

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

Regular Meeting – December 16, 2024

The Stark County Community Unit School District #100 Board of Education met Monday, December 16, 2024, at the Stark County Elementary School cafeteria. Members present were Emily Leezer, Ann Orwig, Erin Price, Joseph Rediger, Brian Rewerts, Dane Richards, and Bruce West. No members were absent. Also present were Brett Elliott, Superintendent; Emily Mastin, Elementary Principal; Jackie Colgan, Elementary Assistant Principal; Michael Jenkins, Jr./Sr. High School Assistant Principal; Rebecca Lane, Unit Clerical/Payroll Clerk; Mike Bunch, IT; 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.

President Orwig opened the Public Truth in Taxation Hearing. Mr. Elliott presented the rationale for the proposed tax levy increase. There were no questions from the board. Mrs. Orwig asked if there were any comments from the public.

A member from the community asked if this would be the tax increase every year. Mr. Elliott explained that the school goes through the tax levy process every year to determine the amount of the tax levy. Historically the school district tax levy increase has been below 4.99%.

Another community member spoke against the tax increase, voicing his concerns regarding a declining population in Stark County, where the money is going to come from, and the potential long term financial impact. He expressed that we should steward things well and be fiscally responsible not only at higher government levels but at lower government levels as well.

Seeing no other comments, Mrs. Orwig closed the Public Truth in Taxation Hearing.

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

- Approval of the November 18, 2024 Board Minutes;
- Approval of the November Elementary Activity Funds, November JH/HS Activity Funds, November Self-Insurance Fund, November Imprest Fund, and November Treasurer's Report;
- Approval of the November LEA checks as follows: City of Wyoming \$662.41, Stark County CUSD #100 \$155,217.36, Guardian \$368.89, Guardian \$3,345.94, Guardian \$567.13, Guardian \$471.16, IL HS E-Sports Association \$200.00, IHSA \$2,483.20, Stark County CUSD #100 \$191,337.03, Angie Roark \$625.00, VISA \$898.45, VISA \$1,076.04, VISA \$1,687.03, State Bank of Toulon \$1,042,466.67, Stark County HS Activity Fund \$501.04, Imprest Fund \$3,807.50.

Motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

Next on the agenda was the approval of December bills. Motion was made by Mr. West, seconded by Mrs. Leezer, to approve the December bills of \$353,347.92. Motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

There were no Pride and Excellence Recognitions for tonight's meeting, but there have been several faculty and staff members nominated by their peers for the Golden Sledgehammer Award for their dedication to the PHEARCE philosophy and the elements to "Protect This House." Since our last board meeting, the following award recipients have been recognized either at the elementary morning assembly or on the SC News: Dusty Browning, Andrea Terwilliger, Aili Leathers, Barb Hildebrandt, Sara Nowlan, Hayley Down, Erin McClanahan.

Visitor Comments:

No visitor comments.

Finance Committee:

Vice President West provided an update from the Finance Committee meeting held earlier this month in regards to the proposed tax levy options presented. Mr. West expressed that he felt the board had a good discussion regarding the tax levy, taking into comparison the tax levies of other local districts in order to come up with the recommendation up for approval at tonight's meeting.

Policy Committee:

Secretary Leezer provided an update from the Policy Committee meeting held earlier this month on PRESS Issues 116 and 117 including updates to Title IX, Grievance Procedures, High School Acceleration and Bidding. These PRESS policies are up for a second reading and approval at tonight's meeting.

Henry Stark Governing Board Report:

Superintendent Elliott shared that the Henry-Stark Special Education Governing Board approved their new Director, Casey Miller, and Assistant Director, Marci Jett, for the 2025-26 school year.

Administrative Reports:

Stark County Elementary School Principal, Emily Mastin, shared that they began backward planning for writing to ensure alignment with critical benchmarks and state standards. An inventory of current practices is underway to identify strengths and areas for growth. The goal is to implement this structured approach by the 2025-26 school year, fostering consistent and effective writing instruction. In PLC, teachers have been gathering feedback on progress reports to enhance communication with families and align the process with a focus on continuous improvement. Changes aim to address specific student challenges more effectively, with implementation planned for the 2025-26 school year. We are holding a door decorating contest in collaboration with the Parents Club, who is hosting Penny Wars, to raise funds for Project Playground and spread holiday cheer throughout the school. The holiday concert was a resounding success, showcasing students' talent and spreading festive cheer to families and the community. The staff holiday party had a fantastic turnout, bringing everyone together to

celebrate the first half of the school year. STEM Family Night was also a great success, with strong attendance showcasing our new curriculum. The event generated excitement and set the stage for future opportunities. There were no questions for Mrs. Mastin.

Stark County Junior High/High School Principal, Megan McGann, is on the final month of her maternity leave and will be returning in January after Christmas Break. Acting Principal, Thomas Blumer, was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Assistant Principal, Michael Jenkins, shared that Todd Jefferson, BIST consultant, visited our campus in late November, and spent the day observing in classrooms. Afterwards, he met with the staff and shared his observations. He was encouraged by the level of student engagement which is a major factor in reducing behaviors. He also pointed out that teachers are showing quicker responses and giving fewer reminders to students, and teachers are more willing to engage in conversations around BIST. For next steps, he stated there was a need to communicate a common boundary around phones. Dara Carr from the ROE met with the staff for the last time in the first semester. Each teacher has now completed at least one cycle of inquiry. The collaboration and dialogue during the weekly PLCs have been very beneficial. Teachers now have a tool that will allow them to problem solve productively and meet the needs of struggling students. We will continue to work with the ROE to collaboratively design professional development for the second semester. The Holiday concert was a smashing success this year. Our talented students, led by Ms. Elswick, in band and chorus performed a medley of holiday music that helped launch the season. Forty-six band members from junior high and high school performed a variety of music selections including Jingle Bells, Little Drummer Boy, and Jolly Old St. Nick. Not to be outdone, our junior high and high school choirs, with 53 vocalists, contributed classic vocal renditions of Under Winter Moon, Do You Hear What I Hear, A Winter Wind, and other holiday favorites. In the spirit of the season, we had our students involved in a few of philanthropic activities in December. Our middle school student council sponsored a food drive for the first two weeks of December. Through their efforts over 100 items were donated to the Toulon Food Bank, and we were also able to help a Rebel family struggling with providing food for their table. Our high school student council made blankets for patients at the Illinois Cancer Center and also volunteered for the Radio Thon for the Children's Hospital of Illinois. With their collected efforts, they were able to raise over \$500 in less than two hours. There were no questions for Mr. Jenkins.

Stark County Superintendent, Brett Elliott, started his report by publicly thanking Mr. Tom Blumer, who has gone all-in with his commitment to Stark County Junior and Senior High as the acting principal. He has been a great teammate and supporter of our students and staff. We are so proud of completing another highly successful semester where we saw continued growth in our teaching and learning, facilities, athletics and extracurricular activities. Our students, teachers and staff continue to live the PHEARCE philosophy that is producing a tremendous culture of learning as we continue to Protect This House! We are proud of implementing the first workshops for our new Peer Mentoring Program that will be fully implemented starting in January, with weekly mentoring sessions between high school mentors and junior high mentees. We are proud to share the growth of our Instructional Coaching Program led by Jackie Colgan and Kaleena Conrad. They have done tremendous work in which they will share a presentation with the board of their progress in January. Winter Break begins Friday, December 20th - January 6th, with

students returning Tuesday, January 7th. Teachers will return Monday, January 6th for our annual winter institute. We want to wish our students, staff, administrative team, board of education and the entire community a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year! Mr. Elliott closed with a budget update on expenditures through 41.7% of the fiscal year 2025, projecting that we should end the year under budget. There were no questions for Mr. Elliott.

Unfinished Business:

Mrs. Orwig expressed that she appreciated all of the conversations that the board has had and research they had done regarding the 2024 Tax Levy, while keeping the taxpayers in mind while making this decision. Mr. Elliott agreed that he felt the board had landed on a good compromise, adding that the increase was half of what other local districts were increasing. Mrs. Orwig made a motion to adopt the 2024 Tax Levy as presented at a 7.99% increase in funding and to direct the superintendent to submit the certificate of levy to the county clerks. Mrs. Price seconded and the motion passed with a 5-2 vote. Mr. Rediger and Mr. Rewerts voted no.

It is recommended that we officially review the updated Risk Management Plan at the time of the Tax Levy approval. Summary of Coverage in the Tort Fund Includes: annual insurance, legal cost/liability, and a percentage of salaries (Superintendent 50%, Building Administration 25%, School Nurses 20%, Maintenance Director 10%). Due to the addition of an assistant principal this year, the building administration salary percentage was adjusted from 35% down to 25%. Mr. West made a motion to approve the 2025-26 Risk Management Plan as presented. Seconded by Mr. Rewerts and approved 7-0.

The board's Policy Committee met earlier this month to review Press Issue #116 and #117. The key components of the policy updates include Title IX, Grievance Practices, Professional Development, and High School Acceleration. Mr. Rediger made a motion to approve the PRESS Policy Issues #116 and #117 as presented. Mr. Richards seconded and the motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

New Business:

The Local Government Travel Expense Control Act requires that all school boards in Illinois take action annually to comply with the law. One requirement is that each year, you set the maximum allowable reimbursement for travel, meals and lodging expenses for board members and employees. This is an annual item for board approval. It is acknowledging the amount we have allocated for travel purposes. The amount is \$52,890 as indicated by our auditor. Mrs. Orwig made a motion to approve the expense reimbursements max in the amount of \$52,890 for FY25. Mrs. Leezer seconded and motion passed 7-0.

Items for Next Meeting:

Approval of Final Cardiac Response Plan; Discussion of School Calendar; Possible Finance Committee Meeting; Possible Education Committee meeting; IASA Vision 2030 overview.

Executive Session:

Motion was made by Mr. West, seconded by Mrs. Leezer, to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing employee compensation, employee performance, resignations, retirements, and employment of personnel at 6:39 p.m. Motion was approved 7-0.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer, seconded by Mr. Rediger, to reconvene from Executive Session at 7:13 p.m. and to hold the Executive Session minutes, Not for Release. Motion was approved by a 7-0 vote.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer, seconded by Mrs. Orwig, to approve the Executive Session Minutes of November 18, 2024, Not for Release. Motion was approved 7-0.

Mrs. Leezer made a motion to approve Kyle Cantwell as High School Boys Basketball Assistant Coach. Mr. West seconded. Motion passed 6-0, Price abstained.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer to approve Chase Dietz as a part time student worker. Mr. Richards seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Mrs. Leezer announced the resignation of Tyler Brown as Junior High Girls Volleyball Coach.

Mrs. Leezer made a motion to approve Payten Hillier as Junior High Girls Volleyball Coach. Mrs. Orwig seconded. Motion passed with a 7-0 vote.

Mrs. Leezer announced the retirement of Tim Faber, Junior High/High School Custodian, effective January 22, 2025.

Motion was made by Mrs. Leezer, seconded by Mr. Rediger, to adjourn at 7:14 p.m. Motion was approved 7-0.

Ann Orwig
President

Emily Leezer
Secretary

Approved 1/21/2025