



**West Plains R-VII School District
Board of Education Update
March 18, 2025
Regular Session Meeting
West Plains High School Library**

Open Session

- President Tyree called the meeting to order.
- The West Plains R-VII School District Board of Education led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Student/Staff Spotlight

- Mr. Somoza featured students from the Zizzer Pride Academy. The students spoke to the board about their positive experiences at ZPA.



Consent Agenda

- Before approving previous board meeting minutes, the board approved the following:
 - Financial report
 - [https://go.boarddocs.com/mo/wpr7sd/Board.nsf/files/DEGMDN5AC27E/\\$file/Board%20Balance%20Sheet%20-%20March%202025.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/mo/wpr7sd/Board.nsf/files/DEGMDN5AC27E/$file/Board%20Balance%20Sheet%20-%20March%202025.pdf)
 - Hires, Transfers, Volunteers, Resignations, Retirements, and Terminations
- **New Hires – Board Action Required**

Certified Positions

- Jerry “Ronnie” Harper - District Counseling Advisor
- Pamuela May - WPHS Counselor
- Eva Benine - WPHS Counselor

Non-Certified Positions

- Elijah Wartnaby - Custodian
- Gabe White - WPHS Asst. Baseball Coach
- Daniel Luehrs - WPHS Asst. Baseball Coach
- Jared Davis - WPHS Asst. Football Coach
- Derek Culpepper - District Maintenance
- Danielle Gorham - Custodian
- Drew Cargill - District Maintenance

- **Transfers – Board Action Required**
 - Austin Reece - Assistant Wrestling Coach to Head Wrestling Coach
 - Jesse McGuire - Head Wrestling Coach to Assistant Wrestling Coach
 - Donald Skelton - Full Time Route Driver to Part Time Sub Driver
 - Mason Miller - WPHS Study Skills to WPHS Social Studies

- **Volunteers - Board Action Required**
 - None at this time

- **Resignations – Board Action Required**
 - Molly Burnett - Elementary Teacher
 - Shyanne Lewis - WPES 10 Month Secretary
 - Andrea Varney - WPMS 5th Grade Teacher
 - Mason Miller - WPHS Head Boys Basketball Coach
 - Emily Edwards-Long - District Special Education Process Coordinator
 - Don Long - WPHS Asst. Boys Basketball Coach
 - Mary Howell-Brown - District Special Education Process Coordinator
 - Brady Dean - WPMS Physical Education Teacher
 - Charlotte Johnson - WPHS Counselor
 - Anna Collins - WPE Kindergarten Teacher

- **Retirements - Board Action Required**
 - None at this time

- **Terminations - Board Action Required**
 - Dominic Case - Custodian

- Approval of CSIP Update (CSIP S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, & S9)

Previous Business

- MSBA Policy Updates - 2nd Read
- Seated Requirements for Participation - 2nd Read (CSIP S8 & S9) - Dr. Davis reviewed the survey results at the February board meeting. He shared that the school attorney had mentioned it was a board decision, but Dr. Davis also noted that this could change for

the 2026-27 school year with possible legislation. The board approved 7-0.

Regular Agenda

- The monthly bills were paid and approved. The board approved 7-0.
- Payment of Buro Invoice (CSIP S7). The board approved 6-0-1. (RG abstained)

New Business

- Approval of Surplus Property Bid(s) (CSIP S1 & S7) - The Carmichael property was put up for bid several months ago. The district received one bid, but it was more for a rental than a purchase. Dr. Davis asked the board to reject the bid and start the process again. The board approved 7-0.
- Approval of OPAA Contract Extension (CSIP S7)—Each year, the district reevaluates its food service contract with Opaa! Food Management. The district is pleased with the service and quality of the food. The board approved the contract for an additional year. The board approved 7-0.

Updates/Reports to the Board of Education

Administrators reported on current events, projects, and plans in their respective buildings or departments.

- The Zizzer Pride Academy has 72 students, 14 of whom are on IEPs and 13 in the MO Option Program. The instructional coach continues to support curriculum improvements. The Zizzer Clinic now serves 32 students weekly, BHC is hiring another CSS to reduce waitlists, and five students have completed the MO Option program this semester.
- West Plains Middle School Student Council hosted successful socials for 5th-8th graders, serving as a fun event and a behavior incentive. Additionally, 6th grade ELA students gained real-world experience by participating in mock job interviews with local professionals.
- SoMoTech - February was short but busy, with eight students advancing to the SkillsUSA state competition and SoMoTech students sweeping the MSU-WP Welding Competition. Staff focused on accreditation prep and safety improvements, and we look forward to welcoming the community to Showcase Night on March 20.
- Public Relations & Communications - The annual Summa Cum Laude Luncheon, honoring the top 10% of graduating seniors, will be held on April 29 at the West Plains Civic Center, and all board members are invited. Additionally, the Faculty & Staff Awards Banquet is set for May 14. Ongoing digital storytelling efforts continue to highlight the dedication and achievements of our educators.

- Facility, Human Resources, Security, and Capital Projects - In February, we served nearly 1,100 free suppers to students through the CACFP program, and our maintenance team completed several projects while preparing for summer improvements. Additionally, we have trained 175 staff members on Stop the Bleed, provided AED and CPR training for all bus drivers, and shared information on the Courage 2 Report tool to enhance school safety.
- West Plains High School participated in the annual high school fair at Howell Valley, connecting with rural students to showcase opportunities for incoming freshmen. Freshman Enrollment Night on March 4th had a great turnout, allowing families to explore academics, activities, and campus resources, while the Future Teachers of America hosted its first area meeting, bringing together students, educators, and university representatives to support future educators.
- South Fork Elementary is progressing into the fourth quarter, preparing for assessments, spring conferences, and MAP testing. A big celebration goes to Mrs. Hunter and the South Fork community for raising \$1,210 for The Ronald McDonald House through the “Share a Heart” program.
- Teaching & Learning—A new curriculum evaluation tool has been developed to help teachers assess curriculum alignment, effectiveness, and district support. WPHS has been selected for a DESE Quality Assurance visit during EOC testing, and preparations for WorkKeys, MAP, and EOC assessments are underway.
- West Plains Elementary 2nd grade has 60% of students at or above grade level, surpassing last year’s progress, a huge achievement for both students and teachers. WPE’s first Spring Carnival on March 6 was a success, with over 250 families enjoying games, free books, and activities.
- In the Superintendent's Report, Dr. Davis highlighted several topics:
 - Student school board member interviews for the 2025-2026 school year will take place at the April school board meeting. Dr. Davis reported he had completed the initial screening process and the first round of interviews.
 - Financial Report
 - Year To Date Budget as of 3.17.25
 - Total Revenues- \$24,764,806 - 74.76%
 - Total Expenditures - \$23,846,560 - 68.10%
 - The 2019 Lease Purchase Payment - \$276,861 was paid
 - Dr. Davis discussed the recent Legislative Forum that was hosted by the district. Sixteen area schools were present, along with 3 Representatives, 1 Senator, and 2 DESE supervisors. Plans are in place for next year already. The majority of the meeting discussed Open Enrollment and transportation.

- Two school buses ordered for the 2025-2026 school year are ahead of schedule and will be delivered in March or April. Dr. Davis commented that this is not a concern financially for the district and is happy they are coming early and not late. He referenced that extra trip buses are needed during the heavy spring trip season. The special needs bus is still scheduled for fall delivery.
- 2025-2026 Budget Discussion - Dr. Davis previewed an example of a certified salary school for the upcoming year. He mentioned that he would be asking for approval of several schedules in the April meeting. Currently, he is navigating the Teacher Base Salary Grant requirements while maximizing the money to put into the teacher's pay. He also mentioned that he has been reducing and eliminating many stipends and positions during the last few months. Some positions have been eliminated as retirements or resignations have taken place. The biggest stipend elimination that he mentioned was moving away from paid lunch duty. Based on the current salary schedule, this would save the district over \$85,000 next year.
- The health insurance renewal came in. The district is receiving a 5% increase to stay with MEUHP. Dr. Davis said he would recommend the district stay with MEUHP and continue to pay the full amount of the base plan at the April board meeting pending any new information that comes forward. MEUHP will make some changes with their main provider, but Cox, Mercy, OZH, Barnes, and Baxter will still be in the network. Also, current deductible amounts will carry over. There will be zero changes to all plan coverages. He commented that this is the first time that the plans have not changed from year to year. The only negative is that the district, as it did about 6 years ago, will get an assessment to cover costs in MEUHP. This is approximately \$150,000. Dr. Davis said the district can afford this, and he would not be pushing the cost onto the employees.
- As this was the month for hiring non-tenured staff, he mentioned that 19 teachers would become tenured when they reported back to the district in August. This would bring the district's tenure rate to 49.36%. He was pleased to see this number increase so significantly.
- In closing, Dr. Davis discussed the aftermath of the storm. He first thanked the board for their support of his idea of the "ten tornado days." He said this is "something that is not heard of...but is thankful that our district does things like this for the staff". He mentioned that student absences have been excused as needed, and the outpouring of support for the kids and staff has been amazing. He thanked WP 1st Baptist Church for providing the South Campus to use the building on Monday for South Fork. He also mentioned that Howell

Valley and Glenwood Schools both had brought frozen and refrigerated food up to WPMS and WPHS kitchens on Saturday to prevent a massive loss of food. (SFES also brought in their food.)

- Student School Board Member Report (CSIP S5): Before spring break, Emma surveyed students about the counseling services offered at the high school.

The next board meeting is **Monday**, April 14, 2025. *The Open Session will begin at 8:00 p.m. in the West Plains High School Library.*