

West Plains R-VII Board Meeting
March 10, 2026

Opening Items

- Call to Order by President Cindy Tyree
- Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum by President Cindy Tyree
- Approval of Agenda - Approved 7-0
- Motion to enter into Closed Session - Approved 7-0

Closed Executive Session

- Adjournment to Closed Executive Session
- Pursuant to Section 610.021.1 Legal Matters
- Pursuant to Section 610.021.2 Leasing, purchase, or sale of real estate
- Pursuant to Section 610.021.3 Personnel Matters
 - **New Hires – Board Action Required**
 - Certified Positions
 - Mackenzie Brunson - WPHS Mathematics Teacher
 - Lucy Hershenson - WPMS 6th Grade ELA
 - Kaley Wake - WPMS 6th Grade Teacher
 - Non-Certified Positions
 - Raymond Leonard - Custodian
 - Mackenzie Brunson - WPMS Asst. Volleyball Coach
 - Macie Stowers - WPMS Head Volleyball Coach
 - Brandon Andrus - Transportation Head Mechanic
 - Kristen Davidson - WPMS Office Manager
 - **Transfers – Board Action Required**
 - Alexis Harris - WPES 2nd Grade Teacher to WPHS Physical Education/Health Teacher
 - Alexis Harris - WPMS Asst. Volleyball Coach to WPHS Asst. Volleyball Coach
 - Hayley Martin - WPMS Office Manager to 10 Month Secretary
 - Ashlea Adams - WPES 1st Grade to WPMS Reading Success/Computers Teacher

- Keeli Holden - WPMS Reading Success/Computers to WPES 3rd Grade
- **Volunteers - Board Action Required**
 - Melynni Yarber
 - Fred McKinney
- **Resignations – Board Action Required**
 - Kenneth Cook - Full Time Bus Driver
 - Jami Cook - WPMS Special Education Teacher
 - Tori Healy - WPMS Study Skills Teacher
 - Marion Barker - Custodian
 - Melody Buse - Paraprofessional (2/27/26)
 - Cassie Cressman - WPHS Asst. Theater Director
 - Kynslee Burgess - Paraprofessional (2/24/26)
 - Dave Watson - Full Time Driver (03/03/26)
 - Pamela McIntyre - Custodian (3/3/26)
 - Brandon Somoza - WPHS Asst. Principal
 - Amy Barlow - WPHS Counselor
 - Dave Clarkson - Full Time Bus Driver (3/6/26)
- **Retirements - Board Action Required**
 - None at this time
- **Terminations - Board Action Required**
 - Billie Morris - Custodian
- Pursuant to Section 610.021.6 Student Matters
- Pursuant to Section 610.021.17 Security Operations
- Motion to return to Open Session - Approved 7-0

Open Session

- Call to Order by President Cindy Tyree
- Pledge of Allegiance led by President Cindy Tyree

Student/Staff Spotlight

- South Fork Elementary School - Seth Huddleston
 - Dr. Seth Huddleston highlighted the outstanding efforts of staff and students at South Fork Elementary School. Staff members who represented at the board meeting were Kendra Shankle, Sam Fox, Kara Brown, Heather Miller,

Camisha Hunter, Ronna Dalton, and Patricia Rodriguez, along with students Remi Shankle, Kimber Shankle, Hynlee Hunter, Ryan Brown, Kason Brown, Jaxon Brown, Gabby Miller, Emmett Fox, Cash Fox, Maddox Fox, Evelyn Rodriguez, Merritt Rodriguez, Layla Long, and Sophie Long. A major highlight was the school's incredible fundraiser for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. With teacher-led initiatives driving the effort, the goal was set at \$23,000 to match the previous year's total. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of staff and students, South Fork Elementary not only met that goal but set a brand-new record by raising \$25,250, making a meaningful impact for children in need.



Consent Agenda - Approved 7-0

- Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting(s)
- Approval of Monthly Finance Reports
- Approval Request for employments, resignations, retirements, terminations, transfers, and volunteers of individuals as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools
- Approval of Program Evaluation(s)

- Approval of CSIP Update(s)

Previous Business

- None at this time

Regular Agenda

- Payment of Bills - Approved 7-0

New Business

- Approval of Employee Health Insurance RFQ - Approved 7-0 - Mr. Orchard presented an update on the Employee Benefits RFQ process. Five companies submitted responses to the RFQ with two companies providing competitive plans and rates. Mr. Orchard recommended approval of the OSBA (Ozarks Schools Benefits Association) bid for the 2026-2027 school year.
- Approval of 2026-2027 Food Service Renewal - Approved 7-0 - Mr. Orchard recommended a contract renewal for Opaa! Food Management Inc. to serve as the district's Food Service Management Company for the 2026-2027 school year. This extension is for one year, beginning July 1, 2026. This is the 2nd of a possible 4 renewals before the next required bid process for Food Service Management services.

Updates & Reports to the Board

- Student School Board Member Report - McKrae Brewer
 - Student Board Member McKrae Brewer shared several highlights of recent student activities and accomplishments. The girls basketball team advanced to the district championship, while the boys basketball team reached the district semifinals. In wrestling, Zizzer history was made as William Colvin, a sophomore, became the first boys wrestler to advance to the state tournament, competing in the Class 3 State Tournament. The Lady Zizzer swim team also had a strong season, earning the title three-peat conference champs and qualifying nine swimmers for state. In addition, the theater program will be advancing to state for the first time in 15 years after earning second place in Readers Theater.
 - Miss Brewer also shared that the past week was Inclusion Week at the high school. Students participated in themed spirit days connected to Special Olympics Missouri, including Red Out Day, Superhero Day, and Twin/Inclusion Day. Wednesday focused on Spread the Word to End the Word Day, which promotes inclusion, respect, and kindness toward individuals with special needs while raising awareness about the harmful effects of the R-word.

Activities included creating a banner and hosting a fundraiser at lunch: “Plunge a Principal” coin drive. She also shared a video highlighting the Polar Plunge fundraiser, noting that West Plains High School raised \$625 toward the event’s overall total of \$48,000.

- Administrative Reports

- Briana Link - Communications

- Mrs. Link shared a video in recognition of School Board Appreciation Week, highlighting students and staff expressing their gratitude to the board for their service and continued support of the district and its schools.

- Joby Steele - WPMS

- Dr. Joby Steele reported on several updates from West Plains Middle School. He shared that 64% of sixth grade students are currently reading on grade level and praised the teachers for their hard work in helping raise reading scores. With 23 days remaining until the MAP assessment, staff and students continue to focus on academic preparation. Dr. Steele also highlighted student activities, noting that fourth through sixth grade volleyball is underway. In addition, the student council recently sold candy grams during lunch to raise money in support of the Lady Zizzer Pink Out fundraiser.

- Josh Cotter - SMTI

- Dr. Josh Cotter from Southern Missouri Technical Institute provided an update on accreditation and recent student achievements. SMTI is currently working through 10 accreditation standards, encompassing 550 criteria, with significant progress already made on Standard 2, which is the lengthiest standard. For the remainder of March and April, focus will be on completing the remaining nine standards, with support from Waynesville schools, who volunteered to assist with the review process. Recent student accomplishments include placing 6th in the statewide Pro Star competition in its first year and advancing 13 students to the state level in SkillsUSA. Additionally, SMTI’s annual Showcase Night is scheduled for March 3, following last year’s turnout of 200 attendees.

- Matthew Orchard - Facilities/Human Resources

- Mr. Matthew Orchard shared updates on staffing and campus projects. March is a busy hiring period, though the current vacancy list remains

short, with positions such as secondary instructional coach, high school counselor, assistant high school principal, sixth grade teacher, and high school/middle school English teacher still open. He highlighted that free after-school meals are available to any students who stay on campus and last month the program served 1,283 after school meals. Facilities updates include work on the officials' room outside the high school gym, a new shot put area, and added concrete to the high jump areas which are improvements that will allow the district to host larger track meets in the future. The Somo Tech Building Trades class is continuing work at the ballpark, which will remain closed until fully completed for insurance purposes. Additionally, a new contract with Pepsi was signed to add markets at Somo Tech for staff and adult students. Mr. Orchard also met with student board member McKrae Brewer and Dr. Davis to gather input on emergency and safety ideas from students' perspective.

- Michael Davis - ZPA

- Mr. Michael Davis provided updates on student programs and outreach. Five additional students have completed the MO Options program, and next month, Mr. Davis will attend a conference with other alternative schools in the area. He expressed appreciation to central office staff for taking students and staff to lunch and helping pack Rotary bags for students in need. ZPA also visited Lincoln School to discuss the history of West Plains and the school with students. At the Zizzer Clinic, 62 sessions have been provided so far, demonstrating significant support for these students. This year, 35 students have graduated which is an increase of 10 from previous counts. As the school year approaches its final turn, ZPA is wrapping up programs and preparing for year-end activities.

- Ryan Smith - WPHS

- Ryan Smith from West Plains High School shared updates on Future Teachers of America (FTA). FTA hosted its 3rd area meeting at Missouri State University–West Plains, welcoming over 70 students from surrounding schools, which is a number that continues to grow. A special thanks to McDonald's of West Plains for donating lunch for all attending students. Additionally, 150 EDU 150 students gave

presentations during the meeting. Incoming Freshman Night was a phenomenal success, providing students and families the opportunity to turn in enrollment forms, ask questions, attend the activities fair, and tour the school. Attendance increased by 25 students from last year, including 86 students from outside West Plains Middle School, with 171 total enrollments submitted total. Earlier this week, Smith and the FFA program visited Richards R-VII to present to prospective freshmen. FFA students took leadership roles in sharing information about West Plains, then later that day Mr. Smith met with parents at Richards from 5:00–6:00 p.m. for the parent portion of the event to answer questions and provide additional guidance.

- Seth Huddleston - SFES

- Dr. Seth Huddleston shared updates on school programs and events. The school is partnering with Ronald McDonald House for the Share a Heart program, with McDonald's treating participating students to lunch. Planning for next year's St. Jude activities has already begun, and Huddleston thanked the school board for their support in allowing the program to continue. A Student of the Month assembly is scheduled for Wednesday to celebrate student achievements. MAP testing will begin on April 7, and the school has seen tremendous growth in both math and language arts programs. Tomorrow morning, staff will meet to finalize the spring calendar, including events and trips. Huddleston also recognized Dr. Miller for his support with planning and coordinating transportation.

- Tiffany Young - Teaching/Learning

- Dr. Tiffany Young provided updates on curriculum and professional development. There are seven curriculum dates planned for the summer and three scheduled during the school year. BTAP for first and second year teachers was recently completed, and juniors have been participating in the WorkKeys assessment coordinated by Mrs. Barlow, which involves around 30–40 students. Teachers have also been attending neat and exciting professional development sessions and conferences throughout the year. The Education Foundation continues to grow and is exploring ways to raise funds for teacher grants. Young highlighted that FTA Day was an amazing event, inspiring hope for the

future of teaching, and praised Jenni Campbell and Alicia Gunter for their efforts in promoting FTA and encouraging student participation.

- Virginia Uphaus - WPES

- Mrs. Virginia Uphaus shared updates on school partnerships and student activities. The collaboration with WPHS has been very successful, with FFA students visiting 3rd grade classrooms to present on how products are made and hosting a petting zoo where students especially enjoyed holding snakes and interacting with the animals. High school students also assisted during Carnival Night, which was a big help. Fourth graders recently took a Capitol trip, meeting with Representative Lisa Darnell and enjoying pizza provided by Darnell. Spring activities are planned and being promoted, and EDU 150 students have expressed interest in going on a field trip, which Mrs. Uphaus is welcoming.

- Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Davis reported that along with Mr. Orchard, they had conducted the initial round of the 2026-27 Student Board Member Interviews. A total of six students had been interviewed. They had reduced the number to three. Those three students will be interviewed by the school board next month. He commented that all six did amazing. And it was so difficult to narrow the list. He spoke how proud he was of those students for having the courage and initiative to come and interview with them.
- According to Dr. Davis, 13 teachers qualified for tenure contracts tonight. Once the contracts are signed and they report for school in August; they will officially become tenured with the district.

- Below are some figures he reported for finance

- 2025-2026 Budget

- Year to date Budget numbers as of 3.9.26

- Total Revenues - \$26,201,658 - 74.85% of budget
- Total Expenditures - \$23,139,544 - 66.82% of budget

- This month the district has the 2019 Lease Purchase Payment of **\$278,961.86**

- Also the district has encumbered the MEUHP Assessment; it is due on 3.27.26 in the amount of **\$727,086.**

- The local tax collections to date are at 100.39% of the budgeted amount. Dr. Davis stated he always budgets the previous year's amount of tax collections. This provides him with a safe budgetary figure. The Year To Date collections are \$6,949,469 of the \$6,922,736 budgeted amount.
- High school tuition collections to date are at 56.59% of the budgeted amount. He stated that tuition collections will continue to be collected throughout the school year. \$2,125,370.84 has been collected of the \$3,755,792 budgeted amount. This does not include tuition collections for the SMTI sending schools.

Adjournment

- Motion to Adjourn - Approved 7-0
 - Next Meeting - April 21, 2026