

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE SUFFOLK CITY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, November 10, 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 Mayo¹
Tyron Riddick²
Sherri Story

Attendance via Electronic Device (Upon Board Approval):

Phyllis Byrum, *Vice Chair*

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 Howell 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: 4 / Nay: 0 / Abstain: 0 / Absent: 3 (Mayo/Riddick/Byrum). The motion Passed by vote of 4 to 0

➤ Gifted & Advanced Instruction Updates:

Dr. Lawson-Davenport, Director of Instruction and Curriculum, presented the following highlights:

- 2nd Grade Screening 2021-2022 - 1,927 students were screened and 149 were eligible for gifted services.

¹ Board Member Mayo arrived at 5:06 p.m.

² Board Member Riddick arrived at 5:24 p.m.

- Governor’s School for the Arts
 - 2021-2022 – 27 students
 - 2022-2023 – 36 students
- International Baccalaureate Program
 - 2021-2022 – 61 Pre-Diploma Students, 45 Diploma Students, 19 seniors, Diploma Awards (53%)
 - 2022-2023 – 36 Pre-Diploma Students, 38 Diploma Students, 19 Seniors
- Project Lead the Way – Engineering
 - 2021-2022 – 84 Students
 - 2022-2023 – 81 Students
- Project Lead the Way – Biomedical Sciences
 - 2021-2022 – 52 Students
 - 2022-2023 – 59 Students
- Center for Performing and Production Arts – 2022-2023
 - 34 Students
- Advanced Placement
 - 2021-2022 – 452 Students
 - 2022-2023 – 426 Students
 - 2022 – 43% of students enrolled and taken AP exams earned a 3 or higher
 - Areas of focus (continued growth of advanced high school offerings, including expanded enrollment in college-level courses, equity in gifted services and advanced instruction, professional development on equity and access from College Board).
- Dual Enrollment
 - 2021-2022 – 153 Students
 - 2022-2023 – 136 Students

Board members asked questions, made comments, and thanked Dr. Lawson-Davenport for her report.

- SEAC Annual Report: Representatives were not available to present at this meeting, therefore, this report will be moved to the December 2022 School Board Work Session.
- Strategic Plan 2023-2028 Discussion:
Dr. Branch, Chief Academic Officer, presented the final version of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. She highlighted the following:
 - 2023-2028 Strategic Plan Final Process
 - Goals and Indicators
 - Student Achievement
 - Climate and Culture
 - Human and Fiscal Resources
 - Community Engagement and Communication
 - Vision Statement
The Vision of Suffolk Public Schools is to strive for excellence in education, celebrate diversity, and be committed to students, staff, and the school community.
 - Mission Statement
The Mission of Suffolk Public Schools is to produce 21st century learners that will become productive citizens in society; foster a dynamic, safe and nurturing learning environment; partner with the school community for the benefit of students and staff; strengthen the school division by employing a highly qualified and diverse staff; effectively and efficiently manage capital and human resources, effectively communicate to increase community investment.

- Title
Destination 2028: Connection, Educational Excellence, and Innovation
- Slogan
Creating Achievers: From Classroom to Community

Board members thanked Dr. Branch for working on the Strategic Plan and having done an excellent job.

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.
- Pledge of Allegiance:
Member Riddick led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Approval of Agenda:
Vice Chair Byrum moved and Member Mayo seconded the motion to approve the 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.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS ON AGENDA TOPICS

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

REPORTS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

- Good News Report:
Mr. Melvin Bradshaw, Community Engagement Facilitator, highlighted the following good news/events that occurred throughout the division:
 - Spotlight (Season 2, Episode 2 of the SPS STARCast; Dr. King and Mrs. Devers)
 - Athletics & Activities (Landon Jones-World Kickboxing Champion; KFHS Mighty Marching Bulldogs; LHS Marching Quiet Storm Band; NRHS Competition Cheer Squad; NRHS-Varsity Field Hockey, Cross Country, Varsity Football, Golf Teams; LHS-Theatre, Varsity Field Hockey, Varsity Boys & Girls Volleyball, and Cross-Country Teams; KFHS-Varsity Football, Varsity Boys Volleyball, Varsity Girls Volleyball, Girls Field Hockey, and the Cross-Country Team)
 - Awards & Recognitions (October Teacher Spotlight)
 - SPS In the Community (Healthy School Market; Annual Milton Liverman Golf Tournament; "Big Feet Meet"; Breast Cancer Awareness Day in SPS; and the Disability Awareness Fall Fair)
 - SPS in the News (Suffolk News Herald; and 13 News New)

➤ Calendar of Special Events:

Dr. Gordon spotlighted the events that are listed on SPS website for November and December. He also mentioned a new initiative, SPS Present Everyday, which is aimed at tackling chronic absenteeism.

CONSENT AGENDA

➤ Approval of the Consent Agenda:

Vice Chair Byrum moved and Member Mayo 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

➤ Motion to table Resolution 22/23-8 until the next meeting to get additional details on the resolution (Riddick – 10/26/2022)

Member Riddick requested to withdraw his motion to table Resolution 22/23-8. There being no objections from Board Members, the motion to table was withdrawn.

➤ Resolution 22/23-8: A Resolution Authorizing the Office of the School Board Attorney to Make Grammatical and Non-Substantive Revisions to Policies of the Suffolk City School Board

The Clerk read Resolution 22/23-8.

Vice-Chair Byrum moved and Member Jenkins seconded the motion to accept Resolution 22/23-8 as read.

Board Members asked questions and expressed their concerns with the resolution. Board Member Riddick recommended removing the following language from the resolution “non-substantive revision of policies” and suggested approving the resolution granting the School Board Attorney the right to make grammatical changes to policies without presenting that information to the Board.

Attorney Waller clarified the process for making changes to the resolution via an amended motion.

Member Riddick moved and Member Story seconded the motion to amend Resolution 22/23-8, removing the language “non-substantive revisions of policies” and granting the School Board Attorney the authority to make grammatical changes without the Board’s prior approval.

The roll-call vote began and Board Member Mayo asked that the original motion be reread for clarity before voting. Board Members Riddick and Story objected to the request. The Chair allowed the rereading of the motion for clarity, allowed any members who wish to change their votes to do so. With no other concerns expressed, the voting resumed beginning with

Member Mayo. The vote was: Aye: 3 / Nay: 4 (Howell, Mayo, Byrum, Brooks-Buck) / Abstain: 0. The motion Failed by vote of 4 to 3.

Attorney Waller provided clarification of the steps following a failed amended motion and directed the Board to provide a vote on the original motion made by Vice-Chair Byrum and seconded by Member Jenkins (“to accept Resolution 22/23-8”).

Upon a roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 4 / Nay: 3 (Howell, Riddick, Story) / Abstain: 0. The motion Passed by vote of 4 to 3.

NEW BUSINESS

➤ New Course Proposal

Vice Chair Byrum moved and Member Mayo seconded the motion to accept the new course proposals.

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

➤ State Required Bonus to be Paid by December 1, 2022

Vice Chair Byrum moved and Member Jenkins seconded the motion to accept the state required bonus for Suffolk Public Schools’ employees.

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

➤ Strategic Plan 2023-2028

Vice Chair Byrum moved and Member Mayo seconded the motion to approve the Strategic Plan for 2023-2028.

Board Member Story expressed her disapproval of the Strategic Plan.

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

➤ Ordinance 22/23-1 – Ordinance 22/23-16

Vice Chair Byrum moved and Member Mayo seconded the motion to approve Ordinances 22/23-1 through 22/23-16.

Board Member Riddick and Member Story seconded a motion to defer a vote on items 4-19 (Ordinances 22/23-1 through Ordinance 22/23-16), but those covered by the approved Resolution 22/23-8 (A Resolution Authorizing the Office of the School Board Attorney to Make Grammatical and Non-Substantive Revisions to Policies of the Suffolk City School Board) can be revised as outlined in the approved Resolution with the remaining ordinances not covered by Resolution 22/23-8 to be considered by the Board at the next meeting for approval.

Upon a roll-call vote, the vote was: Aye: 2 / Nay: 5 (Howell, Jenkins, Mayo, Byrum, Dr. Brooks-Buck) / Abstain: 0. The motion failed by vote of 5 to 2.

➤ Ordinance 22/23-1 through Ordinance 22/23-16

Vice Chair moved and Member Mayo seconded the motion to approve Ordinances 22/23-1 through 22/23-16.

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

➤ 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 – First Reading

Attorney Waller explained the importance of reviewing, and asking questions regarding this new policy because a vote will need to take place at the December meeting in order to meet the January 1st deadline as required by state law. He suggested that Board Members review the model policy listed on the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) website and compare the policy that is being presented to the model policy. He also explained the process used in drafting policies for review by the Policy Review Committee.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS ON NON-AGENDA TOPICS

➤ Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items:

No speakers signed up to speak.

BUSINESS BY BOARD MEMBERS

➤ Comments and Reports by School Board Members:

Members:

- Thanked Dr. Gordon and his team (Forsman, Whiting, Branch, Lawson-Davenport and others) for their continued dedication to the entire SPS family and community.
- Thanked constituents for their votes during the election, congratulated newly elected and re-elected Board Members and encouraged those newly elected to educate themselves in Public Education.
- Congratulated the Marching Bands, teachers spotlighted, and athletic wins/sports accolades and information on the fine arts programs.
- Encouraged families to continue participation in the family reading initiative and to buy books for children as Christmas presents.
- Thanked all who participated in the Legislative Day event and a special shout out to Mrs. Bilby, her staff and students who demonstrated academic excellence during the visit.
- Were excited for the bonuses and turkey that faculty and staff would receive.
- Thanked the Food and Nutritional Services team for the wonderful holiday dinner.
- Were amazed at the beauty and safety of the new football field at LHS.
- Encouraged all to keep student success at the forefront of every decision, and asked everyone to put aside any difference that might interfere with the best interest of the students.
- Wished Happy Veterans Day to all veterans and thanked them for their service.
- Wished all a happy and safe Thanksgiving/Fall Break.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Accident Report - October 2022
- Financial Report - October 2022
- Financial Report: Capital Projects

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 Mayo moved and Member Jenkins 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 November 10, 2022 School Board Meeting at 8:42 p.m.


Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck, *Board Chair*


Tarshia L. Gardner, *Board Clerk*



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