a first year teacher at JYMS.
- Teacher & Staff 2023 Convocation – Welcomed over 2,000 teachers and staff to the 2023-2024 school year.
- First Week of School Highlights – The Superintendent and Mayor Duman walked the hallways and welcomed students on the first day.
- 2023 Summer Series: SPS Explore! – The Suffolk Public Library and SPS partnered to include SPS Explore in its annual summer reading challenge. Hogarth Miller (FBES), Lucy Bunn (CES), Rylan Bailey (JFKMS) were highlighted.
- Start Together & Rise (S.T.A.R.) Summer Student Interns – Students received a high-quality work-based learning experience over the summer. The following students were recognized: Kaitlyn Johnson, Larry Stokes, Jaylen Johnson, Samuel Venable, Demetrias Warren, Donte Duton, Jasmine Bowen, Mason Hirsch, Rebecca Girard, Brianna Morris, Nyima Wiggins, Jenesis Bannarbie, Jaryl Sanchez, and Elijah Johnson. Students were presented with SPS swag.

➤ Calendar of Special Events:

Dr. Gordon highlighted the events listed on SPS website for September/October.

Dr. Gordon alerted all to the potential for inclement weather and that a final decision regarding an early release would be made by 10 a.m. tomorrow. He also addressed comments made by the public. He indicated that following:

- SPS always tries to compromise, see both sides of the plate, and work towards the middle. But with each compromise, the attacks grow stronger with the attackers never thinking about the impact on our kids.
- Virginia Department of Education policies totally ignores student's rights.
- Stop perpetuating fear from the case in Loudoun County as if it will happen in Suffolk Public Schools.
- Because you disagree, doesn't give you the right to be disrespectful.

- Negativity displayed is to turn parents against the Schools/School Board, and to avoid talking about SPS' 95% accreditation rating. The 5th highest growth in the entire state.
- A parent was told to move from SPS by a Board Member.
- Suffolk Public Schools works to support all kids and to give them the opportunity to feel safe.
- Bullying towards SPS is actually worse from the adults.
- Many divisions would switch with SPS success.
- Congratulatory emails received from Chair Riddick, Member Dr. Brooks-Buck, Member Jenkins, and Member Byrum celebrating the staff and students for a job well done regarding testing, and for supporting the 100+ long term substitutes who worked with SPS last year. (This year, long term substitutes total 77. SPS is moving in the right direction.)
- Congratulated Dr. Jessica Avery on successfully defending her dissertation.
- SPS is here for kids and what is being done is working.
- When having the conversation about race, Superintendent was told he was insubordinate.
- Many great things are going on in SPS and many divisions are asking us how are we accomplishing so many innovative things within the division. Suffolk Public Schools' success comes from our great team working together.
- Stop the negative conversations about SPS, this is not a terrible school division.
- Time to stop the hate and start celebrating our kids.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham called for a Point of Personal Privilege. Board Chair Riddick did not recognize Board Member Dr. Brittingham and continued with the agenda.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham appealed Chair Riddick decision for her Point of Personal Privilege. There was a disturbance in the audience and Board Chair Riddick called the meeting back to order. The citizen continued speaking out and Board Chair Riddick asked for his removal from the auditorium. The meeting was then recessed to allow other citizens who wanted to leave, the opportunity to do so without disrupting the business of the Board.

Board Chair Riddick resumed the meeting and Board Member Dr. Brittingham called a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry. Board Chair Riddick confirmed which point Board Member Dr. Brittingham wanted to address first and the Point of Personal Privilege was recorded for a vote. Board Chair Riddick verified for the Clerk that Dr. Brittingham's request did not need a second, only the Board approval or denial.

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

Board Member Dr. Brittingham called for a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry. Dr. Brittingham asked Attorney Waller "if we are under *Robert's Rules of Order*, should the Chair not be neutral in his words and actions?" Attorney Waller clarified that the policy does not reference that the Board is operating under *Robert's Rules of Order*. He further explained that the Board has implicitly operated under *Robert's Rules of Order* but it is not set forth in policy. Board Member Dr. Brittingham disagreed and read information from the website regarding Early and Late Appearance speakers. Attorney Waller clarified that information listed on the website is not the policy of the School Board. Dr. Brittingham then asked Chair Riddick if the Board was going to function under *Robert's Rules of Order*, or will it be used when it works for the Board? Board Chair Riddick acknowledged that Dr. Brittingham's point of inquiry had been addressed and proceeded with the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

➤ Approval of the Consent Agenda:

Board Member Dr. Brittingham moved and Vice Chair Howell seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of the Bills and Payroll and the Minutes from School Board Meeting.

It was clarified that only the minutes from the August 10th Monthly Meeting was to be removed therefore the motion was amended.

Board Member Dr. Brittingham moved and Vice Chair Howell seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the removal of the Bills and Payroll and the Minutes from August 10th School Board Monthly Meeting.

Vice Chair Howell explained the error in the minutes as the reason for the removal of the minutes. Board Member Slingluff referenced correspondence from Attorney Waller regarding the potential to move The Payment of Bills and Payroll to an information item.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

➤ Capital Improvement Plan 2025-2034:

Dr. Gordon explained an adjustment. The item should have been listed as “Action” item instead of an “Info” item. He further explained the order as it was updated by Mrs. Forsman and Mr. Napier, and uploaded during the Board’s recess for public viewing.

Vice Chair Howell moved and Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck seconded the motion to approve the CIP order of construction projects for 2023-2033 as established in the work session.

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

NEW BUSINESS

➤ Resolution 23/24-12 – A Resolution Approving the Terms and Conditions of a Right of Way Agreement Between the Suffolk City School Board and Virginia Electric and Power Company, d/b/a Dominion Energy Virginia.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve Resolution 23/24-12 as presented.

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

➤ Resolution 23/24-13 – A Resolution of the School Board for the City of Suffolk, Virginia Making a Bid Award to MB Kahn Construction Co., Inc. for the Construction of a New John F. Kennedy Middle School and Authorizing the Board Chair and School Superintendent to enter into a Contract for the Construction of the New John F. Kennedy Middle School

Board Member Byrum moved and Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck seconded the motion to approve Resolution 23/24-13 as presented.

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

- Ordinance 23/24-14 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 - First Reading

- Payment of Bills and Payroll

Board Member Slingluff agreed to remove the Payment of Bills and Payroll from the Consent Agenda solely to not vote against the entire Consent Agenda. She indicated that since the Bills and Payroll could not be officially approved, it was her understanding that it could be pulled out and listed as an "Information Item."

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion to approve the Payment of Bills and Payroll as presented.

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

- August 10, 2023 School Board Monthly Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Howell suggested the minutes be corrected to reflect that Dacia Smith, not Angela Kilgore, led the audience in the Lord's Prayer.

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Slingluff seconded the motion to approve the minutes of August 10, 2023 (School Board Monthly Meeting) with the correction noted by Vice Chair Howell.

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

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:

1. Travis McKinney – Yes, I Can in Fact Criticize Members of the School Board. Mr. McKinney felt that the Board was suppressing free speech and disenfranchised citizens. He agreed that the Superintendent honestly listened to and addressed concerns that he personally presented for his attention.
2. Anita Fisher – The Importance of ASL in the Community / American Sign Language Class. Ms. Fisher requested six minutes to speak as she was not aware she would have to cover all topics listed within the time allotted. Board Chair Riddick did not grant additional time, she received the same time as other speakers, three minutes. Ms. Fisher was

- disappointed that ASL would no longer be offered to students and that the course is vital to the community.
3. Janet McKinney – Policy Changes Mandated by the Virginia Department of Education. Mrs. McKinney felt that the decorum message read by the Clerk before hearing speakers violate SPS policy 10-5.2. She stated that a public hearing must be held before the transgender policy could be adopted.
 4. Richard Wisner – FOIA Violation. Mr. Wisner – [No Show](#).
 5. Jennifer Hergert – Informed Consent. Ms. Hergert did not agree with COVID vaccinations and suggested that everyone research the vaccines and side effects of these vaccines.
 6. Deanna Kline – You and Your Family and Your School Children’s Health and Life. Ms. Kline did not agree with COVID vaccinations and indicated that vaccines may be responsible for extreme harm to people both physically and neurologically.
 7. Tenten Shunai – Transgender Policy. Tenten Shunai supported the transgender policy and was supportive of students talking to teachers and administrators as it might save students’ lives.
 8. Dacia Smith – Model Policy. [Ms. Smith cancelled her appearance to address the Board after the agenda was printed for the meeting.](#)
 9. Ashlin Dotson – ASL Program. Ms. Dotson explained the importance of ASL classes and was disappointed that it was no longer being offered as a course.
 10. Kit Webb – Transgender Policy, First Amendment Rights Violation, FOIA Violations. Ms. Webb does not agree with the transgender policy. She taught students that God had a plan for their life, and that God made no mistakes.
 11. Angela Kilgore – Prayer / SPS Board Policy Regarding Prayer. Ms. Kilgore felt that the purpose of education should be teaching reading, writing, and math, not pushing ideology that many disagree with, improving SOL scores and skill-sets to help them in life. She said SPS is focused on the wrong priorities, and everyone should be praying for students, teachers, and staff.
 12. Rod Thompson – Transgender Policy. Mr. Thompson does not agree with the transgender policy. He expressed concern with teachers and counselors who speak with students about sex and it’s kept a secret. Additionally, he felt that students scores and the accreditation with conditions of JFKMS rating shows that the Board has lost sight of its purpose.

BUSINESS BY BOARD MEMBERS

➤ Comments and Reports by School Board Members:

Board Members were each given three minutes to speak. They highlighted the following:

- Expressed concern with the Superintendent’s comments recorded in an article. Felt that the statements are divisive, untrue and perpetuate a false narrative.
- Does not agree with policies presented by the school division which crosses the line into parental responsibilities and must be rejected.
- Does not agree with the narrative as to what the role of a School Board Member is and being constantly told “to stay in my lane.”
- Thanked speakers for their comments.
- Hoped that all students feel comfortable and safe in talking to parents however, if a child would like to talk with a teacher or any other adult, it should be acceptable that the child is comfortable in talking with someone. Unfortunately, everybody’s home is not a safe space.
- Information reported to the proper authorities when children are exposed to threatening situations.
- God is a God of love and respect. Read the entire Bible, continue to love and respect each other.

- Be careful with the potential inclement weather.
- Prayerful that SPS is always striving to meet the needs of the entire student population.
- Concerned that the best is not being done to prepare, equip, and provide resources needed for students enrolled in SPS.
- Invited by the Police Department to participate in the Active Shooter Drill.
- Hosted and attended successful Town Halls. Discussions included the Virginia Department of Education's Model Policy, the Superintendents proposed revisions to the transgender policy, parental rights in education, and additional measures involving school safety.
- Collaborated with Southside Baptist Church's Young Navigators Tutoring partnership working with students at Kilby Shores Elementary School.
- Concerning issues include the implementation of the model policy, current transgender policies, and the blatant violation of the First Amendment Right of Ms. Kilgore not being allowed to pray at the podium at the August 10th Board Meeting.
- Thanked and congratulated Dr. Gordon, staff, and all employees for a successful opening of the 2023-2024 school year.
- Congratulated and expressed pride in the students who participated in the S.T.A.R. summer program.
- Thanked speakers for expressing their concern with the ESL courses, and encouraged the Board/Superintendent to check into how these courses can be available to students as they are vital to the students and community.
- Expressed sorrow for the behavior of those who came with the purpose of attempting to insult a Board Member due to their need for attention, their political agenda, and their use of children for those agendas. The Member stated because of her Christian belief, she would not talk to people the way she had been spoken to.
- Reiterated disparaging/racist remarks received from a citizen who wanted to pray for a Member and asked that citizen not pray for her as those prayers are unwanted.
- Expressed that when the truth is presented to the public, some citizens leave the meeting as they do not want to hear what the truth really is.
- Stated that constituents are very expressive regarding their concerns and are always willing to share their concerns with their borough representative and a lot of concern was not received regarding transgender children.
- Expressed care for all children just as God is love and cares about all children.
- Expressed readiness to have conversations with any who would like to talk.
- Gave special recognition to Mr. Privott, Director of Transportation, for the many hours and care given to getting the busses running and for a great start to the school year.
- Thanked speakers for their courage in addressing the Board.
- Spent the first year building relationship, listening, seeking to understand, learning and humbling one's self before all and God.
- Expressed that the greatest deficit of the Board is inconsistency regarding applying policy toward Board Members, citizens, and within buildings. Cited inconsistency example using the three minutes given to citizens and Board Members to speak versus the Superintendent speaking on the Calendar of Events for seven to 10 minutes.
- Tired of being the punching bag and being stretched beyond capacity and taking heat from both sides and saying nothing. No one is perfect, but people are composed, speak truth and desire progress.

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 items and subjects pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia (1950) as amended:

1. The discussion and/or consideration of applications submitted by citizens for appointment to serve on citizen advisory committees that include the CTE (Career & Technical Education) Advisory Committee, Gifted Education Advisory Committee, Local Advisory Committee for Special Education, Parent Advisory Council, Safety Audit Committee, and the School Health Advisory Board; and
2. The discussion and consideration of Employee Appeal Number 23/24-2 as it relates to the job performance of a specific employee of the public body.

Which is authorized by Section 2.2-3711 A.1 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended.

Board Member Byrum moved and Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck seconded the motion to approve the motion to go into a closed meeting as read by Mr. Waller.

Upon 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 Called to Order:
Board Chair Riddick reconvened the public meeting.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

- Attorney Waller read the following certification:

A Resolution of Certification of the Closed Meeting of August 10, 2023, 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 Byrum moved and Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck seconded the motion to approve the Certification of Closed Meeting as read by Mr. Waller.

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

ACTION ON CLOSED MEETING ITEMS

➤ Recommendations to the Citizen Advisory Committees:

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved to approve the recommendations however, Board Chair Riddick asked the Clerk to read the names of the members being recommended.

Gifted Education Advisory Committee:

Dacia Smith – recommended by Dr. Brittingham

Duane Hoffer Foster – recommended by Dr. Brooks-Buck

Christina Havlin – recommended by Mrs. Slingluff

Staff recommendations:

Jennifer Hazer

Kathleen Coyne

Elizabeth Joyner

Russell Terrillion

Melissa Douglas

Kirsten Gamble

Tremont Artis

Bonnie Tran

Jamie Tordoff

Katie Seibel

Teri Kerns

Ashley Tatem-Bland

Tianna Spells

Heather McGee

Maegan Kelish

Kimberly Folston

Erin Jones

School Health Advisory Board:

Michele Schmoll – recommended by Dr. Brittingham

Kelly Hengler – recommended by Mrs. Slingluff

Staff recommendations:

Anne McCoy

Lottie Holzendorf

Luanne Dorsey

Tricia Kastelitz

Sara Williford

Camille Hundley Prince

Student (TBD)

Student (TBD)

Parent Advisory Council:

Angela Kilgore – recommended by Dr. Brittingham

Ellen Benegar – recommended by Mrs. Slingluff

Staff recommendations:

Katrina King
Tina Johnson
Mikka Coughlin
Charlotte Brooks-Dale
Charlotte Baker
Vernecia Fentress
Luis Batrez
Bernice Foster-Holland
Leslie Brennan

School Safety Audit Committee:

Rod Thompson – recommended by Mrs. Slingluff

Staff recommendations:

Cynthia Devers
James Allen
Melissa Zawodny

Local Advisory Committee for Special Education:

Stephanie Whitley – recommended by Mrs. Slingluff

Staff recommendations:

Kirsten O’Neill

Career and Technical Education Advisory Council:

Brian Harris – recommended by Dr. Brittingham
Valerie Fields – recommended by Dr. Brooks-Buck
Karen Hazelwood – recommended by Mrs. Slingluff

Staff recommendations:

Karen Bazemore
Ross Boone
Charles Chapin
Chef Maia Collins
John Cotton
Jonathan Graham
Ryan Jenkins
Paul Jodun
Elizabeth Joyner
Dr. Katelyn Leitner
Angelo Milan
Justin Nemeth
Dr. Justin Oliver
Mona Parker
Dorissa Pitts-Page
Paige Powell
Judy Raymond
Terry Smith
Shalarrisa Skinner
Susan Stubenrauch
Alexandria Sylve-Parker
Joan Turner
Angela Turntine

Troy Williams
Students (TBD)

Member Byrum moved and Board Member Jenkins seconded the motion to approve the members of the Citizen Advisory Committees as read.

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

➤ Employee Appeal No 2023/24-2:

Board Member Dr. Brooks-Buck moved and Board Member Byrum seconded the motion that the Superintendent's request to dismiss employee appeal number 23/24-2 be granted because the material allegations contained in the complaint were not filed within 45 days of the alleged act of discrimination as required by School Board Policy 1-5.9 (A).

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

Board Chair Riddick provided the following comments:

- Time limits were given to the Superintendent regarding his topics during the agenda review meeting. He kept to that requirement.
- Per policy, the Non-Agenda Speakers segment is allotted 45 minutes. Therefore, pending the number of speakers, it may become necessary to adjust the time limit for each speaker to remain in compliance with Board policy.
- SPS is operating in the best interest of our children. Unfortunately, some may not like the implementation of the policy which is not personal or based on party.
- Threats were received by the School Board Chair after the August 10th School Board Meeting. Persons making the threats are still being determined as well as possible participation by some colleagues. Many threats were received by "fellow Christians" after information was circulated on a Christian Network. The threatening messages received referenced the removal of children from public schools and enrollment in private schools. Verification of these messages are posted on the Chair's political Facebook page for viewing.
- Refuse to stand by and allow anyone to tear down Suffolk Public Schools as we are in the business of supporting, educating, and providing a safe environment for students.
- Staff continually dealing with negativity and disrespect. Counter intelligence must stop as it is not in the best interest of children but designed to dismantle the school division.
- Suffolk Public Schools cannot accomplish the work of the division due to foolishness. If you're not supportive of the business of children, let the foolishness go.
- Process asking citizens to put in writing their request to speak before the board is not an abuse of power.
- Tired of watching Dr. Gordon be unfairly treated and disrespected by those hiding their hands and claiming disrespect on the Superintendent's behalf. Respect goes both ways. You cannot hurl insults at him and expect him to continually take it without a response.
- Most speakers addressing the Board did not indicate they had a child(ren) in the school division. If the division is doing so poorly, let us hear from the 14,000 plus Suffolk Public Schools parents or guardians.
- Board Members were asked to not have their constituents reach out to the Chair due to misinformation received from their town hall.
- Working to protect Suffolk Public Schools. An alleged allegation was shared with one person, however, before leaving the building, FOIA requests were received for that same information

shared. Acting innocently while maneuvering secretly will cause a person to correspond with you differently.

- Asked members to focus on the CIP however, some members did not bother to dissect the information.
- All need to get with the business of educating our children but if you have any other motive, you are asked to resign.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Accident Review Report – August 2023
- Capital Projects Financial Statement
- Financial Report as of June 30, 2023
- Financial Report - August 31, 2023

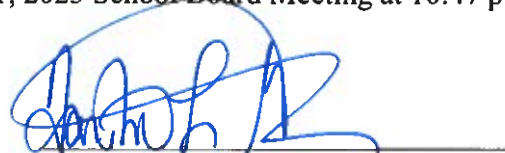
ADJOURNMENT

- Adjournment of Meeting:

Board Chair Riddick adjourned the September 21, 2023 School Board Meeting at 10:47 p.m.



Tyrone Riddick, *Board Chair*



Tarshia L. Gardner, *Board Clerk*

