

RECORD OF BOARD PROCEEDINGS
(MINUTES)

Fulton, KY December 19, 2023

The **Fulton Independent** Board of Education met at **Fulton High School** at **5:45** o'clock **P. M.** on the **119th** day of **December, 2023** with the following members present:

(1) Mrs. Carol Bransford, Chair (2) Mrs. Debbie Vaughn, Vice-Chair (3) Mrs. Christy Pettigrew (via Zoom) (4) Mr. Austin Ferrell (5) Mrs. Rea Jones

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF
FULTON INDEPENDENT BOARD OF EDUCATION**

CALL TO ORDER

1. Chair Bransford called the Regular Monthly Meeting of Fulton Independent Board of Education to order at 5:45 p.m.

PRAYER

2. Mr. Kent Green opened the meeting with prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

AGENDA APPROVAL

4. With the recommendation of the Superintendent, a motion by Mrs. Jones and second by Mr. Pettigrew, the Board approved the agenda of the December 19, 2023, Regular Monthly Meeting as presented.

Members voting yes: Mrs. Bransford, Mr. Ferrell, Mrs. Pettigrew, Mrs. Vaughn, Mrs. Jones.

ROLL CALL

5. Mrs. Bransford, Mrs. Debbie Vaughn, Mrs. Christy Pettigrew, Mr. Austin Ferrell, and Mrs. Rea Jones were present for roll call.

SUPERINTENDENT ATTENDANCE

6. Superintendent Rogers was present for the December meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

7. With a motion by Mrs. Pettigrew and second by Mr. Ferrell, the Board approved the amended minutes of the November 21, 2023, meeting as presented by the Board Secretary.

Members voting yes: Mrs. Bransford, Mrs. Jones, Mr. Ferrell, Mrs. Pettigrew, Mrs. Vaughn

PUBLIC COMMENTS

8. Janet Gossum acknowledged and expressed her gratitude to the board for allowing the public to speak and submit questions ahead of time to be considered for placement on the agenda. Gossum said the public is essential in supporting public school education and that she looks forward to hearing questions from the public answered after the board has time to research the topic and answer those questions for a clearer direction for the future of the students.

Lenny Hohlbein also spoke, expressing his concern about FISS student performance. Hohlbein shared several statistics he had researched about Kentucky's independent schools. According to Hohlbein, there

are 171 school districts in the state and the 30 districts with the highest tax rates are all independent school districts. He said that Fulton is one of the highest at 73.5%. Compared with Murray Independent School District's rate of 70.9%. Hohlbein said that FIRD is the smallest of the Kentucky's 32 Single A schools. Based on his research, the average math proficiency of Kentucky schools is 33%. FIRD has 17% proficiency in math, while Murray has 52%. For reading, Hohlbein said FIRD students are 37% proficient, while Murray is at 47%. The state average amount spent on student learning is \$14,042, based on his research. Hohlbein said FIRD spends \$16,324 per student and Murray spends \$17,931. The student to teacher ratio for FIRD is 11.1 to one, with the state average reported as 15.3 to one. Hohlbein told the board that based on his research, the low student performance can't be blamed on money spent nor a low student to teacher ratio. "If you look at this as a business, the business is failing miserably" Hohlbein said. He said a huge amount of Fulton taxpayer's money is now missing and they deserve a better explanation that what they have been given. At this, Hohlbein's 3-minutes were up and Bransford told him that while she truly appreciated his concern, none of what he mentioned were on the approved agenda and the board could not comment further.

Fulton resident Donna Hacker was given the floor stating, "It is a sad day when we, in this Fulton City School, manage to lose, or misspend, or miscalculate \$1.1 million under your watch," she told the board and superintendent. Hacker questioned why Fulton was still "holding on" to independent school status. Hacker said the school gets a hefty chunk of taxpayer money and "tons" of grant funding, yet FIRD hasn't seen significant improvement in student test scores. Ms. Hacker said she wanted to know where is FIRD's focus on learning." We are working as taxpayers trying to give you resources and its failing. We would love to see us start talking to Fulton County about merging these two districts and make it a better Fulton County for the students," she said. Bransford told Hacker that at the end of the day, the board are taxpayers just like her and they were working on what is best for the students first.

Mr. Milner was the final public speaker, and he echoed the concerns of those who spoke before him. "My taxes have doubled and about 60% if that goes to FIRD. I'm not sure what our enrollment is, but my point is where is the tipping point, where is the economy of scale, and is that not the board's responsibility? What are you doing to address that," he said. As the time for public comments ended, Bransford spoke to the crowd, saying, "We meet every third Tuesday of every month and all of you are welcome to attend. Just don't make it her tonight. Our doors are open and if any of you feel like you can do better than the board that was voted in, be my guest." Board member Rea Jones waited until the end of the meeting to express her gratitude and the board's gratitude to FIRD financial officer Chris Morris, Superintendent Jeff Rogers, and the district's entire staff. "We support you all 100% for transparency and at the end of the day, we are looking at the fact that putting our students first, our teachers first, the overall picture and we want to tell you all that we appreciate everything you do.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

9. With a motion by Mrs. Pettigrew and a second by Mrs. Vaughn, the Board accepted the reports and approved action items listed in the consent agenda as follows:

A. ASAP Moment – Principal's Accountability Report

Mr. Seavers' Student Technology Leadership program was scheduled to present, but had to be postponed due to student illness.

B. FRYSC Activities Update

Ms. Tracy Pulley, Family Resource /Youth Services Center Coordinator, submitted a report to Board Members detailing the activities and services she provided during November 2023.

C. Food Service Report

Mrs. Ashley Teasley, Food Service Director, submitted the Monthly Food Service Report, outlining Food Service Department activity through November 2023.

D. Employee of the Month

Pete Zalucki, Custodial, was recognized as Employee of the Month for November 2023.

E. Teacher of the Month

Bethany Carter, MS Science teacher, was recognized as Teacher of the Month for November 2023.

F. Fundraising Activity Requests

All Fundraising requests were approved by the Board.

PERSONNEL REPORT

10. Superintendent Rogers informed the Board of the following personnel actions:

Appointments: None

Transfer: None

Terminations None

Retirements: None

A. Superintendent's Effective Standards

Mr. Rogers presented his Standard 4 – Human Resource Leadership.

CALENDAR PROPOSAL – 2nd READING

11. On a motion by Mrs. Vaughn and a second by Mr. Ferrell, the Board approved the 2nd reading and adopted the FY 2024-2025 Calendar Reading as presented by Kent Green, DPP and recommendation of Mr. Rogers.

The proposed calendar included 174 student days and 185 teacher days.

Teachers are to return for professional development on Aug. 6 and the first day for students would be Tuesday, Aug. 13. The proposed calendar includes Fall Break from Oct. 7-11, Christmas Break from Dec. 23-Jan. 3, 2025. Spring Break will be April 7-11, with the last day for students set on May 22.

Board member Debbie Vaughn asked Green to confirm the proposed two-week Christmas Break.

Green explained that the way the days fall on the calendar would have the first day back fall on a Thursday or Friday, so the committee opted to move the return date to the first Monday, on Jan. 6.

Mr. Green also stated that a 4-day work week was discussed and had a lot of PRO's and that teachers seemed favorable, but wanted more time before adopting that type of schedule.

Members voting yes: Mrs. Bransford, Mrs. Jones, Mr. Ferrell, Mrs. Pettigrew, Mrs. Vaughn.

CDIP APPROVAL

12. On a motion by Mrs. Jones and second by Mrs. Pettigrew, the Board approved the CDIP (Consolidated District Improvement Plan) as presented and recommended by Mr. Rogers.

Members voting yes: Mrs. Bransford, Mrs. Jones, Mr. Ferrell, Mrs. Pettigrew, Mrs. Vaughn.

FINANCIAL REPORTS AND ORDERS OF THE TREASURER

13. On a motion by Mrs. Jones and second by Mr. Ferrell, the Board approved the monthly Financial Statement and Claims, and Activity Account Reports, as presented by Chris Morris, Finance Officer, and Betty Bartimus, Activity Account Treasurer.

ADJOURNMENT

15. With a motion by Mrs. Pettigrew and second by Mr. Ferrell, the Board meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Members voting yes: Mrs. Bransford, Mrs. Jones, Mr. Ferrell, Mrs. Pettigrew, Mrs. Vaughn.

Chair

Secretary