



**West Plains R-VII School District
Board of Education Update
May 20, 2025
West Plains High School Library**

Open Session

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

Student Spotlight - West Plains High School - Mr. Smith recognized Lauren Stewart, the 2025 Valedictorian, and Kyle Martinez, Salutatorian. The seniors reflected on their time at WPHS and what it meant to be a Zizzer.



Consent Agenda - Approved 6-0

- Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting (CSIP S3)
- Approval of Monthly Finance Reports (CSIP S7)
- Approval of Program Evaluations (CSIP S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S7, S8, & S9)
- Approval of Employment:

I. New Hires – Board Action Required

Certified Positions

- Christy Otter - WPHS Study Skills Teacher
- Adam Niehaus - WPHS Social Studies Teacher
- Jared Davis - WPHS Part Time Strength Training Teacher

Non-Certified Positions

- Ryan Harvey - WPHS FCCLA Sponsor
- Kelly Marsh - Custodian
- Taber Walker - Seasonal Maintenance
- Joe Mansfield - Seasonal Maintenance
- Alicia Gunter - WPHS National Honor Society Co-Sponsor
- Karsyn Smith - WPHS Student Council Co-Sponsor
- Erin Lovelace - WPHS Senior Class Sponsor
- Kirsten Peterson - WPHS Junior Class Sponsor
- Haley Kraft - WPMS Cheerleading Coach
- Elizabeth Mitchell - Paraprofessional
- Adam Niehaus - WPHS Asst. Football Coach

II. Transfers – Board Action Required

- Amber Russell - SFES 3rd Grade to Parents as Teachers Instructor

III. Volunteers - Board Action Required

- Peyton Reynolds - Volunteer

IV. Resignations – Board Action Required

- Amy Lipford - WPHS Girls Soccer Coach
- Bobby Bevel - WPHS Social Studies Teacher and Asst. Baseball Coach
- Mason Miller - WPHS Social Studies Teacher
- Ashlie Ledbetter - WPMS Office Manager (5/30/25)
- Edward Contreras - Substitute Bus Driver

V. Retirements - Board Action Required

- None at this time

VI. Terminations - Board Action Required

- None at this time

Previous Business

- The board approved the 2025-2026 salary schedules. Approved 6-0. The only update was that Dr. Davis amended the longevity stipend for certified staff. Currently, it provides \$1,000 for certified staff with 11+ years of experience. Next year, it will be based on the following rates:
 - Steps 1 - 10 - \$0
 - Steps 11 - 15 - \$1000
 - Steps 16 - 20 - \$1500
 - Steps 21 - 25 - \$2000
 - Steps 26+ - \$2500
 - Dr. Davis said that he would like for the 2026-27 school year and beyond to combine this incentive into the salary schedule. This could eliminate multiple contracts and confusion. .
 - After the board unanimously approved this change (and the other schedules that Mr. Orchard presented), Dr. Davis thanked the board for recognizing the importance of taking care of the staff with multiple years of experience. He said, “Keeping our experienced staff and recruiting staff with experience is vital to student success. Thank you for recognizing and rewarding that. I know I speak for all the certified staff when I say thank you.”
- Discussion of the 2025-2026 budget (CSIP S7). The majority of the board meeting was spent discussing the upcoming budget. Dr. Davis referenced a legislative update that many of the administrators had participated in that morning. Terms such as “be careful,” “use caution,” and “a big spread in possible funds you could receive” were mentioned. However, Dr. Davis assured the board that, as usual, he would be very conservative in his revenue budget. Below are some highlights from his budget talk.
 - \$36,010,177 - Expenses & \$34,566,935 Revenue
 - He mentioned to the board that these numbers will change. Many of the expenses will decrease as projects are completed ahead of schedule, lowering the total expense budget.
 - 10% increase in MUSIC insurance - (Facilities and Work Compensation)
 - \$75,000 increase in costs
 - MUSIC just emailed and said to expect a 5 %+ increase
 - Local Property Taxes - All to be deposited into Fund I next year
 - Past breakdowns - 75% Fund I...25% Fund IV
 - 5% increase in utilities

- SMTI Perkins, Enhanced Grant, and CTE funding will be determined in early June
- Capital Projects (Many will be completed in FY25)
 - **Zizzer Stadium**
 - Track resurfacing - Moved to 26-27 School Year because of lighting and turf projects (26-27)
 - LED Lighting - Majority will be paid in the 24-25 Budget; we have paid for the materials already. (24-25 & 25-26)
 - Turf insurance replacement - Not currently in either budget, waiting on timelines (24-25 & 25-26)
 - Steps (24-25)
 - Seal asphalt around bleachers (24-25)
 - **Zizzer Ballpark**
 - Carpentry Class Finishing Building & Dugouts (25-26)
 - Ballpark Bleachers (24-25)
 - **District**
 - Repaired/Replaced entrances into parking lots (25-26)
 - Special Needs Bus - \$180,000 (25-26)
 - 2019 Lease Purchase - \$337,000 (25-26)
 - Two School buses for the 25-26 school year (arrived early) (24-25)
 - **WPES**
 - Roofing \$1.3 Million (24-25 & 25-26)
 - EC drainage (24-25)
 - Parking lot sealing (26-26)
 - Tuckpointing (25-26)
 - Updated/Replaced 20 cameras (24-25)
 - **WPMS**
 - Carpet - Room 215 (24-25)
 - FEMA Doors - 4 sets - \$106,000 (50% split between years) (24-25 & 25-26)
 - West Awning (24-25)
 - **WPHS**
 - South Band Doors (24-25)
 - South Choir Doors (24-25)
 - Counseling office carpet (24-25)
 - **SFES**
 - Parking lot sealing (24-25)

- Tuckpointing (25-26)
- Gym Painting (24-25)
- **SMTI**
 - Security/Storm shelter (26-27)
- **Valley View**
 - Parking lot sealing (24-25)
 - Security/Storm shelter (26-27)
- **ZPA**
 - Front Awning Replacements (24-25 & 25-26)
 - Tuckpointing (25-26)
 - Security/Storm shelter (26-27)

Regular Agenda

- The monthly bills were paid and approved. The board approved 6-0.
- Payment of Buro Invoice (CSIP S7). The board approved 5-0-1. (RG abstained)
- Payment of Tyree Fertilizer invoice (CSIP S7). The board approved 5-0-1. (CT abstained)

New Business

- 2025 MSBA Policy Update - 1st Read (CSIP S5) - Dr. Davis presented the latest round of Board Policy updates. Approval will be at the next board meeting.
- 2025-2030 - CSIP Update - 1st Read (CSIP S1-S9) - Dr. Ross presented on the work of the CSIP team. Final read and approval will be at the next board meeting.
- Approval of Athletic Training Bid (CSIP S7) - The board requested athletic training bids for the next five years. PTSC of West Plains received the bid at \$30,000 per year. The only change from the last contract is the addition of an athletic trainer who will be on site in the mornings in the fall during the WPMS football season. The board approved 6-0.
- Approval of the Special Education Related Services Bid for OT/PT - The district accepts bids each year for occupational and physical therapy services. Dr. Ross recommended that the board accept the Ozarks Healthcare Rehabilitation Services bid as the related service provider for the 2025-2026 school year. (The board approved 5-0-1; Grigsby abstained)

Updates/Reports to the Board of Education

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

- Federal Programs, Special Services, CSIP, and Early Learning - The district received sealed bids for 2025–2026 Occupational and Physical Therapy services, with a recommendation for board approval in May and contract finalization on July 1. Additional updates include

submitted payment requests for federal programs, a pending final Parents as Teachers report, CSIP documents ready for board review, and a successful Special Olympics inclusion initiative led by Student Council.

- Zizzer Pride Academy - ZPA continues to make progress with 74 enrolled students, strong instructional support, and collaboration with behavioral health and safety partners, including an SRO and the Zizzer Clinic. This year, 27 students completed the MO Option program, bringing the two-year graduation total to 150, with students also engaging in service learning, historical visits, and planning year-end celebrations.
- West Plains Middle School - Students and staff wrapped up MAP testing with strong preparation and support, followed by field trips, track meets, and transition activities for incoming and outgoing students. Highlights included a spring band concert showcasing the talents of beginner to advanced musicians.
- SoMoTech -April was a busy month with nearly 70 students earning program completion certificates, and most remaining seniors receiving industry certifications to support workforce readiness. SoMoTech also advanced NEAT admissions, celebrated seniors at multiple events, and began preparations for our 2026 accreditation visit. Dr. Cotter also discussed a recent project of the Auto Body program. The students repainted a truck for the Bakersfield Volunteer Fire Department. Below are some before and after pictures.



Members of the Bakersfield VFD stands with others in front of the department's recently donated brush truck, which was painted by students at Southern Missouri Technical Institute in West Plains. Pictured above, from left, are: SMTI Director Josh Cotter, Bakersfield Fire Chief Greg Watts, Tecumseh Assistant Fire Chief JB Duke, BHS student Tate Bonham, BVFD Secretary Zaylor Watts, SMTI instructor Brian Hoyle and SMTI instructor Jason Pekarek.



This photo shows the truck before it was painted red at the vo-tech school.

- Facility, Human Resources, Security, and Capital Projects - During the month of April, we served 2,399 free suppers to students after school. This is the CACFP program through the Department of Health and Senior Services. West Plains Elementary School: 1,340 South Fork Elementary School: 90 West Plains Middle School: 969 Total: 2,399
- West Plains High School - WPHS closed out the 2024–2025 school year with major accomplishments, including Summa Cum Laude honors for 24 seniors, successful end of year testing, a community-supported Day Without Hate, and the graduation of 283 students. Planning is already underway for curriculum improvements, and summer school begins May 19.
- South Fork Elementary—MAP testing is complete for grades 3–6, and students have shown great effort and resilience despite a challenging spring. Recent celebrations, including field trips and a tropical treat day from the South Fork PTO, have rewarded students for their hard work and support of the St. Jude fundraiser.
- Teaching & Learning— The district adopted the McGraw-Hill Wonders reading series for K–5, with teacher input guiding the selection and implementation process. In addition, summer and school-year curriculum days have been planned, assessments were successfully completed, and a two-year plan has been launched to strengthen K–4 math instruction using tools like Freckle and standards tracking.
- West Plains Elementary - Kindergarten through 4th grade students were recognized at end of year awards ceremonies for achievements in academics, attendance, and citizenship. The Little Zizzer Preschool celebrated its graduates on May 13. Summer school kicks off May 19 with strong attendance and excitement for a great session ahead.
- In the Superintendent's Report, Dr. Davis highlighted several topics:
 - In reviewing the current budget, Dr. Davis mentioned that the current year is looking very good. He reminded the board that they had planned a deficit budget this year of almost 3 million with the large projects from last year, including the WPHS Connecting Hallway and the ZIZZER Ballpark upgrades. Current budget numbers are as follows:
 - Total Revenues- \$31,468,704 - 94.83% of budget
 - May DESE Payments (Usually about 3-4 payments in May)
 - The large May payment just arrived and has been deposited.
 - June DESE Payments (Usually about 2-3 payments in June)
 - Total Expenditures - \$30,270,972 - 83.99% of budget
 - Several payrolls are yet to be made, including two for June, two for July, and also Summer school.

- DESE provides some opportunities for districts to transfer funds from the “General Fund I” account to the “Capital Fund IV” account. Dr. Davis said the district will take full advantage of these opportunities next month. Expected amounts are as follows:
 - Transportation Transfer \$249,055
 - 7% Guaranteed Transfer \$1,058,111
- The Missouri Governor has created a task force to create a new funding formula for schools. The final report is due on 12/1/26. Dr. Davis mentioned that one of the 16 person members is a close friend and is excited that Dr. Jeremy Tucker is a member of the group. Dr. Tucker is a former Superintendent of Rogersville and now works at a district in the Kansas City area. Dr. Davis did mention he wished more current or former administrators who dealt with school finance were on the committee.
- The final tuition bills will be sent to the sending school districts next Tuesday. This represents about \$4,000,000 of revenue for the district.
- Due to staffing shortages, the district will no longer be able to provide ECSE services to students who do not live in our district. In the past, West Plains R-VII provided these services to the K-8 districts, but unfortunately, with the inability to hire staff, this partnership will end.
- Dr. Davis provided the board with a handout showing the meeting schedule for the upcoming school year. It also lists the student spotlight schedule and the program evaluations for each month.

2025-2026 Board Meeting Schedule

Month	Tentative Date	Student Spotlight	Program Evaluations linked to CSIP 2025-26
July Lincoln School	15	None Board Workshop	None
August (Tax Rate)	26 (Late for Tax Rate Hearing)	None	Summer School & Building Plans Aligned to CSIP
September	16	Middle School	Technology & Transportation
October	14 (Early for P/T Conferences)	High School	Attendance and Food Service
November	18	Elementary	Emergency Management (Safety) Plan
December	16	Activities and Athletics	Student Activities and Communications
January	20	SMTI	Climate and Culture Survey (Student, Community, and Staff)
February	17	South Fork	Vocational Ed Career Technical
March	10 (Early for Spring Break)	ZPA	Guidance and Counseling, Literacy Plan, Curriculum, Assessment Plan, Academics/APR
April	21	High School	Facility Improvement and Maintenance Plan
May	19	None	District Professional Development Plan, Title 1 Plan , and Early Childhood
June	23	None Year End Meeting	Budget & Finance

- Student School Board Member Report - Emma Arnold thanked the board for the opportunity to work alongside them for the year. She remarked how much she learned about school, how things actually work, and how thankful she was for being recognized at the graduation ceremony.
- Dr. Davis and Board President Cindy Tyree ended the meeting by commenting on the year end awards ceremony. He commented about the award winners and how great things went. They also spoke about the amazing food. All members complimented the quality of the food prepared by the FFA kids and advisors.

The next board meeting is Tuesday, June 24, 2025. *The Open Session will begin at 5:30 pm in the West Plains High School Library.*