West Plains R-VII Board Meeting
November 17, 2026

Opening Items - 5:00 PM

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

Closed Executive Session - 5:05 PM

- Motion to return to Open Session - Approved 7-0

Open Session - 6:00 PM

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

Zizzer Spotlight

- WPHS FCCLA - Alex Creech
    - West Plains High School Principal Ryan Smith introduced FCCLA member Alex Creech, who recently made history as the first WPHS student to serve as Region 9 President. Alex shared highlights from the Region 9 FCCLA Meeting, which West Plains High School hosted for 436 students from 18 schools. The event included opening ceremonies, a welcome from State Representative Keith Elliott, games, a raffle basket fundraiser, and keynote speaker Elizabeth McCormick, the region's first out-of-state speaker.
    - Alex expressed how proud she was of the event and thanked FCCLA sponsor Ryan Harvey, Mr. Smith, the Board of Education, custodial staff, Mr. Hale, yearbook students, and the Region 9 Executive Council for their support in making the event a success. Alex was joined by her family and Mr. Harvey for the presentation.



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
    - **New Hires – Board Action Required (Pending background check)**
      Certified Positions
        - None at this time

      Non-Certified Positions
        - Colleen Whittington - Paraprofessional
        - Jace Harring - Paraprofessional
        - Hannah Wainwright - Paraprofessional
        - Makinley Aaron - Paraprofessional
        - Evan Ackerson - 7th and 8th Assistant Boys Basketball Coach
        - Robert Brazzell - Custodian
        - Amy Farnell - Full Time Route Driver
        - Madalyn Gantyuk- Paraprofessional

    - **Transfers – Board Action Required**
        - JJ Speake- Paraprofessional to Boys PE (SY 26-27)
        - Stormy Peeler - 1st Grade Reading Specialist to 3rd Grade Special Education Teacher (SY 27-28)
        - Penny Merriman - Transitional Special Education Teacher to 4th Grade Special Education Teacher (SY 27-28)
        - Tammy Lamb - WPMS 5th Grade ELA Teacher to 8th Grade ELA Teacher (SY 27-28)
        - Kaley Wake - WPMS 8th Grade ELA Teacher to 5th Grade ELA Teacher (SY 27-28)

    - **Volunteers - Board Action Required (Pending background check)**
        - Charles "Nate" Swift
        - Samantha Radosevich
        - Nathan Ell
        - Ida "Renae" Smith
        - Chrystal Sikes
        - Ragen Callahan
        - Sarah Callahan
        - Bruce Vincent
        - Diane Cobler

    - **Resignations – Board Action Required**
        - Amystie Hastings - Paraprofessional
        - Courtney Wilbanks - Paraprofessional (Effective 11-3-26)

        - Ezra Grantham - Custodian (Effective 11-13-26)
        - Joseph Hicks - Custodian (Effective 11-18-26)
        - Justin Whiteside - Custodian (Effective 11-10-26)
        - Donna Holt - WPHS English Teacher (EOY)
        - Cassidy Bingham - Paraprofessional (Effective 11-20-26)
        - Ronnie Harper - Counseling Advisor (Effective 12-18-26)

    - **Retirements - Board Action Required**
        - Larry Pingleton - Electric Line Technology Instructor (EOY)
        - Tonya Jedlicka - Agricultural Education Teacher (EOY)
        - Angela Johnson - WPES Special Education Teacher (EOY)
        - Andrea Bowers - WPES Special Education Teacher (EOY)
        - Karen Vaughn - SFES Part Time Special Education Teacher (EOY)
        - Stephanie Dow - Special Education Process Coordinator (EOY)
        - Brian Minahan - Full Time Route Driver (EOY)

    - **Terminations - Board Action Required**
        - Rebecca Skelton - Paraprofessional (Effective 10-19-26)
- Approval of Program Evaluation(s)
- Approval of CSIP Update(s)

Previous Business

- None at this time

Regular Agenda

- Payment of Bills - Approved 7-0
- Payment of Buro Bill - Approved 6-0-1(RG abstained)

New Business

- Approval of 2025-2026 Audit (CSIP S7) - This was tabled until December. - Approved 7-0
- Approval of Surplus Property Bids (CSIP S7) - Motion needed
    - A bid of $600 was approved for the surplus golf cart and $1,200 for the surplus scrap school bus.
- Approval of MSBA Board Policies (CSIP S5) - Approved 7-0
- Approval of Board Filing Dates (CSIP S5) - Approved 7-0
    - The West Plains R-VII School District encourages qualified persons interested in running for a position on the school board to file to be a candidate in the April 6, 2027 election. There are two positions available, each with a three-year term. Interested persons may file at the Central Office located at 610 E. Olden Street, West Plains, MO 65775. Filing begins on December 15, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. and will continue during the district's regular business hours; which are Monday - Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except for the last day of filing in which the office will be open until 5:00 p.m. Filing will not occur on days that the school district is closed due to inclement weather. Filing will also not occur on days in

which the district office is closed, (December 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, & 31st and January 1st). Filing on January 5, 2027 begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes at 5:00 p.m.

- Approval of Reimbursement of Cindy Tyree MSBA Travel Expenses (CSIP S7) - Approved 6-0-1 (CT Abstained)
- Approval of Reimbursement of Jim Thompson MSBA Travel Expenses (CSIP S7) - Approved 6-0-1 (JT Abstained)
- Approval of Reimbursement of Brian Mitchell MSBA Travel Expenses (CSIP S7) - Approved 6-0-1 (BR Abstained)
- Approval of Reimbursement of Sam Riggs MSBA Travel Expenses (CSIP S7) - Approved 6-0-1 (SR abstained)
- Approval of Reimbursement of Sheilia Harper MSBA Travel Expenses (CSIP S7) - Approved 6-0-1 (SH abstained)

Updates & Reports to the Board

- Student School Board Member Report - Abigail Freidt
    - Student Board Member Abigail Freidt shared several updates on student activities throughout the district. The Portrait of a Zizzer survey sent to the student body received 77 student responses and seven staff responses. She also highlighted the first quarter Portrait of a Zizzer recipients and a senior class survey that received 142 responses.
    - Abigail shared that the Student Council hosted its first leadership conference with five schools participating and held a blood drive with 65 participants. She also discussed the recent Special Olympics National Banner recognition and City of West Plains proclamation. This recognition was especially meaningful because the Student Council had been working toward this goal for several years. Abigail also shared her positive experience participating in the high school musical for the first time.
    - Abigail introduced Eden Brice, a WPHS student in the 417 internship program with her. Eden shared about attending a recent City Council meeting and speaking on the topic of AI data centers and their potential impact on the environment in our area.
- Administrative Reports
    - Amy Marshall - West Plains Middle School
        - West Plains Middle School Principal Amy Marshall shared several building updates. Recent STAR Reading data showed that 75% of students are demonstrating typical or higher growth, with sixth grade showing improvement to 60%. Fifth grade students recently read *Where the Red Fern Grows*, and Mrs. Lamb invited her brother and husband to bring dogs similar to those in the story, giving students a real-life connection to what they were reading.
        - Parent Teacher Conferences had a steady flow of families throughout the evening. The school also recognized 24 students for demonstrating the Portrait of a Zizzer trait of Effective Communicator. Students nominated their peers, and teachers selected three boys and three girls from each grade level for recognition.

Attendance has also been strong, with the building maintaining over 95% attendance during the first quarter.

- Amy Ross - Special Education/Federal Programs
  - Dr. Amy Ross shared updates from Special Education and Federal Programs. She praised the recent high school musical and thanked everyone who attended the Special Olympics National Banner presentation, emphasizing the positive impact inclusion has had on all students at West Plains High School.
  - Parents as Teachers continues to offer community activities, including a sensory event during Halloween. South Fork Preschool was also recognized by DESE for its Quality Assurance Report. Dr. Ross highlighted her work with Alicia Gunter's EDU 150 and EDU 202 classes, including opportunities for students to gain classroom experience alongside paraprofessionals on November 12.
  - The high school counseling department is also working to follow up with recent graduates and connect with their families.
- Briana Link - District Communications
  - Mrs. Link recognized October's Teacher Proud honorees, Angela Johnson and Andrea Bowers, and Zizzer Champion honorees, Cassie Wakefield and Robert Broyles. A major focus this month has been expanding the District Report Card section of the district website by gathering information from administrators across multiple departments. This ongoing project aims to provide families, staff, and community members with a clearer understanding of district performance, student achievement, educational opportunities, and services while promoting transparency and accountability.
  - Additionally, a consistent logo was developed for the *Every Zizzer. Every Opportunity. Every Day.* initiative to help the community recognize posts that provide an authentic look at learning experiences and opportunities throughout the district.
- Josh Cotter -Southern Missouri Technical Institute
  - Dr. Josh Cotter shared updates from Southern Missouri Technical Institute, highlighting the completion of its third accreditation visit. The visiting committee, with members from Alaska, Texas, and California, reported zero findings, earning SMTI another six years of accreditation, the longest term possible. Dr. Cotter thanked the Board of Education for its continued support and funding that helps provide quality opportunities for students. He also recognized Brian Hathcock for his efforts during the visit and shared that the committee enjoyed a dinner prepared by Hathcock at Lincoln School with Crockett and Tonya Oaks.
  - Dr. Cotter also announced that the Ozarks Healthcare Foundation has established a fund to assist SMTI students facing financial hardships. Additional CTE funding was secured for security fencing, and more grant applications have been submitted. He concluded by sharing that adult education graduation will take place December 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the West Plains Civic Center, with 53 graduates expected to participate.

- Matthew Orchard - Deputy Superintendent Report
    - Mr. Orchard shared that District administrators and many other staff have made strong progress developing a new, accessible District Report Card dashboard for the school website to highlight student growth and celebrate academic achievements. Running alongside our *Every Zizzer, Every Opportunity, Every Day* campaign, this evolving tool will make it easier for the community to explore and compare district metrics. This not only highlights academic achievements, but all of the programs that have impacts on our students.
    - Enrollment & Demographics: As of October 30, 2026, total district enrollment stands at 2,467 students, with a Free and Reduced lunch rate of 55.02% and Special Education enrollment holding steady at 15.05%. The general trends over the last three years indicate an increase in free/reduced percentages with a decrease in enrollment.
    - To keep our transportation fleet modern and reliable, the district is currently accepting budgeted bids for two new school buses (scheduled for delivery between April and October 2027), with final approval anticipated at the December Board of Education meeting.
    - Last, Mr. Orchard shared that the resurfacing on the first set of tennis courts is officially complete, and crews are scheduled to resurface the remaining courts with the same refreshed color scheme next Spring.
- Ryan Smith - West Plains High School
    - West Plains High School Principal Ryan Smith shared several building updates. He highlighted the recent college and career fair organized by Hailey Beazley, which welcomed approximately 700 juniors and seniors from West Plains and surrounding schools. Students had the opportunity to visit with representatives from colleges, universities, SMTI, and the military. He also praised the recent MASC Student Council Conference, where students collaborated with other schools and brought back new ideas.
    - Mr. Smith recognized the National Honor Society's blood drive and shared that counselors provided suicide prevention training to students, focusing on available resources and where to turn for help. He also highlighted the successful Veterans Day assembly and breakfast, which served more than 100 veterans and family members. Veterans complimented the students on their respectful behavior throughout the event.
    - Athletic highlights included the Lady Zizzer Golf team's trip to state and another successful season for Zizzer Cross Country, with the boys earning the Class 4 State Championship and the girls finishing fifth in the state.
- Sarah Land - West Plains Elementary School
    - West Plains Elementary School Principal Sarah Land shared exciting progress in student reading achievement. At the beginning of the school year, 33% of students were reading on grade level, and that number has already increased to 45%. The

school's goal is to reach 54% by the end of the year, and Mrs. Land is hopeful they will reach that goal even sooner.
        - Mrs. Land also highlighted the many activities that made October special for students, including visits from high school FFA members, collaboration with Student Council for Red Ribbon Week, a cross country meet supported by high school athletes, and Halloween parades. She emphasized how much she values these opportunities for younger students to connect with older Zizzers and simply enjoy being kids.
        - She also shared a fun staff recognition tradition called the GOAT Trophy, created by Mrs. Bell, which is passed each week to a staff member nominated by a colleague. The tradition encourages teamwork, appreciation, and a positive school environment.
    - Seth Bryant - Zizzer Pride Academy
        - Zizzer Pride Academy Director Seth Bryant thanked the Board of Education for the opportunity to represent ZPA and shared several updates. The academy currently serves 55 students, with nine graduates so far this year and more expected at Christmas. He also highlighted six students attending SMTI, where they are developing valuable skills for their futures.
        - Mr. Bryant shared several community service projects involving ZPA students, including work at the community garden, helping with the JAG group at Bridges, and packing food bags with Sunrise Rotary. Students packed 1,200 bags in just 38 minutes! He also discussed the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP), which helps students develop community service ideas, such as cleaning yards for community members, with support from a $500 grant for materials.
        - Through Ozarks Healthcare, 20 students have received support through a total of 34 counseling sessions.
    - Seth Huddleston - South Fork Elementary School
        - South Fork Elementary School Principal Dr. Seth Huddleston shared highlights from a busy October, including a student cross country race led by Coach Long, where students received new medals. Parent Teacher Conferences were also a success, with 90% of families participating in the building. Students enjoyed the Halloween parade with parents in attendance, along with Red Ribbon Week activities. Dr. Huddleston shared student artwork created during Red Ribbon Week.
        - November has also been full of opportunities for students, including four grade levels participating in the Veterans Day parade and a fun Balloons Over Broadway event held throughout the building. Dr. Huddleston emphasized the importance of providing these memorable experiences for students.
        - He also thanked the Board of Education for its support of the Fall Festival. Although the weather was chilly, the indoor activities were a success, and he expressed appreciation for everyone who helped make the event possible.
    - Tiffany Young - Teaching/Learning

        - Dr. Tiffany Young shared updates from Teaching and Learning, highlighting the recent Fall EduCamp professional development day. A total of 34 sessions were offered, led by district teachers, 12 administrators, and community partners, including Missouri State University-West Plains, Lincoln School, West Plains Bank, and representatives from DESE. Dr. Young praised the knowledge and expertise of district staff and their willingness to share with others.
        - She also discussed the upcoming second BTAP training for new teachers and increased interest in professional conferences. Curriculum work continues with Hannah Doughty and Lynn McGuffee to improve consistency in reading instruction across the district.
        - Young also highlighted Missouri's instructional testlets, which provide teachers with tools to help prepare students for MAP and EOC assessments throughout the year. Learning checks are planned before the end of the semester, with fall EOC testing approaching.
    - Virginia Uphaus - Human Resources
        - Virginia Uphaus shared updates from Human Resources and district operations. She highlighted a team effort in October when a school employee learned of a family needing help preparing their home for colder weather. District maintenance staff stepped in to help winterize the home using 70 bales, showing the care and support district employees have for families in need.
        - Mrs. Uphaus also shared that the district is working with OPAA! to provide more food choices for students. South Fork Elementary now offers a self-serve fruit and vegetable bar, which students are enjoying, and West Plains Elementary is next to receive one. The Zizzer Clinic also reported 182 visits during the previous month.
        - She also discussed attending school safety specialist training in Jefferson City, which included presentations from Courage2Report and other organizations, along with hands-on safety scenarios. Mrs. Uphaus will take on additional school safety responsibilities beginning in January.
- Superintendent's Report
    - Financial Report
        - Dr. Davis reported on several items concerning finances:
            - 2027-28 Bus Specs were released and the bid will be accepted at December board meeting)
            - 2027-28 Budget Document has been created and that the 2027-28 Budget requests have been sent in by buildings and departments.
            - The first read of the 2027-28 tuition rate will be next month along with the first read of the 2027-28 Calendar.
            - Tuition collections update:
                - The district has invoiced a total of $1,112,080.18

- He reminded the board that Property Tax Collections will start coming into the district anytime. This is the time of the year in which the district has the largest fund balance.
- Dr. Davis shared that Basic Formula Money is the district's largest source of funding from DESE. As of the end of October, the district had received 34.98% of the budgeted amount, slightly ahead of the expected 33.33% based on four of the 12 monthly payments. While he hopes funding will remain ahead of projections, he expressed doubt that this trend will continue throughout the school year.
- Current Revenues and Expenditures as of 11/15/2026:
    - Total Revenues - 22.08% of year's budget
    - Total Expenditures - 34.83% of year's expenditures

- Dr. Davis informed the board of the district's commitment to be involved in the Chamber of Commerce's LEAD Program. The district will once again have staff participating in the upcoming cohort.
    - 2025 - Tiffany Young and Brandon Somoza
    - 2026 - Virginia Uphaus, Michael Davis, and Colton Hensley
    - 2027 - Ryan Smith and Seth Bryant
- Dr. Davis provided a recap of the recent Missouri School Boards' Association state meeting in Kansas City. He discussed breakout sessions focused on A-F school grading and school funding, noting that both presented a concerning outlook for public education, particularly rural schools. Board members Cindy Tyree, Brian Mitchell, Jim Thompson, Sam Riggs, Shealia Harper, and Mr. Orchard also shared their experiences and echoed similar concerns. Several attendees highlighted sessions focused on school safety, noting that it was reassuring to learn that many of the recommended safety practices are already in place at West Plains Schools.
- Dr. Davis ended the evening by highlighting several recent district events and discussing the upcoming A-F school grades that will soon be released by the state. He reminded the Board that "this is just a letter, and by no means does it show what is taking place here in West Plains." He shared several examples of the meaningful things happening throughout the district that cannot be measured by a letter grade:
    - The A-F grade will not reflect that Southern Missouri Technical Institute recently received zero findings during its accreditation visit from COE. Dr. Davis commended Dr. Cotter and his team for their hard work and dedication.
    - It will not reflect the meaningful moments that took place during Veterans Day, whether in the gym, classrooms, or parade. It will not show WPHS students applauding veterans as the band played the Armed Forces songs or students cheering for and honoring staff members and teachers who served in the military.
    - It will not recognize the work of a district social worker who visited a family's home to ensure students had heat, food, and clothing, or the maintenance crew that

stepped in to help winterize the home so the children would be warm throughout the winter.
        - It will not show the students at South Fork Elementary School who raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital year after year, knowing their efforts are helping other children in need.
        - It will not reflect the incredible support shown by district staff, students, and the community for Special Olympics or the progress made toward creating a more inclusive school environment.
        - It will not recognize the students at Zizzer Pride Academy who volunteered to pack food bags with Sunrise Rotary, helping ensure students at South Fork Elementary, West Plains Elementary, West Plains Middle School, Glenwood, Fairview, Junction Hill, and Howell Valley have food to eat over the weekends.
        - It will not reflect the West Plains Elementary students who helped serve breakfast to veterans and their families during the Veterans Day breakfast.
    - Dr. Davis concluded by emphasizing that all of these things matter, even if they are not measured on a state grade card. He expressed how proud he is of the students, staff, and community for the care and compassion they demonstrate every day, reminding the Board that these are the things that truly matter and represent what West Plains Schools is all about.

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn - Approved 7-0
    - Next Meeting - December 15, 2026