

**STARK COUNTY COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #100**  
**Stark, Knox, Marshall, Henry & Peoria Counties, Illinois**

**Regular Meeting – November 18, 2024**

The Stark County Community Unit School District #100 Board of Education met Monday, November 18, 2024, at the Stark County Elementary School cafeteria. Members present were Emily Leezer, Ann Orwig, Erin Price, Joseph Rediger, Dane Richards, and Bruce West. Brian Rewerts was absent. Also present were Brett Elliott, Superintendent; Emily Mastin, Elementary Principal; Jackie Colgan, Elementary Assistant Principal; Thomas Blumer, Acting Jr./Sr. High School Principal; Michael Jenkins, Jr./Sr. High School Assistant Principal; Rebecca Lane, Unit Clerical/Payroll Clerk; Mike Bunch, IT; Stark County student athletes and coaches; members of the community; and a member of the press.

With a quorum present, President Orwig called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance, and the Mission and Vision statements were recited.

Motion was made by Mr. West, seconded by Mrs. Price, to approve the consent calendar. Items approved under the consent calendar were:

- Approval of the October 21, 2024 Board Minutes;
- Approval of the October Elementary Activity Funds, October JH/HS Activity Funds, October Self-Insurance Fund, October Imprest Fund, and October Treasurer's Report;
- Approval of the October LEA checks as follows: City of Wyoming \$586.51, Guardian \$363.89, Guardian \$3,295.88, Guardian \$554.05, Guardian \$469.76, Stark County CUSD #100 \$156,128.74, Marilyn Ely \$236.25, Sharon Kuntz \$202.50, Pro Acoustics \$6,553.42, State Bank of Toulon \$1,750,000.00, IL Office of State Fire Marshall \$500.00, Stark County CUSD #100 \$187,729.37, Marilyn Ely \$135.00, Angela Roark \$675.00, Unland Insurance \$305.00, VISA \$77.35, VISA \$1,540.60, VISA \$886.87, VISA \$2,579.36, Imprest Fund \$7,369.52.

Motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

Next on the agenda was the approval of November bills. Mrs. Orwig asked if the check to CORE was the next installment on the new gym, Mr. Elliott confirmed that it was. Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer, seconded by Mr. Richards, to approve the November bills of \$710,542.49. Motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

Mrs. Orwig presented Pride and Excellence Recognition to the Stark County High School Cross Country 2024 IHSA State Qualifiers. Under the leadership of Coach Bob Rennick, the girls' team and Evan Knobloch advanced to the IHSA State Finals on Saturday, November 9, 2024. The girls' team earned 3rd place at Sectionals including three Top 25 finishers and Evan is our first boys' state qualifier in school history. Congratulations to Alexis Martinez, Sarah Kraklow, Hailey Moodie, Dusti Smith, Cheyenh Smith, Darilis Knobloch, Paytin Terwilliger, Kelsey Hawley, and Evan Knobloch. We are so proud of the Stark County High School Cross Country program that has become perennial state qualifiers. Congratulations! Coach Rennick thanked the school board, administration, and Athletic Director Brown for all of their support and expressed how proud he was of this year's runners. Mr. Elliott congratulated them and

reminded everyone that it is a huge honor to make it to state and when students make it to state multiple years it's easy to take that for granted.

Next, Mrs. Orwig presented Pride and Excellence Recognition to Stark County High School Student, Jason Knowles. With our PHEARCE philosophy, we continue to model for students and staff our process of creating the ultimate learning and working environment. Recently a Stark County High School student stepped up in the face of adversity to assist in a student dispute. Jason Knowles did not hesitate to intervene and set a positive example of leadership for all students. Jason, thank you for setting an example for other students and leading with courage and compassion. You are truly the Pride and Excellence of Stark County. Mr. Elliott added that he was proud of Jason for stepping up when he didn't have to.

Lastly, Mr. Elliott recognized our School Board Members. On November 15, 2024, we celebrated National School Board Members Day. Here at Stark County, we have the great fortune of having knowledgeable and dedicated board members who consistently put our students and staff first. This can be a thankless volunteer position, yet our board members continue to give their time, energy, passion and commitment for the success and growth of our school district. We have accomplished many great things in the past four and a half years together. We truly appreciate them and their service. Our Board of Education includes President Ann Orwig, Vice President Bruce West, Secretary Emily Leezer; and Members: Brian Rewerts, Erin Price, Joe Rediger and Dane Richards.

Since our last board meeting, the following faculty and staff have been nominated by their peers for the Golden Sledgehammer Award for their dedication to the PHEARCE philosophy and the elements to Protect This House: Courtney Kunkel, Mary Beth Newby, Emily Ropp, Mary Jo Groter, Andrea Terwilliger, Sarah DeBord, Lynne Paxson, Barb Hildebrandt, Sam Grigg, Jenny Acree, Kaleena Conrad, Jennifer Jacobs, and Lori Wineland. The recipients were recognized either at the elementary morning assembly or on SC News.

Since the Pride and Excellence Recognitions had concluded, all of the audience left the meeting, except for the member of the press.

**Visitor Comments:**

No visitor comments.

**Board of Education Building Visits Reports:**

Board Members were given the opportunity to visit the campuses in November. Mrs. Orwig shared that she visited both the Elementary and Junior High/High School campuses earlier this month. At SCES, she visited with Mrs. Mastin and Mrs. Colgan, and attended the morning assembly where the Golden Sledgehammer was awarded. Mrs. Orwig added that she feels that Mrs. Mastin happily greeting the students in the morning is a great way to start their day. At the JH/HS campus, Mr. Blumer also starts the day by greeting students at the door. She got to meet with Mr. Blumer to get to know him a little better.

There will not be any visits in December due to the short school month.

Mr. Elliott added that the Assistant Principals are also involved in greeting students in the morning before school starts. Mr. Jenkins is at the back door of the Junior High greeting the students as they get off of the buses. Mrs. Colgan and Mrs. Mastin take turns being at the front door at SCES.

**Administrative Reports:**

Stark County Elementary School Principal, Emily Mastin, shared that SCES teams are finishing their first PLC inquiry cycle, showing measurable growth in their targeted problem areas. This focused collaboration has set a solid foundation for continued progress. On School Improvement Day, teachers led sessions on a variety of instructional strategies, with topics selected based on feedback from staff. This collaborative approach ensured that sessions were tailored to meet the instructional needs and interests of all teachers. Parents Club hosted Candy Bar Bingo, which had a great turnout with about 100 people joining in on the fun. It was a great event to kick off fundraising for Project Playground, which is SCES Parents Club's fundraiser for a new playground at SCES. We hosted Fall Parties at the end of Red Ribbon week. It was a great way to end the busy and fun week, and to celebrate fall with our students and families. Our Veterans Day program welcomed many honored guests into the school to celebrate their service. Students and staff showed their gratitude by creating a heartfelt tribute to the veterans in our community. We even had two staff members play *Taps* at the end of the program. There were no questions for Mrs. Mastin.

Stark County Junior High/High School Principal, Megan McGann, is currently on maternity leave. Acting Principal, Thomas Blumer, shared that as we near the end of the first semester of school, the middle school science teachers want to express their appreciation to the School Board for their recent science curriculum adoption. Amplify Science has given a serious boost to teaching and learning in the middle school science classrooms. The hands-on activities that have accompanied the text have been excellent and have increased the level of student engagement in their classrooms. In addition, the teachers report that the textbooks have allowed them to expose middle school students to non-fiction narratives. They are especially pleased with the writing component in the series. On our last SIP day, four of our teachers, Mrs. Acree, Mrs. Conrad, Ms. Jacobs, and Ms. Wineland, offered breakout sessions for the staffs at both campuses. By tapping into our own educator experts, teachers were offered professional development that was created specifically for Stark County students that addressed their unique needs. Some of the breakout sessions included: Chunking and Pacing, Annotations, and Discussion Strategies. Mr. Parrish and Ms. Wilkinson attended the annual FFA Convention in Indianapolis in October and our Stark County students had an impressive showing. Chelsey Stotler earned 4th place in the nation in Division 5 Food Science. Adam West placed 9th in the nation in Division 5 Social Systems. Toby Williams earned 8th place in the nation in Division 3 Food Products and Processing. Jacob McCauley was in the FFA National Choir and sang on stage at many sessions during the week. All students who attended the conference gained valuable experiences with college choices from across America as well as career options. Overall it was a fantastic and exciting week for the students, who couldn't stop talking about how much they learned. Earlier this month our student council attended the Hopewell District Fall Workshop. Thirty (30) Stark County High School students attended this all-day event escorted by student council sponsors Mrs. Acree and Ms. Jackson. Some of the notable break-out sessions the students

attended included time management, team building, and leadership. As an extra bonus, our very own Stark County Superintendent, Mr. Elliott, was the keynote speaker. Stark County is also represented on the Hopewell District Student Council Executive Board by Senior Maeve Colgan. The third annual College and Career Fair took place in our gym on October 18th. Through the efforts of our counselor, Ms. Westphal, we had an amazing turnout. With forty vendors in attendance, all of our high school students were given the opportunity to talk with college reps, employers, and trade representatives. Each student was obligated to have conversations with at least twelve vendors, and students were able to walk away with important connections to community members that may help them in their future. Our annual Veterans Day celebration was very well attended with 50 of our community's retired military and their families in attendance. Led by Ms. Elswick, patriotic performances by our band and chorus set the tone for the all-school assembly. FFA members figured prominently as they organized the event through the leadership of Mr. Parrish and Ms. Wilkinson. Quilts of Valor presented two of our veterans with quilts in honor of their service to our country. Captain Travis Wilkinson of the Illinois National Guard gave an inspirational key note address. Special thanks to Ms. Coziahr for her efforts in organizing the event. There were no questions for Mr. Blumer.

Stark County Superintendent, Brett Elliott, shared that we are proud of the first class Veterans Day Assemblies at both campuses and, again, thank all of our Veterans for their sacrifice and commitment to our amazing country. Being in school on Veteran's Day allows the opportunity for us to honor veterans and is also a great learning opportunity for our students. We are excited about the continued growth of our newly implemented Instructional Coaching Program. Jackie Colgan and Kaleena Conrad are doing great work building the program and will present an update to the board in January. Mrs. Colgan, Mrs. Conrad, and Mr. Elliott meet every Friday regarding the new program. The new gym will be completed in December with a tentative grand opening planned for Friday, January 10, 2025 where we will host both a girls' varsity basketball game at 6:00 pm and boys' varsity basketball game at 7:30 pm to open the new facility. More details to come. The new track project is officially complete with new landscaping and fencing added in the past month. Planning for hosting track meets is underway with a reminder to the public that track meets are scheduled years in advance so it is a process to begin hosting. In the season of gratitude, we want to take an opportunity to thank the best faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Education for their continued passion, commitment and growth of Stark County CUSD #100. Thank you! Mr. Elliott then provided a brief financial update on expenditures as we are now 33.3% through Fiscal Year 2025. There were no questions for Mr. Elliott.

**Unfinished Business:**

Superintendent Elliott provided an overview of the 2023-24 Illinois School Report Card that included key data points and a rating of "Commendable" for all three schools. There has been growth in several data areas school wide, including increases in graduation rates and student attendance, and a decrease in IEPs. Mr. West made a motion to accept the Illinois State School Report Card for 2023-24 as presented. Mr. Rediger seconded and the motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

**New Business:**

Superintendent Elliott presented the end of year fund balances for FY24 which is a newer state requirement during the levy process. He then presented the annual Preliminary Tax Levy. Per the County Clerks, we have been given an estimated 10% - 13% increase in our EAV to use in creating our Tax Levy. Mr. Elliott presented three levy options, a 4.99%, 9%, and 10% increase in funding from the previous year. With the increased EAV, all three options present an overall reduction in tax rate from the previous year, reflecting a reduction per/\$100,000 assessed value compared to 2023. Also presented was a 10-year comparison in EAV, Tax Rate, Total Expenditures and Education Fund Expenditures. It shows a 52% increase in EAV, 31% increase in expenditures yet the tax rate has remained constant at 5.41 from 2014 to 2024. The proposed tentative levy at 10% reflects a reduced tax rate at 5.35. Mr. Elliott stressed that the 10% is NOT a 10% increase in taxes. It is a 10% increase of funding from last year's school levy. The 4.99% increase would not be enough to cover the upcoming salary increases or insurance benefit increase. Mr. Elliott recommended that the board approve the Preliminary Tax Levy at 10% with the possibility of approving a Final Tax Levy at a lower amount later. If the Preliminary Tax Levy is approved at a lower rate and the board decides on a higher rate for the Final Tax Levy, there are extra steps required in the levy process. Mr. Richards thanked Mr. Elliott for his presentation and explanation of the tax levy process; Mrs. Orwig added that she also appreciates the layout of Mr. Elliott's presentation and feels he does a good job explaining it. Mr. West asked if the County Clerk provided a breakdown of the increase in EAV. The increase in EAV is more related to farmland and commercial property than it is to homeowners' property. Mr. West made a motion to approve the Preliminary Tax Levy up to 10%, accept the FY24 end of year balances, and to set a Truth in Taxation hearing to be held on December 16, 2024. Mrs. Leezer seconded and the motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Superintendent Elliott presented the 2025-26 Risk Management Plan which allows for select expenditures in the final approved levy to use Tort funds; these expenditures include insurance premiums and select percentages for administration, facilities director, and nursing salaries to meet school safety guidelines. The proposed plan mirrors the 2024-25 plan with an adjustment to accommodate for the additional elementary assistant principal/instructional coach by reducing the salary percentage in the Risk Management Plan from 35% to 25%. This is the first reading, no action needed.

As of January 1, 2025, all districts must have an approved Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) in place. Kari Bush and Cheryl Daum have taken the lead and worked with Mr. Elliott to design our plan. Today is the first reading. It will be up for approval in December and implemented beginning next semester. No action needed.

PRESS Issue 117 was released with a variety of policy, administrative procedures and exhibit updates for board approval. The board is charged with reviewing all changes before the December board meeting for approval. First reading, no action needed.

PRESS Issue 116 is currently on hold due to Title IX changes and will be revisited later.

**Items for Next Meeting:**

Truth in Taxation Public Hearing; Approval of Final Tax Levy; Approval FY26 Risk Management Plan; Approval of Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP); Approval of PRESS Policy #117. We normally have an Education Committee Meeting in December but will hold off until January when Ms. McGann returns from maternity leave.

**Executive Session:**

Motion was made by Mr. West, seconded by Mr. Richards, to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing employee compensation, non-renewals, employee performance, employment of personnel and resignations at 6:58 p.m. Motion was approved 6-0.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer, seconded by Mr. West, to reconvene from Executive Session at 7:37 p.m. and to hold the Executive Session minutes, Not for Release. Motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer, seconded by Mr. Richards, to approve the Executive Session Minutes of October 21, 2024, Not for Release. Motion was approved 6-0.

Mrs. Leezer made a motion to hold the following reviewed Executive Session Minutes, Not for Release: October 16, 2023; November 20, 2023; November 30, 2023; December 18, 2023; January 16, 2024; February 20, 2024; March 6, 2024; March 18, 2024; March 25, 2024; April 15, 2024; May 20, 2024; June 24, 2024; July 15, 2024; August 19, 2024; September 23, 2024. Seconded by Mrs. Orwig. Motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

Mrs. Leezer announced the resignation of Preston Parrish as Junior High and High School Scholastic Bowl Sponsor.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer to approve Matthew Bowen as High School Scholastic Bowl Sponsor. Seconded by Mrs. Orwig. Approved 6-0.

Mrs. Leezer made a motion to approve Christine Cole as Cook's Helper. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Price and approved by a 6-0 vote.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer to approve Owen Mercer as second shift custodian at SCES. Seconded by Mr. West. Approved 6-0.

Mrs. Leezer made a motion to approve Chelsea Stage as Part-Time Interventionist Aide at SCES. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Orwig and approved 6-0.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer, seconded by Mrs. Orwig, to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Motion was approved 6-0.

Ann Orwig  
President

Emily Leezer  
Secretary