

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

**Regular Meeting – October 21, 2024**

The Stark County Community Unit School District #100 Board of Education met Monday, October 21, 2024, at the Stark County Elementary School cafeteria. Members present were Emily Leezer, Ann Orwig, Erin Price, Brian Rewerts, Dane Richards, and Bruce West. Joseph Rediger 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; Cameron Ehnlé, Senior Associate from Gorenz and Associates, Ltd.; Stark County staff, students, 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 September 23, 2024 Board Minutes;
- Approval of the September Elementary Activity Funds, September JH/HS Activity Funds, September Self-Insurance Fund, September Imprest Fund, and September Treasurer's Report;
- Approval of the September LEA checks as follows: City of Wyoming \$240.57, Stark County CUSD #100 \$139,236.94, Guardian \$362.58, Guardian \$3,396.00, Guardian \$580.21, Guardian \$472.56, U.S. Postal Service \$500.00, Marilyn Ely \$114.75, Sharon Kuntz \$135.00, Unland Insurance \$1,143.00, Hoerr Nursery \$2,700.00, IL Office of State Fire Marshall \$225.00, Stark County CUSD #100 \$174,294.59, Angie Roark \$225.00, IESA \$20.00, Amazon Capital Services \$142.57, VISA \$1,972.78, VISA \$760.88, VISA \$1,411.27, Stark County CUSD #100 \$200.00, Imprest Fund \$9,848.50.

Motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

Next on the agenda was the approval of October bills. Mrs. Orwig asked if the check to Byrne & Jones was the final check for the track. Mr. Elliott confirmed that it was, but noted that it would not be mailed until the final punch list items were reviewed and approved. Mr. West asked if the check to CORE Construction was another milestone check for the gym, Mr. Elliott confirmed. Mrs. Orwig asked if the washer and dryer purchase was to replace the one that had gone out in the boiler room. Mr. Elliott confirmed that it was and noted that another went out today at a different campus. Motion was made by Mr. Richards, seconded by Mr. West, to approve the October bills of \$933,201.73. Motion was approved by a 6-0 vote.

Mrs. Orwig presented Pride and Excellence Recognition to five Stark County High School Seniors who were recognized by the College Board for Academic Excellence with the 2024 National Recognition. To qualify, students must take the Fall 2024 PSAT/NMSQT (10th or 11th) or Spring PSAT 10 (10th) and score in the top 10% of test takers from their award program in their state, earn a 3+ or 2 or more on distinct AP

exams in the 9th and/or 10th grade, earn a cumulative GPA of B+ or higher (at least 3.3 or 87-89%) by the time of submission, and identify as first-generation, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Indigenous or Native and/or attend school in a rural area or small town. Congratulations to our Stark County High School Seniors: Lauren Best (Rural), Maeve Colgan (Rural), CJ Richards (Rural), Adam West (Rural), Garrett Bruecks (Rural, First Generation). Thank you for representing the Pride and Excellence of Stark County. Mr. Elliott added that the Administrative team is very proud of these individuals. Academic Success is one of the pillars that we strive for at Stark County and we are excited to recognize these students for their academic achievements.

Next, Mrs. Orwig presented Pride and Excellence Recognition to Stark County High School Sophomore, Anna Nagode, who is a 2024 IHSA Golf Sectional Qualifier. Under the leadership of Coach David Wallace, Anna finished in the top 25 at the IHSA Regional and will advance to the 2024 IHSA Sectionals. We are so proud of you Anna, and look forward your bright future ahead.

Mrs. Orwig presented Pride and Excellence Recognition to the Stark County Junior High School Cross Country 2024 IESA State Qualifiers. The following runners, under the leadership of Coach Gary Frail, advanced to the IESA State Finals this past weekend in Normal, IL: Norah Rorem, Will Denton, and Jackson Smith. We are so proud of the growth of this program in just its third official year in competition. Thank you Coach Frail for your commitment to Stark County Athletics. Coach Frail added that he will miss these three 8<sup>th</sup> graders next year, they have been with him from the start three years ago. He is so proud of these 3 athletes for placing in the top 40 in the IESA State Finals, where they ran against over 200 other state qualifiers. Congrats Norah, Will, and Jackson!

Lastly, Mrs. Orwig presented Pride and Excellence Recognition to the unit office staff. Here at Stark County we are so fortunate to have three dedicated ladies in the unit office. Mary Streitmatter, Rebecca Lane, and Jenny Denton take great pride in their work. Their passion and commitment to perfection is commendable and provides confidence to the superintendent and board of education that all things related to finances, human resources and payroll are top notch and accurate. The latest achievement was a successful audit for the 2024 fiscal year without a finding. This process is extremely tedious and the ladies spent endless hours supplying all evidence for a successful audit. On behalf of the board of education, we thank you for your tireless service to Stark County CUSD #100 and our students, faculty and staff.

Our mantra for the 2024-25 school year is to "Protect This House." As a way to fuel this energy all school year, we have implemented the peer nominated "Golden Sledgehammer" Recognition for those staff who are representing the elements of PHEARCE (Process, Humility, Energy, Adversity, Relationships, Culture, Excellence) or Protect This House (which include Trusting Our Process; Avoiding Distractions (Decluttering); Avoiding Complacency; Preparation; and Second Chances). Since our last board meeting, the following faculty and staff have been nominated by their peers for the Golden Sledgehammer Award: Mike Bunch, Melissa Jackson, Jenny Acree, SCHS Student Council, Sophia Elswick, Brittany Venzon, Michelle Morrissey, Toni Nowlan, and Lynne Paxson. The award recipients were recognized either at the elementary morning assembly or on SC News.

Since the Pride and Excellence Recognitions had concluded, most of the audience left the meeting.

**Visitor Comments:**

No visitor comments.

**Board of Education Building Visits Reports:**

Board Members were given the opportunity to visit the campuses in October. Mr. West visited the Elementary School campus where he met with Mrs. Mastin and Mrs. Colgan to experience a little bit of their day to day routine. It was Homecoming week and Mr. West enjoyed seeing the students' excitement at the assembly. He also took a tour of the building. Mr. Elliott reminded the board that calendar invites have been sent out for the November visits.

**Administrative Reports:**

Stark County Elementary School Principal, Emily Mastin, shared that enrollment stayed steady with 2 students dropping out and 1 student enrolling this past month. Mrs. Colgan has been working closely with Mr. Elliott and Mrs. Conrad to align instructional coaching with our October SIP day by designing teacher-led learning opportunities based on the September instructional coaching survey. Additionally, two of her three current coaching cycles are connected to our ongoing work in PLCs. The SCES team has been focusing on using data in PLCs to drive instruction in areas where students need the most support. This targeted approach has led to significant growth, particularly in reading and math. In 1st grade, the percentage of students reading at grade level has increased from 15% to 45%, while 2nd grade has seen an improvement in math performance, with an increase from 42% to 51%. The kitchen team continues to hold monthly meetings to support the new staff, build capacity, and foster trust among members. Administration also joins these meetings, providing coaching to the SCES kitchen lead to help guide and strengthen her team. Congratulations to Miss Groter for being recognized for her stellar instruction by IMSE. They are featuring her educational practices and resources on their social media pages. The SCES Parents Club organized volunteers to provide dinner for staff during parent-teacher conferences. Additionally, they have set an ambitious fundraising goal starting at \$60,000 to purchase new playground equipment for SCES over the next few years. On Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, the parents club will be hosting Candy Bar Bingo at the Elementary Cafeteria as a fundraiser for Project Playground.

Mrs. Price noted that the 15% to 45% increase in 1<sup>st</sup> graders reading at grade level was a significant jump, and asked if the teachers were using a new strategy. Mrs. Mastin noted that the teachers have been using an intentional small group instruction to best benefit all students in the class, not just those in need of extra help. Mrs. Price then asked why there was not any data for the Kindergarten class and Mrs. Mastin noted that the Kindergarteners do not take the midpoint assessment. There were no other questions for Mrs. Mastin.

Stark County Junior High/High School Principal, Megan McGann, is currently on maternity leave. Acting Principal, Thomas Blumer, shared that enrollment is down 13 students total in the Junior High and High School. We have reached another milestone with our PLCs at SCJSHS, as we continue our focus on tracking completion of our first round of Cycles of Inquiry and aligning our instruction to our standards and assessments. Dara Carr from the Regional Office of Education continues to join us at our PLCs as she guides us through this process. Teachers have a goal of completing a full Cycle of Inquiry by December 4th. BIST (Behavior Intervention Support Team) consultant, Todd Jefferson, joined us for his monthly meeting with the staff. He concentrated his most recent PD by working with the high school teachers on the unique challenges of implementing BIST at this level. In the short time Mr. Jefferson has worked with the staff, we have received valuable feedback and we are beginning to see changes in classroom discipline practices. Earlier this month our 8th graders enjoyed an excursion to Peoria Civic Center for the Career Spark field trip. This annual event allowed students to explore career options in technology and trades. Students acted out careers through hands-on activities to visualize their future and lay the foundation for high school studies and prepare them for a career path. Junior Achievement will follow-up by visiting our 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms to continue to highlight career possibilities for our students. Thanks to Ms. Jackson, Mrs. Acree and our student council for sponsoring a fun week of Homecoming activities. A full week of events ranging from school-wide pep rallies to daily school spirit activities were just some of the highlights. The week culminated with the Homecoming Dance that saw the crowning of our Homecoming King and Queen, Chris Barnwell and Alexis Martinez. In October, Stark County had over 30 participants attend the Section Soils Contest. We hosted the Section 3 Soils CDE at Tanners Orchard where over 300 students competed to judge soils. We placed 3rd overall out of 13 schools. In the State Soils contest, Stark County students placed 19th out of 32 teams. We saw the highest scores in school history with several team members placing in the top 20% of the members.

Mrs. Price asked if the Student Council does a survey to get student feedback on Homecoming events, noting that the dance appeared to have low attendance. Mr. Blumer was not aware of a survey but will pass along the suggestion to Ms. Jackson, the Student Council sponsor. Mrs. Leezer noted that she attended the Career Spark event for work and was impressed by how well behaved the Stark County students were. There were no additional questions for Mr. Blumer.

Stark County Superintendent, Brett Elliott, shared that Homecoming 2024 was a huge success. The energy and passion from our students, staff and community created the most energy and participation he has seen in the past five years. We are known for our homecoming events and this was the best yet. In response to Mrs. Price's question for Mr. Blumer, Mr. Elliott noted that he had not attended the dance so he was unsure about its attendance but as far as the rest of the week's activities, they were all well attended. A special thanks to Ms. Jackson, Mrs. Acree and the student council for all of their efforts to create memories for a lifetime. A special thanks to all of the volunteers behind the scenes who also contributed to its success. We are proud of the level of collaboration and commitment of our faculty towards our Professional Learning Communities. This year both campuses are doing a deep dive into standards alignment, assessment design and data collection and analysis. Our instructional coaches, Mrs. Colgan and Mrs. Conrad

continue the implementation of this new process. They have spent a great deal of time with our first and second year teachers thus far in addition to working with veteran teachers to design our October SIP day that will include peer led workshops. They have also been working hard to align their instructional coaching with our PLCs. The final punch list items have been completed on the track project, but Mr. Elliott plans to do one more walk through before we mail the final payment for the track. The gym construction continues with flooring being installed over the next few weeks. Paint, windows, doors, drywall, plumbing, electrical, scoreboards and more have been completed. They also re-painted the outside of the high school and it looks great! Mr. Bohm and Mr. Elliott attended the Ameren Business Symposium for Energy Efficiency in Springfield. They learned about the various Ameren incentives that could provide up to 100% of lighting, weatherization, and other projects that also provide long term savings to the district. We have contacted various companies to discuss taking advantage of these opportunities. One of the two companies that we have already met with, recommended that we continue to work with Ruyle to complete some of these energy efficiency projects. Finally, Mr. Elliott provided a financial update on expenditures as we are now 25% through the 2025 fiscal year.

Mr. West inquired about how Byrne & Jones resolved one of the issues at the new track, specifically if they pressure washed the spot on the track, and if that was something the district was going to need to do each year going forward. Mr. Elliott responded that they did pressure wash the spot on the track and that was one of the issues that he wants to look at for the final walk through. The district has a pressure washer at the bus barn that can be used if the spot returns. There were no other questions for Mr. Elliott.

**Unfinished Business:**

Cameron Ehnle from Gorenz and Associates, Ltd. presented an overview of the FY24 financial audit with no findings. Mr. Ehnle walked through a packet of specific numbers with the board of education noting that the jumps or drops were all due to known reasons (i.e. the end of ESSER funds, the completion of the high school building project, etc.). Mr. Ehnle noted that Stark County runs a solid budget that is very detailed by line item. The district ended with a profile score of 3.7 on a scale of 4.0 and that was due to the outstanding debt from the recent capital projects. A score of 3.7 is still in financial recognition. Mr. Ehnle complemented the district by adding that Stark County is his favorite audit due to the detailed numbers and great internal controls in place. There were no questions for Mr. Ehnle. Mr. West made a motion to accept the FY24 Financial Audit as presented. Mrs. Leezer seconded and the motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

The drug screening procedures for SCHS athletics have been on hold since the pandemic. Nurse consultants Cheryl Daum and Kari Bush have worked with our athletic director and superintendent to update our procedures and coordinate testing at the new health clinic in Toulon. The new procedures will be implemented beginning with the 2024-25 winter athletics. Mrs. Leezer made a motion to approve the Athletic Drug Screening Procedures as presented. Seconded by Mr. West and approved 6-0.

Mr. Elliott provided an overview of our energy cost savings at the elementary campus due to our solar grid. From April 2023 - April 2024, we have saved just over \$15,000. This savings is projected to be annual. We will also lock in new lower rates that will

continue to contribute to our savings. Once we complete our Solar Bus Barn/Electric Bus project, we will look to expand our solar to the high school campus for additional savings of \$20,000- \$25,000 annually. No action taken.

**New Business:**

Librarian Mary Beth Kelly presented a proposal to move to Follett Library Network under a three year contract beginning the fall of 2025. Due to the upcoming price increases for RSA, our current library service company, Mrs. Kelly researched multiple options in comparison. She also spoke with other local schools' librarians to find out which company they use and pros/cons to each. She feels Follett is the best option for the school district going forward and was able to negotiate and lock in a lower rate for the first 3 years. Mrs. Price made a motion to approve a three year contract for library network services through Follett as presented. Mr. Rewerts seconded. Passed 6-0.

Superintendent Elliott shared an overview of the new Student Mentoring Program that will begin this year. The mentoring program is a result of the Strategic Plan and the first step in creating leadership opportunities for students. This program will begin with high school 10th -12th grade students being trained by Mr. Elliott along with volunteer adult mentors. High school mentors will be assigned to sixth grade students and work collaboratively with teachers to best support the academic, behavioral, and social needs of the students. There are currently 23 high school students interested in mentoring a junior high student and several local volunteer adult mentors interested in mentoring the high school mentors. There were no questions for Mr. Elliott. No action needed.

Next was a renewal of our Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Bradford, the IGA allows Bradford Junior High students to participate in Stark County Junior High athletics. Mrs. Leezer made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement between Stark County CUSD #100 and Bradford School District for continued participation in SCJH athletics as presented. Mrs. Price seconded and the motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

Another renewal of an Intergovernmental Agreement is needed, this one is between Bradford, Bureau Valley and Stark County providing high school choice to Bradford students. Mrs. Orwig made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement between Bradford, Bureau Valley and Stark County for high school choice as presented. Seconded by Mr. West and passed with a 6-0 vote.

Mr. Elliott asked for the annual approval for the Superintendent to begin the Tax Levy Process for 2024. Mr. Richards made a motion to approve Superintendent Elliott to begin the 2024 Tax Levy Process. Mrs. Leezer seconded. Passed 6-0.

Superintendent Elliott informed the board that if the tentative tax levy would be greater than 5% of the previous year, a Truth in Taxation Public Hearing is required prior to submitting the final Tax Levy. As per past practice, the Board will hold a Truth in Taxation Hearing, regardless of exceeding the 5% increase prior to approving the final levy. With another large increase in EAV expected and a teacher contract expiring after this year, we will need to consider levying more than 5% as we did last year to ensure we are capturing the available dollars while we can. No action taken.

Superintendent Elliott presented an overview of the 2024-25 Snow Day/Emergency Day procedures that are the same as what have been in place the past four years. SC100 has an approved e-Learning Plan that will allow them to use up to 5 emergency days without make ups. Mr. West made a motion to approve the 2024-25 Snow Day/Emergency Day procedures as presented. Seconded by Mr. Richards. Passed 6-0.

**Items for Next Meeting:**

Tentative Tax Levy; Cardiac Plan Presentation; Student Leadership Honor.

**Executive Session:**

Motion was made by Mrs. Price, seconded by Mrs. Leezer, to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing employee compensation, non-renewals, employee performance, employment of personnel and resignations at 7:13 p.m. Motion was approved 6-0.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer, seconded by Mr. West, to reconvene from Executive Session at 7:19 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 September 23, 2024, Not for Release. Motion was approved 6-0.

Mrs. Leezer announced the retirement of Russell Schierer, Bus Driver, effective September 24, 2024.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer, seconded by Mrs. Orwig, to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. Motion was approved 6-0.

Ann Orwig  
President

Emily Leezer  
Secretary

Approved 11/18/2024