

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE
SUFFOLK CITY SCHOOL BOARD
Thursday, June 11, 2020 (5:00 PM)**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held at City Hall and electronically while practicing social distancing.

Upon roll being taken, the following persons were present:

Phyllis Byrum, *Chair*
Karen Jenkins
Lorita Mayo
Tyron Riddick
Sherri Story

Also Present: Dr. John B. Gordon III
 Tarshia L. Gardner, Clerk
 Wendell M. Waller, School Board Attorney

Absent/Late Arrival: Dr. Judith Brooks-Buck¹

Attendance Via Electronic Device: (upon Board approval):²
 David Mitnick

5:00 P.M. – OPENING OF PUBLIC MEETING

The School Board Meeting was called to order by the Board Chair Byrum.

PRESENTATION

– The College and Career Academy at Pruden (CCAP) Completers

Ms. Connie Burgess, Principal stated that there are 162 completers in one and two year programs, four (4) dual enrollment programs, 56 students attained 627 hours of college credits, 24 Hampton Roads Public Works Academy Cadets, and 45 First Governor’s Career and Technical Academy completers. These students have established a strong foundation of knowledge, skills, and experience which will prepare them for a wonderful future. She said the CCAP program completers are truly “Skilled to Soar.” Ms. Burgess and Ms. Ward introduced the completers via PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Gordon thanked Ms. Burgess, Mr. Milteer and the faculty and staff at CCAP. These students are so talented and watching them perform various demonstrations at various events were impressive. They have done a tremendous job and are ready for the workforce.

Chairwoman Byrum and the Board Members congratulated the students, parents, and family members. These students will have jobs and good careers. The programs at CCAP have pointed these young people in the right directions and this is what it is all about. The students were admonished to tell others how they made it through this difficult time as to encourage other students because there are great things being done in our city and our school division. It was mentioned that not every track is a college track; there are successful career programs offered here at CCAP, and Suffolk Public Schools offers the pathway to access those careers at no cost.

There being no further comments, this portion of the meeting was adjourned.

5:38 P.M. – RE-OPENING OF MEETING

The School Board Meeting was called to order by the Board Chair.

MOTION TO GO INTO A CLOSED MEETING

Member Mayo moved, and Member Riddick seconded the motion to go into Closed Session.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 4 Nay: 1 Absent: 2. The motion Carried. 4 to 1

7:00 P.M. – RE-OPENING OF PUBLIC MEETING

-The School Board Meeting was called to order by Board Chair Byrum.

Vice-Chair Dr. Brook-Buck was present with this portion of the meeting.¹

-Meeting Attendance Via Electronic Device (David Mitnick):²

Member Riddick moved, and Member Mayo seconded the motion, to approve the attendance by means of electronic device for Member David Mitnick.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0. The motion Carried. 6 to 0

**There was a pause in the meeting to allow Member Mitnick to join the meeting.*

-Member Riddick led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

Member Mayo moved, and Member Riddick seconded the motion, to approve the Resolution of Certificate of the Closed Meeting.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 4 Nay: 1 Abstain: 2. The motion Carried. 4 to 1 to 2

ACTION ON CLOSED MEETING ITEMS

-Personnel Report

Member Mayo moved, and Member Jenkins seconded the motion, to accept the Personnel Report as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

¹ Due to the emergency health concerns of her husband, Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck was absent for the first portion of the meeting and was present beginning with the 7 p.m. Public Meeting.

² Board Member Mitnick observed (as a spectator) the opening of the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and did not participate in the closed meeting that followed. Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(2) requires approval by the public body before a member can participate in a meeting through electronic communication means. The School Board did not vote to allow Board Member Mitnick to participate via electronic communication means due to medical condition until the opening of the public meeting at 7:00 p.m.

At this time, Dr. Gordon introduced the three new Principals to the Board and public. Each principal expressed their excitement, honor, and gratitude for being selected as an administrator and introduced the family that accompanied them to the meeting. Each new principal was a former Assistant Principal with SPS and are excited to continue the great teaching and learning that is happening in their respective schools.

Ms. Candace Myrick - OES

Ms. Kristal Taylor - HES

Ms. Bernette Brock - BTWES

Board Chair Byrum thanked each new Principal and stated she is looking forward to the great things they will do.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

-Before a vote was taken, Member Mayo indicated that there were some important items that needed to be added to the agenda for approval.

1. The 2020-2021 Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Application
2. The 2020-2021 Title III Statewide Consortium Application
3. Resolution 19/20-41: A Resolution Of The School Board For The City of Suffolk, Virginia Expressing Its Steadfast Commitment To Foster An Inclusive Educational Environment Where Every Student, Teacher, Support Professional, Parent And Community Member Is Treated With Dignity And Respect, As Well As Our Commitment To Continue Fighting For Racial Justice And Human And Civil Rights For All.

Member Mayo moved, and Member Jenkins seconded the motion, to approve the Agenda with the additional items.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 Nay: 0. The motion Carried. 7 to 0

PUBLIC SPEAKERS ON AGENDA TOPICS

-Rules for public speakers were read by the Board Clerk.

Meg Diggs:

- School Board overreached with the approval of the Norms and Protocols added to policy.
- School Board policy gives false impression that school board elected members can discipline another elected official.
- Board have no formal powers of discipline, according to the law.
- School Board discusses and criticizes public officers' opinions, ideas, and actions regarding public business in closed session outside of public view. Public is kept in the dark with this process and cannot make informed decisions at elections.
- Board does not grasp the responsibility of being open.
- The Board should not be judge and jury for other members. Reported violations should be reviewed by a neutral third-party committee to ensure the board is not allowing personal interest and opinions to interfere with professional responsibilities.

- Not the role of elected officials to punish or censure another member with whom they have a difference of opinion. There are no grievous ethical violations that support this public censure.
- Censure states that Ms. Story breached confidentiality of closed meetings, but the information cannot be confidential if it is posted on the public agenda.
- The Board and Mr. Waller making decisions about transgender guidelines for our kids without input from the community is appalling.
- Board is more passionate about muzzling Ms. Story than it is about anything else. We feel that Ms. Story is the only one doing it right.

Thomas Turner:

- Concerned with charges against Ms. Story collaborating with counterpart on City Council. Confused by this charge since there is a disconnect between the two bodies.
- Confused with the charge with Ms. Story seeking ideas from her counterparts in other cities. Wouldn't that be something we would want...to see what other cities are doing in this time of crisis.
- Confused by criticism of Ms. Story postings information to Facebook. We voted for her based on her bring transparency to our borough and representation.
- It's ok to disagree, but to muzzle someone is inappropriate and unbecoming of a body.
- Reject this censure, seek a mediator, work together do whatever you have to do.
- The students are watching.

Judy Lehr:

- Ms. Story has done nothing but be as transparent as possible.
- Keeping the public informed of the goings on at Suffolk Public Schools
- Ms. Story is strong and stands up for what she believes in.
- Residents are not receiving answers to our questions once again.
- Feel that SPS has something to hide.
- Requested clarification from Board Chair and other Board Members of the \$10,000 increase to the Superintendent's contract listed in the approved budget.
- Has anyone reached out to the Attorney General for a legal opinion on whether the Attorney believes the increase is a salary increase or a COLA increase?
- Can my elected official, David Mitnick, request an opinion from the Attorney General?
- Superintendent's contract part 5.1 references his salary and states that it may be increase by amendment for any physical year during the contract. Annual salary increases shall increase no less than the average increase for instructional personnel. Any adjustment made to the annual salary subsequent years shall be in writing and shall be in the form of an amendment or an addendum, this has not been done.

Troy Merryfield:

- The Board Chair and Board Attorney is trying to keep we the voters and taxpayers in the dark about board business and other concerns that benefit the light of public knowledge and discussion.
- Board is supposed to be good stewards of our money and inform the public what is being done to produce excellence in our students.

- Censure is a mean-spirited attempt to silence my representative and nullify my and others who elected Ms. Story. We are getting exactly what we voted for someone who is not afraid to go against the grain and takes its constituents concerns seriously.
- There was no violation of anything in her posts, she was just informing her constituents that the specific topic was being discussed. She urged people to do research and let board members know our stance.
- Nobody should chastise Ms. Story if students are wiping excrement on walls and she wants it fixed now. Wife and I have complained for years stalls and girls' bathrooms at middle and high schools. No remedy or response has been received regarding our complaints.
- Why not contact the director of technology to solve a technology issue. Why waste the superintendents valuable time by notifying him that you have an issue with a computer program. This charge is most ridiculous and mean-spirited. This charge is petty at best.
- Policy manual encourages board members to communicate with the superintendent. Story contacted peers in other districts regarding furloughs. Members should always investigate and research and communicate with others that are in the same situation. Taxpayers could have saved money and furloughed employees could have made more money...a win win for the district and employees. Furlough does not mean terminated. I expect all public servants to find every single dollar that they can as cost savings.
- Compensation adjustment of \$10,000. With less than one year on the job without a performance review...all that needed to be explained was that the superintendent received the same COLA that all other full-time employees received with the remainder to other compensation. This is a distasteful shell game of how to give a highly compensated person a pay raise...but not call it a pay raise.
- Ms. Story is a firebrand and speaks truth to power. By silencing her, you silence thousands.

Deborah Wahlstrom:

- The censure and corresponding vote are faulty. Almost all the arguments in the censure document are faulty and do not reflect what is true.
- Sherri did not violate the confidentiality of closed meeting discussions. The topic of the right of transgender students is not appropriate for a closed meeting and FOIA affirms this. The real violation is that of the board chair for placing the items on the closed agenda. How can Sherri violate a violation?
- Censure document rejects Sherri's comment about a finance meeting that occurred that should not have and states she has no evidence...but she does.
- Censure document changes the wording of what Sherri shared on her Facebook page. It cites that Sherri requested that she should be contacted regarding school bathrooms and this blames her for impeding on the day to day operations. She stated that the staff "may" message her not "should" not "must".
- Sherri's words are misrepresented in the censure document. How can you censure Sherri for an item which you changed the word?
- Censure document cites Sherri for calling polling of members illegal and she did not verify information. Not true, Sherri did verify. It is not legal to send a group email to get a response from school board members. The email must be sent to members individually. Sherri did nothing wrong.
- How do you censure Sherri on an illegal action taken by the board chair?

- Censure document cited Sherri for not verifying her statement when she explained on Facebook about a paragraph that went to board members as a group that would change the current policy and bypass all protocol for policy making...
- Ms. Wahlstrom was interrupted by the Board Clerk due to expired time.

REPORTS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Good News Reports:

Ms. Ward presented the following Good News Report

ESPN – *Outside the Lines (LHS Boys Basketball Team was featured on ESPN) Coach Clint Wright and son Clint Wright Jr. was interviewed by ESPN.

***Superintendent’s Scholarship** – First scholarship recipients were selected based on their good academic standing, good behavioral and community standing and are involved in extra-curricular activities and display strong leadership qualities. Each student received a check for \$1,000. The following students were selected for this scholarship:

1. Clint Wright Jr. – LHS
2. Simeon Guyton – NRHS
3. Ally Tolson – FHS

***SEF Virtual Annual Fundraiser Gala** – Participants included students from elementary, middle, and high schools and Governor’s School for the Arts. SEF raised a total of \$6,443 to give back to the arts program in SPS.

***#SPSStrong Campaign** – COVID-19 has changed our lives tremendously. The 30-second commercial clip was snippets from our cabinet members reminding our SPS community that we are all experiencing stress/strain of the impact of this pandemic and together we can help bring out the best in our community and one another.

***Meal Distribution Update** – Our Transportation and Food and Nutritional Services team will continue distributing food throughout the summer covering enough meals for an entire week. Tuesdays, families receive 3-day meal packages; Thursdays, families receive 4-day packages. Meal packages include breakfast, lunch, snack, and dinner.

At this time, Dr. Gordon recognized Dr. Harrison who will be leaving SPS for a position with Chesapeake City Public Schools. He said of Dr. Harrison:

- A tremendous asset to the SPS team
- This is the next step in her journey to being Superintendent which will happen very soon
- Dr. Harrison was the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Director of Secondary Education, and Interim Superintendent all at the same time
- She assisted Dr. Gordon in his transition coming to SPS and assisted him in various meetings and building great relationships with Board Members
- She is extremely talented and has done a tremendous job setting up a transition plan for her exit
- Her wealth of institutional knowledge will be truly missed
- She is leaving behind big shoes to fill.

Board members expressed their gratitude to Dr. Harrison. Each talked about her tremendous talent, strong work ethics, dedication, and support to Suffolk Public Schools. They

also mentioned that her ideas, hard work, truthfulness, her candor was appreciated and will be missed. Dr. Harrison was the light in SPS, and her spirit will continue with the programs she has in place, staff she has trained, and visions she has inspired. She has gone above and beyond the call of duty, and all wished her the best on her new journey as they look forward to her one day becoming the Secretary of Education.

Dr. Harrison expressed that her time with SPS has been a journey of a lifetime and she enjoyed every moment. She stated we will always be her family as she continues in her career. She will miss being a part of this team and she is excited about Dr. Gordon's vision for the division. Not saying goodbye, but taking the love, support, and encouragement with her. It has been an honor to serve with such great people and she thanked all for their kind words.

i-Ready (Summer School) Presentation:

Dr. Gordon – We have been piloting this program with a small group of teachers and will expand it this summer with online instructional programs for our K-5 students. Pam Connor and the i-Ready team presented information.

Program curriculum include:

- Literacy and Numeracy
- STEM Project Based Learning Activities
- i-Ready Support
- Student devices (Chrome Books)
- Targeted instructional support taught by school

Dr. Shenique Mens-Smith, presented the following information:

- i-Ready is a blended program for reading and mathematics, connecting assessment data to instruction.
- Assessments consists of multiple parts, Diagnostic, Dyslexia Screener, Oral Reading Fluency, Standards Mastery, Growth Monitoring.
- Each data point connects to i-Ready Learning consisting of: Personal Instruction, Learning Games, Teacher Toolbox, Tools for Instruction, and At Home Resources

Dr. Mens-Smith left us with three “stretch” actions for back to school:

- Size the achievement closure gap and identify academic needs.
- Embed learning progression strategies as part of on-grade-level instruction
- Scenario plan for multiple re-entry models.
- i-Ready will help with these actions. It also provides flexibility instruction delivery that is connected to insightful data.

Keysha Thomas, K Teacher at NSES highlighted the following:

- Program was a hit for students and parents
- Students asked for additional i-Ready work
- Program allowed for differentiation
- Can monitor student progress, growth mindset, and self-regulation.
- Is an awesome instructional tool.

Mrs. Parham, 4th grade teacher at NSES:

- Used program with students and grandchildren and were able to see both sides of it.
- Children were engaged and you could see the excitement in their faces.

- Grandson, who is a special needs student, was extremely excited about i-Ready and was engaged in the lessons.
- Students and parents looked forward to the lessons and sent messages that they loved the program.
- Really enjoyed the program and the children did too.

Dr. Gordon thanked the i-Ready team, NSES Principal and teachers for their presentation. He highlighted that one of his main goals was developing individualized learning plans for our kids based on their ability. Was originally discussed to challenge our teachers and to get them to know and understand how our kids work. This is what we are getting with i-Ready. Thrilled to hear that the teachers and students are loving this program. This is how we will bring a better sense of equity to our school division thereby closing some of the achievement gaps.

Board Chair Byrum, Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck, and Member Jenkins all expressed the excitement for the program and how all students, including special needs students really enjoyed the program. The proof is in the pudding and we know from the facts the program works. She said we need to do everything to get our students excited about learning, no matter what. Our purpose is to teach our students.

SPS Response Plan Update: Dr. Gordon highlighted the following:

- Thanked students and parents for adjusting to our new normal and for closing out the 2019-2020 school year successfully.
- Nothing can replace traditional classroom setting and returning to a tradition model has no start date.
- Proud of the plan of action developed by Dr. Harrison and her team. We will use this feedback to finalize plans to start the 2020-2021 school year.
- Fall planning survey will be released to parents and guardians the week of June 22-26, 2020.
- Visitors entering schools must wear a mask.
- Electronic forms of communication have been set within our building and we are asking all to adhere to these guidelines to keep everyone safe.
- June 15th start of summer work schedule.

Dr. Gordon thanked departments and staff for their hard work for SPS: Finance, Food and Nutritional Services (have served 241,000 meals since March), Transportation, custodial staff, Technology and John Littlefield, Human Resources, Dr. Rice and the Student Support Services team, Dr. Leigh, Ms. Connor and Principals, Ms. Ward and the Community Engagement Team. These teams go above and beyond the call of duty. We have strong leaders in SPS, and good leaders rise to the top in a crisis. He thanked our teachers for being the best teachers in the world. This has been shown by your dedication to our students and the importance of building relationships with our families. Job well done!

Dr. Gordon shared that the instructional model that is currently being finalized will not look like the model used for Mastery and Virtual SPS. Will build on those plans to better fit the needs of students and staff. New models will include: Canvass, i-Ready, Edgenuity, and Google Classroom. This will create a comprehensive learning

experience for students that is practical in application. Dr. Gordon will have discussions with students to get their perspective. A sustainable plan that can be used for extended school closure due to inclement weather and a long-term look at virtual learning days are being developed. Dr. Rice will be leading the 2020 Learning Task Force to include SAO staff, building administrators, teachers, and parents.

Dr. Gordon talked about the state of our nation and racial tensions. He stated he knows how many people feel with the strong sense of anger, betrayal, and the need for immediate action. Suffolk Public Schools is not immune to this. There is a need for equity, a need to eliminate implicit biases, a need to ensure that our students learn in an atmosphere of love, compassion, and support. He believes in using his platform as Superintendent to address topics that will sometimes make people uncomfortable. There is no place for racism in Suffolk Public Schools. The only way to stop this negative behavior is to treat everyone with respect, regardless of differences. To do this, we must first admit there is a problem then work on a solution that keeps kids first. Must look at this through the lens of a student and ask ourselves if our kids feel safe. Our job is to make sure the answer is yes. Support our students and staff as we work through this together, leave the politics out and take a hard look at the end result as to what happens when we do not love each other. SPS is a place of inclusion, a place where our people will feel welcomed, treated with dignity, and celebrated for its diversity. This is the cornerstone in “Building the Best SPS.”

SPS Success Program:

Dr. Harrison discussed the adjustments being made to this program which is formally the Excel program. Changes were based on instructional data, behavioral data, and subjective data from staff and administrators. The new SPS Success Program will include the following features:

- Two locations (JFKMS and KFMS),
- Two Intervention Specialist positions and one Behavior Specialist,
- Low student/teacher ratio,
- Year one (1) students in grade 6 will receive instruction from the Excel teacher in literacy and math. Year two (2) students in grades 7-8 will receive a modified program incorporating literacy foundations and wraparound supports,
- Students transported with peers, which decreases time on buses,
- Emphasis on personalized learning, differentiated instruction and continuous monitoring on progress,
- Increased support with technology and digital learning resources,
- Added incentives and resources for family engagement,
- Increased resources, support, and PD in PBIS and SEL strategies.

Calendar of Special Events:

Dr. Gordon highlighted the following:

- Facebook Live Session with the Superintendent
- SPS Summer Hours Schedule
- Suffolk City Council Meeting
- SPS Graduation for NRHS, LHS, KFHS
- Independence Day Holiday
- Suffolk Public School Board Meeting

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck moved, and Member Riddick seconded, the motion to approve items listed on the Consent Agenda as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 Nay: 0. The motion Carried. 7 to 0

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Item 1: School Board Meeting Minutes – April 9, 2020 (Revised)

Member Story requested a correction to the revised minutes from April 9, 2020. Minutes incorrectly reflected that she attended electronically due to a “medical condition”. However, the reason for her electronic attendance was due to COVID. The minutes will be revised to reflect this correction.

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck moved, and Member Jenkins seconded, the motion to accept the minutes, changing a “medical condition” to “COVID-19”.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 Nay: 0. The motion Carried. 7 to 0

Item 2: Ordinance 19/20-66

Vice-Chair Brook-Buck moved, and Member Mayo seconded, the motion to accept the amended ordinance, Ordinance 19/20-66 as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 Nay: 0. The motion Carried. 7 to 0

Item 3: Ordinance 19/20-67

Vice-Chair Brook-Buck moved, and Member Jenkins seconded, the motion to accept the ordinance as amended, Ordinance 19/20-67.

Member Riddick called for discussion. He pointed to sub item “E” needing a change in wording. Suggested instead of the word “immediately” being used, to allow the Board Chair time to respond, to possibly read “24 hours of receipt of request.”

Vice-Chair Brook-Buck moved, and Member Jenkins seconded, the motion to accept ordinance 19/20-67 with the recommendation of changing the word “immediately” to “within a 24-hour period.”

Member Mitnick questioned why the change to this policy.

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck answered, due to individuals asking to add as many as 10 items to the agenda at the same time and being done on a regular basis. There being seven members, if each chose to add 10 items, there need to be some way of vetting how to do it. This way, if there are any objections to any item requested to be added, the entire board will have to vote on whether the items would be necessary or if there is an interest in the item being added to the agenda. One person would not stop any member from adding items, it just means that one person will trigger a vote of the Board regarding that item.

Member Mitnick asked if that would be the majority of the Board to rule in favor.

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck answered, of course.

Member Mitnick - if the majority of the board vote in favor of having an item added to the agenda, is that what it takes if seven members are present. Would it take four votes?

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck - it is like any other board vote, the majority would have to vote. She was not sure as to Member Mitnick's question.

Member Mayo - if this vote would take place in open meeting.

Board Chair Byrum and Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck answered yes.

Member Riddick called for the question.

The Clerk read the motion: "The motion is to accept Ordinance 19/20-67 with the recommended amendment to change the word in item "E" from "Immediately" to "give 24 hours of receipt of the request."

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 Nay: 2. The motion Carried. 5 to 2

Item 4: Citizens Advisory Committee:

Attorney Waller explained - The Board will issue notice to the public regarding various committees which citizens need to be appointed. Citizens will be able to submit letters of interest and board members will review letters and select one person from their borough to serve on Citizen Advisory Committees. This process is outlined in the policy and the process the Board agreed to follow.

Dr. Gordon stated - Information will be posted for citizens to submit letters of interest from June 15-June 25. The Board will then review information and at July 9th meeting, the Board will discuss information in closed session and will then make their nomination at that public meeting.

Member Riddick – said each member will appoint his/her own designee to represent their respective borough. Vacancies on the committees afterwards will be filled by the letters of interest process, will review letters as a group, and will fill remaining vacancies. It is not an automatic serve.

Member Mitnick - what do we do with a policy that is not consistent with the bylaws of an established advisory committee? SEAC has well-defined policy on membership. He thought once Board Members selected the citizen to represent their borough other vacancies would be filled by members of the advisory committee. It is not the boards role to fill an entire committee.

Member Riddick reminded Member Mitnick that it was not established that the committee would fill its own vacancies. The Board will fill these vacancies based on the criteria explained by the SEAC Committee with our Policy Review Committee and it will work. The only issue we had as a board was when it was going to be implemented. We will follow SEAC guidelines and those that we have to fill the vacancies.

Member Mitnick stated that the Board Attorney had a different opinion on this matter. He stated that Mr. Waller told him that the Board will be making seven selections to serve

and the SEAC Advisory Committee will be able to make additional selections for membership.

Attorney Waller provided clarification on the opinion issued stating: the basis of the opinion was whether or not the policy of the school board conflicted with the policy of SEAC or the regulations of the State Board of Education. The conclusion was that there was no conflict between the policy and state board regulation or SEAC bylaws. The Board still appoint people to serve on Citizens Advisory Committees, it could turn out that those currently serving on SEAC may be approved by the board and they continue to serve. However, it is the Board that makes those appointments as it is a Citizen Advisory Committee of Suffolk City Public Schools.

Member Mitnick - there is a difference between appointing and selecting and the Board has always reviewed the appointment for our advisory committees and voted on them. We have always appointed the members, but the members have not always been selected by the board. He did not think the policy approved in the fall changed that.

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck – Vice Chair indicated that the language is confused. She believed that the same is being said but in a different way. We selected one representative from our borough, and we approved members to serve on the committee.

Member Riddick - per policy, we formulate committees. He deferred to the Attorney to pull up the policy and whatever the language is of the policy, we abide by.

Dr. Gordon - According to the minutes from November 14, 2019 meeting, the process was for each member to appoint a member and the remaining seats to be filled by the board using letters of interest. This was adopted by a vote of four (4) to three (3).

Member Riddick - each member would have to go through the process and submit a letter. Members get seven (7) appointees, one for each borough, and the rest will be filled by letters of interest. Not trying to throw anyone out, but it's not an automatic appointment either, you must go through the process.

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck moved, and Member Riddick seconded, the motion to table Citizens Advisory Committees item until July 9th.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 1

NEW BUSINESS

Item 1: Waive Attorney/Client Privilege for Release of Opinion Number 19/20-17 and Opinion Number 19/20-18

Attorney Waller - the two opinions were requested by Member Story which 19/20-17 asked whether the School Board complied with the language found in the Superintendent's contract when it approved a revised budget that included a salary adjustment for the Superintendent. Opinion 19/20-18 asked to render an opinion regarding the process for board members to add items to the public meeting agenda.

This request is to waive the attorney/client privilege on both opinions so that both opinions can be made available for public viewing.

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck moved, and Member Mayo seconded, the motion to waive attorney/client privilege to release the opinions.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 7 Nay: 0. The motion Carried. 7 to 0

Item 2: Resolution 19/20-31

The Board Clerk read the resolution. After the reading, the Board Chair instructed all of the time format. Ms. Story has seven (7) minutes to speak, then the Board Chair and all other Members will have an opportunity to make comments.

Member Story's remarks:

- Thanked supporters for coming to speak on her behalf and the constituents in the Chuckatuck borough.
- Requested items from the Board Chair which were received late proving no time to fully prepare for the meeting,
- Entitled to constitutional guarantees of free speech, due process and equal protection and those rights are not being respected,
- Although FOIA has specific requirements that govern open and closed meetings, she believes that the Board has often been out of compliance,
- Believes there should be maximum transparency, but members of the Board appear to disagree,
- Will always try to comply with the law and with the goal of keeping citizens informed,
- Always try to do the job elected to do, including communicating with all constituents and interested parties. School Board should encourage communication but has instead tried to muzzle and punish her.
- The Board has limited powers and she believe that this Board has gone beyond what the law allows,
- She believes that the process and the rules she allegedly violated are illegitimate and totally inappropriate for this board,
- She does not intend to participate in this proceeding and reserves the right to take legal action to enable her to do her job fully for the benefit of the constituents of the Chuckatuck Borough.

The meeting was then opened for Board Members comments.

Chair Byrum - how did we arrive at this point of censure? She then reviewed events leading to this censure:

- January 2019 - New Board Members were to receive training by VSBA upon taking office. All members received training except Mrs. Story. Board Chair requested the Clerk to provide copies of PowerPoint materials of VSBA's new member training to all new members.
- February 8, 2019 – All Members and Superintendent attended VSBA training where Norms and Protocols and board governance and procedures were discussed.
- Late February 2019 – Met with Member Story to review 15-20 items of concern. At Member Story's request, a meeting was held with her, Dr. Whitney, and Mr. Waller in response to questions and concerns.

- March 14, 2019 – Norms and Protocols were adopted. Member Story was not in attendance for this vote due to illness. Each member was given a copy of the Norms and Protocols.
- April 22, 2019 – Telephone conference was held with Member Story regarding other violations of the Norms and Protocols.
- May 9, 2019 – Member Story was issued a written reprimand for violations of the Norms and Protocols.
- July 11, 2019 – The School Board adopted the Norms and Protocols into policy.
- September 12, 2019 – Member Story received written notice of violations of Norms and Protocols.

For 18 months, discussions, cautions, and reminders were given to Member Story regarding the Norms and Protocols of the School Board. VSBA training was also offered over these 18 months to no avail. Members have also worked diligently to resolve concerns and violations of the Norms and Protocols. When these Norms and Protocols were adopted, so were the consequences of the violations as outlined below:

- Violation 1: The Board Chairman or designee will discuss the violation with board member.
- Violation 2: The Board will provide a written reprimand regarding the violation to the board member who committed the offense.
- Violation 3: The Board will discuss the violation with the board member in a public meeting.

Board Chair Byrum asked Member Story to adhere to the Suffolk School Board approved policy of Norms and Protocols.

Member Jenkins:

- Disappointed to have to take this action against another Board Member.
- We were elected to serve and lead in a manner of creating policy, and following norms and protocols together to govern the school district and to ensure the integrity, honesty, loyalty, and confidentiality, and protection of our students, teachers, staff and administrators. This should be at the forefront of the oath taken.
- Virginia law is clear that the day to day operations of the schools is in the hands of the Superintendent, not board members. Suggesting employees contact members regarding school conditions, intrude upon day to day operations. If approached by students, teachers, or administrators, or if employees express concerns to a member, our response should be to direct their information/concern to the Superintendent. It is not the role of a school board member to interfere in the day to day operations of the schools. All made aware of this on day one, but Member Story willingly violated this law as often as she felt.
- It is apparent when your desired results are not received, you feel that the policies, protocols, and procedures do not apply to you.
- Your School Board Facebook page is being used as a platform to suggest and plant false suspicions in others by saying that secret board meetings are happening, while admitting in the same post you have no proof.
- You plant seeds of discord and deceit among other school board members.
- We are not trying to silence Member Story at all, just make sure if you are telling the story, make sure the story is factual...just speak the truth.
- Although “we” (including you Ms. Story) agreed that Dr. Gordon was the best person to lead SPS, you planted false information about his salary on your Facebook page. You said he was being given an increase in salary of \$10,000. This is not true and has caused many emails and negative comments. Fact is that his

budget is 10% less than last year's budget. You were there when we negotiated Dr. Gordon's contract and you were totally on board with his plan to continue the success of SPS.

- We will not agree with everything with Dr. Gordon but using Facebook to suggest you are being bullied by us or being attacked is again not true.
- Policy, protocols and norms were created (with Ms. Story being a part of that) and if we don't agree with all of them, it does not give us - or you - any authority to ignore them and do whatever you want without consequences.
- Saw a response from a post from one of your former students saying despite what they may think of you, you always tried to make sure students followed the rules and policies of the school when you taught at KFHS. So, my question is, what privilege do you have that that exempts you from following policies, norms and protocols. All must follow these, no one is trying to attack you and keep you from speaking.
- Our School Board is far from dysfunctional; using Facebook to demote fellow school board members is your choice, but misleading and painting false assumptions is no more than the boy that cried wolf scenario.
- You shared that you are a minister, you should be familiar with Matthew 18:15,17, to paraphrase, if there is a concern with your brother, go to them in private (we did that). If nothing is accomplished, make it public - not to embarrass or crucify anyone but allow the public to know of their actions (therefore we're here and we should not be.) We addressed this privately, more than once, and you only escalated your intent to not follow the norms and protocols and policies and procedures.
- We witness in this world daily how people in position feel that following rules and laws do not apply to them. Because of this, people are falsely criticized behind things that are not true and even lose their lives due to the very breath being taken away.
- School Board Member Story, we can't breathe.

Point of order was called by Member Riddick due to the commotion in the audience.

Member Mitnick expressed the following comments:

- Do I agree 100% with the censure resolution, no I do not.
- Ms. Story is different from the rest of you on the board.
- She saw in her election that her constituents wanted accountability, which was her platform while running.
- Story feels that giving people information is what she needs to do.
- It upsets me along with Ms. Story because either one of us can have a totally brilliant idea for change but I am willing to bet the vote will be five to two.
- This board is not open to change, does not have an open mind when it comes to people's ideas and is certainly in favor of pursuing the status quo.
- You are trying to censure a fellow board member because they are different, because they think outside the box, because they want to do things by the laws and the FOIA protections provided and for some reason that angers those of you on the board.
- Ms. Story speaks the truth a lot and I think we as a board would be stronger if we would listen and find the merit in what she says, instead of turning up our noses because Sherri Story said it.

- Upset by the resolution because the document concluded with what it means to be censured and those behaviors defined would not be a way to even treat a dog, let alone a fellow school board member.
- I appeal to the sense of reason for those of you on the school board and if you have the ability to reason that you will vote against the resolution for this censure.

Member Mayo:

- Disappointed we have come to this point and this discussion is taking place.
- We agreed as a board to follow the norms and protocols which were voted upon and approved on July 11, 2019 as policy.
- Those guidelines are for us to follow to be effective board members in word and in deed.
- VA law is clear that the day to day operations of the schools is in the hands of the Superintendent and not school board members.
- It is not the role of the school board members to interfere in the day to day operations of the schools.
- It is imperative that we work in unity as a team, a unified body, a unified board.
- At times, we may have difference of opinions, as we are all human with certain beliefs and ideas, however the end result must be what is best for the education of our children, academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Put egos aside, and the need for attention and do the work necessary for our students that they so richly deserve.
- I believe that we have an obligation to our children to provide the best educational opportunities and to prepare them for life-long learning. Their future depends on this.

Member Riddick:

- Disgusted we must be here having this conversation. That is not a formality, not saying this to be politically correct or obtain your great mercy or whatever.
- Coming on board, we all had to learn how to become school board members. However, transition move faster for some than others.
- We received training from VSBA to do our job effectively. They stressed to us that our job is governance and we govern through policy. We appropriate what is allocated to us from City Council. Our job is to be a good steward over what is given to us.
- The day to day operations and carrying out our visions, goals, and objectives falls on the Superintendent. He does that, we evaluate him, and if we are not satisfied, we make changes from there. Not to bully employees.
- Previously knew Ms. Story, while a student at KFHS and my experience with her was not a pleasant one. Someone emailed and asked me what facts I have for my statements...I experienced them firsthand. I was in a group of students that Ms. Story told us to “stop acting like little monkeys”. That is my experience. If you look on Facebook, you will see other students from KFHS expressing their experiences with her.
- I overlooked all of that so I can work with Board Member Story to move Suffolk forward. Go back and check the meetings, and videos and see the many times I supported whatever Member Story put forth, as long as it was in the best interest of Suffolians.

- There were times I had it out with Dr. Buck, times me and Board Member Story had a strong difference of opinions showing that I do not operate for clicks. I am who I am whether you like it or not.
- Board Member Story said, “to keep the citizens informed.” Yes, we all have free speech, but we do not have the right to go in a crowded place and holler “Fire.”
- When you are purposely misleading constituents it does not make sense.
- I have had a conversation with Board Member Story pertaining to the way she was dealing with the board and there are staff members that want to speak up but are afraid of retaliation.
- We share some of the same concerns, but to tell people that it was a \$10,000 increase for the Superintendent’s budget is false.
- When Dr. Whitney was here, it was attack after attack, email after email it was not complying.
- I asked her why not to VSBA for training and Member Story said, “as long as they are providing training, I’m not going.”
- Board Member Story, (during campaign, at a fundraiser in Northern Suffolk) she came to me and asked, “if Thelma Hinton does not win, can I count on you and your support in getting rid of the Superintendent.” She came to the table with an axe to grind.
- Dr. Whitney is no longer here but he left when we were accredited under both standards. There was nothing to poke fun at anymore. (That is according to the Virginia Department of Education, not Michigan.) Then when he left it stopped for a bit, now its continuing with Dr. Gordon. At what point do we celebrate that we are 100% accredited, surviving a pandemic, and moving forward.
- You all are just finding out about some of this, we as a Board have been living through this for a long time.
- Her first year as a board member, we were threatened with a lawsuit. I wanted to speak out then but could not due to pending litigation.
- I said everything I meant to say, and I meant every word I said. There is nothing personal against Board Member Story. I can overlook the foolishness as a student that I experienced but this behavior is out of control.

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck:

- I am not a Facebook person and it’s interesting to me that the very first person to report to me about you doing something inappropriate on Facebook was Mr. Mitnick. I would not have known anything about it because I do not do a lot of comments on Facebook. Thought this was interesting since I heard his comment.
- It is disconcerting to me, to have worked as hard as I have since 2013, to have to dispel rumors circulating in my neighborhood because you’ve been working very hard there. I live in a diverse neighborhood and the people are friendly and helpful and we have worked together over the years, but lately there’s been some confusion because you’ve been busy in my neighborhood.
- You’ve made it your business to distort facts in my neighborhood, and on your Facebook page quite a lot (more than I’m on my own Facebook page) and have created some alternative reality information about me.
- You have written some untruths about me and have said things in your videos that are untrue. You have had your friends (some here tonight) to write some things and say some things as well...some of them have even written those things directly to me (I have those documents for some other folks to see.)

- We received a document from your attorney's office which said you did not have enough information to defend yourself but at the same time, we found a three-quarter page ad in the newspaper of you defending yourself.
- Your attempts to cause confusion on the board have been troubling. To belittle our administrative staff, to demean our attorney and the board chair, to bring non-sense to my borough and even to my neighborhood, I really do not understand.
- Stories about FOIA, having people to call the Attorney General's office (written on your Facebook page, I don't know if this is true or not) but some things have just really gone "off the chain", as the young people say.
- When you were informed by Board Members that your false Facebook post generated a threat to a teacher (who supported me), you assumed no responsibility for it. In truth Ms. Story, if you put oil on rags and hand someone some matches, you are responsible for the fire.
- One of the falsehoods you put out there is about the Superintendent's salary. We gave him a 1% Cost of Living increase...one percent of \$180,000 is not \$10,000 (no matter what you do with it.) If 1% is \$10,000 we are paying someone a million dollars and if there is a salary of a million dollars in this school system, I am going to step down and compete for that position.
- The second falsehood is committee assignments. Ms. Byrum and I are Chair and Co-Chair of the School Board because these people voted us into those positions. We are invited to meetings with the Mayor and Vice-Mayor because of our positions, not because we selected some special committees or because we like attending meetings...believe me, there is work to do and extra meetings are not something we just do because we want to, but do because they are necessary. So please stop saying otherwise because it is just not true.
- These questions about what you're supposed to do and not supposed to do and going to do with regard to FOIA are just not true.
- Abusing our employees and talking to them like they are less than human will not get us to retain employees. Our employees, some of whom are directors, department chairs, can go other places. We have an excellent staff and they get paid a lot less than other people in the surrounding districts.

Dr. Brooks Buck was interrupted as her time had expired.

Ms. Story was offered a rebuttal however, she did not speak.

Member Riddick moved, and Vice-Chair Dr. Brooks-Buck seconded, the motion that we approve the resolution as presented.

Upon a roll call for vote, the vote was: Aye: 5 Nay: 2. The motion Carried. 5 to 2

Member Riddick called for point of order and asked Chair Byrum to reiterate our practice for our persons who are attending the meeting, who are not on the board, what their roles are, if they desire to speak- how they go about speaking, and to exercise her authority as Board Chair that if interruptions continue from members of the audience to ask that person to vacate the premises.

Board Chair Byrum gave instructions to the audience.

Items 3 & 4: Resolution 19/20-32 and Resolution 19/20-33

Vice Chair Brooks Buck moved, and Member Jenkins seconded, the motion to take resolutions three and four together as a vote.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1 The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

Item 5: Resolution 19/20-34:

Vice Chair Brooks Buck moved, and Member Jenkins seconded, the motion to accept resolution 19/20-34: A Resolution of the School Board for the City of Suffolk, Virginia Approving an Award to Scott Freeman – 757 Auctions.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

Item 6: Resolution 19/20-35:

Member Mayo moved, and Vice-Chair Brooks Buck seconded, the motion to approve Resolution 19/20-35 as presented.

Member Mitnick asked for details regarding this resolution as to what schools are involved.

Mr. Hinds provided clarification that this is for elementary schools.

Member Mitnick asked if this was replacing a current program

Mr. Hinds indicated that this is replacing the YMCA contract.

Vice Chair Brooks Buck moved, and Member Mitnick seconded, the motion to approve.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

Item 7: Resolution 19/20-36:

Vice Chair Brooks Buck moved, and Member Mayo seconded, the motion to accept resolution 19/20-36 as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

Item 8: Resolution 19/20-37:

Member Mitnick asked what does this resolution mean.

Mr. Hinds provided clarification that this is a contract which provides phone service.

Vice Chair Brooks Buck moved, and Member Jenkins seconded, the motion to approve resolution 19/20-37 as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

Item 9: Resolution 19/20-38:

Vice Chair Brooks Buck moved, and Member Jenkins seconded, the motion to approve resolution 19/20-38 as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

Item 10: Resolution 19/20-39:

Member Riddick moved, and Vice Chair Brooks Buck seconded, the motion to approve resolution 19/20-39 as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

Item 11: Resolution 19/20-40:

Member Riddick moved, and Vice Chair Brooks-Buck seconded, the motion to approve resolution 19/20-40 as presented.

Member Mitnick asked for an explanation as to what this resolution involves.

Mr. Hinds explained that this was a pilot program with the YMCA for the traveling Y. Was a very successful program and we are asking for a dual award for continued growth of this program with SPS Wellness Program.

Member Mitnick recommended that in the future, when these requests are received, if a small paragraph could come with it that describes what the request is all about.

Chair Byrum said yes, that would be possible. She also informed that members can always contact the Superintendent for if there is a question about a resolution.

There was an exchange between Members Mitnick, and Riddick and the Board Chair called for the question.

Member Riddick moved, and Vice Chair Brooks-Buck seconded, the motion to approve resolution 19/20-40 as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

Item 12: Resolution 19/20-41:

Vice Chair Brooks Buck moved, and Member Riddick seconded, the motion to approve resolution 19/20-41 as presented.

Upon a roll call vote, the vote was: Aye: 6 Nay: 0 Abstain: 1. The motion Carried. 6 to 0 to 1

PUBLIC SPEAKERS ON NON-AGENDA TOPICS

Andrew Pancoast –

- Member Riddick attended a rally in Suffolk and said about 1200 students have not logged on to the computer and they come from Lakeland and King’s Fork.

- Two questions, why were students from NRHS omitted, did all their students log on to Edgeunity, and how did you arrive at that number.
- This was insulting to the efforts educators have made with switching to virtual learning.
- Regarding board members laying off staff...according to a google search, a furlough is a leave of absence with benefits. Furloughed employees would make more money from the government than their regular check. So why is this a bad thing? Surrounding districts are doing this and saving their districts money.
- This would have been a win-win situation for all.
- Survey regarding on-line learning, why did we have to submit email address when submitting the form.

Lisha Barnes – (Letter)

- Mrs. Story was her former IB teacher at KFHS.
- Barnes was well prepared for Ms. Story's class by previously taking a college course. However, after two months in Ms. Story's class, she had to be switched out due to the hostile environment Ms. Story created.
- Story used her authority as power, was rude, mean, and disrespectful.
- Ms. Story said "well, with the way your headed, you won't be much in life anyways."
- Did not tell her parents because she believed Ms. Story as she wasn't doing well in her class.
- Barnes did all she could to avoid going to school.
- Parents met with the Principal and switched her class immediately.
- Barnes said she spent the first month of her senior year depressed and discouraged about college.
- Ms. Story almost crushed my dreams, but God saw different. Now a graduating senior at Morgan State University.
- The same way Ms. Story was five years ago, is the same way she is today.

Miller Cary –

- When board members are being excluded from an open discussion from an item of consideration by a chair who insist on her own private polling of each member in lieu of open discussion,
- When a board member is denied information by a chair or any other city entity,
- When a board member is discouraged from open communication with staff parents and public.
- When the wrong minded norms are used to remove members from committees. In these scenarios students, parents, staff, and taxpayers of this city is disenfranchised.
- I spoke with another chair from another city and they were surprised that this school board would not furlough employees to save the city money and put more money in pocket of furloughed workers.
- Hopefully, each staff member will go home and think about what they could have done with the extra couple hundred dollars they could have had.
- What a difference a million dollars could have made in our school system.
- Each taxpayer should consider the gross negligence of those managing our resources.
- Underserved children pay the real cost of the board mismanagement.

- Mr. Riddick said, “if you see me slipping call me out and if I’m not doing what you elected me to do, don’t put me back.” You squandered an opportunity to put thousands more in the pockets of some of our cities hardest workers who could use it most. You sold out our children. You came to the meeting with a message of division. And used a falsehood to pit brother against brother.
- You owe an apology to not only Ms. Story, but to our children and every disenfranchised community member you pushed further from community harmony.
- Everyone, stop playing games. This is a bunch of nonsense tonight.

Kelly Hengler –

- We are struggling as a people in Suffolk.
- Did not grow up with derisive language that was spoken out her tonight.
- As a former student of JFK, did not learn things that children were not supposed to know.
- We are a good city, still old Nansemond County.
- Would not tolerate anything but love. We must come together. God loves America, Suffolk, Old Nansemond County.
- I refuse to see anything less than the love I grew up with.
- This area is all rural and trying to go into the direction of urban and we are going to have to do it together.
- We are a rural people and that does not change overnight. Please let them see that.

Iyasha Edwards – (Letter)

- Former KFHS employee
- Ms. Story’s demeanor and superiority to others is/was inexplicable.
- She questioned the intellect and wisdom of African American students before and during the inception of the IB program.
- She impacted students in a negative manner and parent interactions, as if we could not excel or complete assignments as well as our counterparts.
- Those that she told would not excel has obtained multiple degrees.
- Story would call the newspaper when decisions/discussions she did not agree with where made that held her accountable.
- Her sarcasm, tone, demeanor, and body language displayed her lack of respect for people of color.
- It was a challenge dealing with her as a secretary, I can only imagine what it was for students.
- I tolerated her lack of respect because of my professionalism and advocating for all students.
- Scary she was elected to represent the people of Chuckatuck when she does not have the best interest of all students in mind.
- She has been warned, and censured must take place, everyone should vote, and she be removed.
- Time to stop the double standard.

Kirstyn O’Neill –

- Twenty-four parents were selected across VA to have a discussion with the secretary of education regarding our experience and expectations for the fall.
- Being a parent of special needs child is humbling.

- Thanks to an amazing IEP team, great administrators, and teacher at NSES, son was progressing.
- March 13 made that light dim...Covid -19 was especially damaging to my son.
- Impulsiveness, aggression in all areas became out of control.
- No words to express the pain in watching him put multiple words together, to hardly speaking at all.
- Services he was guaranteed under to his IEP went out the window with covid.
- No communication from speech therapist until end of march, and only two times after that.
- Son cannot do online work (never experienced a computer outside a projector and screen.)
- Took district over a month and a half to reach out to parents, with no follow-up.
- Thankfully, we had a teacher who cared and didn't wait for over a month to make contact.
- Homeschooling close to impossible. I'm just a parent, do not have degrees, or a background in special education just want to see my son thrive...trying my hardest but doesn't feel like it's good enough.
- Victims of Covid-19 are not just the people testing positive, they are the special education kids who have not had a voice to speak for themselves and let down by a system that should protect them.
- My hope when fall rolls around, great focus will be put on special education.
- Would like to see a committee or strategy session with parents from our district.
- Survey does even scratch the surface and questions are too vague.
- Hope all stand together this fall.

BUSINESS BY BOARD MEMBERS

(At this time, Member Story left the dais and exited the building.)

Board Member Jenkins:

- Congratulations to schools for celebrations for students.
- Several church functions celebrated their graduates.
- Appreciate the community for allowing us to celebrate with them and acknowledge our students.
- Thanked Dr. Gordon and staff for all you have done for SPS and not skipping a beat with educating our students in a great way.

Board Member Mitnick:

- Thank all for staying for this lengthy meeting.
- Appreciated the opportunity to attend church celebration for graduates.
- Attended session with the media specialist at EFE who did enrichment opportunities to keep the students engaged.
- Saw how hard it was to work with students who had joined voluntarily.
- Heart goes out to all teacher who have worked so hard over the last few months not only teaching SPS children but their own as well.
- Fortunate to have very dedicated staff.
- Wish teachers luck on tests being taken for professional development.

- Wish you a summer that is full of joy and relaxation and time with family and friends.
- Thank you for all that you give to Suffolk Public Schools.

Board Member Mayo:

- Sincere thanks to Dr. Gordon, administrative staff, principals, and teacher support staff for all that was done during this pandemic and for implementing the continuity of learning plan for students.
- Debt of thanks to food service and transportation for their dedication and support. Students still received nutritional meals.
- Governors school doing well, and GSA's virtual graduation will be streamed live and can be viewed on YouTube on June 15 at 7 p.m.
- Kudos to KSES for end of year parade. All participated in 2-hour parade in their school zone.
- Students were excited to see teachers again.

Board Member Riddick:

- Want to give constituents answers to their questions...Numbers referenced in speech were provided in April.
- I did not fail my students, once numbers were given, I went to my community and spoke with pack leaders.
- Popular kids motivated other kids to do what was needed.
- I went to the areas I represent, the areas, where the kids that I know, were not doing what they were supposed to.
- I have a tutoring program through a non-profit organization where I provide affordable programming to children who would otherwise not be able to afford it.
- Have helped over 50 seniors complete community service hours.
- I am vested in this. I don't just talk about it; this is my life.
- About furloughing, I received an email from Norfolk school superintendent stating they did not furlough employees. The employees referenced in the paper were part-time, non-contracted employees. This same information was provided to Member Story.
- I'm not using fake news but giving factual information.
- I reached out and checked with Cobra and yes, employees can have insurance for 18 months, but it is at the expense of the employee. The employee would have to pay for insurance and a 2% administration fee.
- It may sound like lots of money being received by the government but there are expenditures, medications, and things to pay that would now be out of pocket expenses that some may not be able to afford.
- Our employees never stopped working.
- The meals being served - cafeteria staff.
- The meals being delivered - bus drivers. They even rotated bus drivers. Some bus drivers were even cleaning busses.
- Schools being cleaned – custodians.
- Money was already in the budget to pay these people and per budget, we can't move money from salaries without getting permission...that's misappropriation of funds.
- A lot of info shared with the public was not accurate.

- I want to work with everyone, want us to work without hidden agendas, want us to work freely and share suggestions.
- The same way I call Dr. Gordon, every board member has the same opportunity. We all have his number and email.
- Some board members choose not to communicate with Superintendent and tie up our meetings asking questions that could have been asked before now because we get the agenda at least a week in advance.
- When I said “we”, I was not speaking on behalf of the school board.
- I was asked to speak to my constituents in my borough.
- When i spoke and said people of color are under attack, I was not speaking to ride a *Black Lives Matter* coattail. Wouldn't dare use a man losing his life to make a political statement.
- I spoke because I lived that reality as a student at KFHS and I hoped that the behavior had changed but I realize that it has not.
- I can respectfully disagree with Dr. Gordon and board members, as I have done in the past.
- If any have any questions about what I said, please email me and I will respond.
- Thank you to all of Suffolk for allowing me to serve you and I will continue to serve you with transparency and with our students first.

Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck:

- Thanked Board Members, Dr. Gordon and staff, Mr. Waller, and all.
- Started the day with husband having a stroke and going to hospital.
- He wanted me to come tonight because he has read the ugly things and lies against me publicly and around my neighborhood.
- Access to VA unemployment benefits is not easy. It's unfortunate that anyone would lead others to believe that it is when it is not.
- Some who have applied have not yet gotten one cent.
- You cannot simply, whether unethical or not, let people go so they can move to state benefits when we have money in the budget for them.
- Every budget season there are distractions which usually suggest the board is not doing its job, the kids aren't doing well, or something. But it is just an excuse for not supporting the budget and this year is no different.
- Norfolk nor Chesapeake transferred people to the state's budget, and they got more money, it did not happen that way.
- Would like for all realize we are a body, there is seven of us; individually we have no power or authority, only when we work as a board, we have power and authority.
- We have been living in the middle of two terrible situations; we watched a murder on television and we are living in the aftermath of that and were living in a pandemic and trying to figure out what to with schools.
- My hope is that this terrible real-life drama we're living, this circus of policy will end tonight and we can focus on what we need to do to get back to schools.
- Thank you to our staff who have worked so hard to get through this and start our next year.
- I was a special education teacher and anyone who says that I don't work for special needs students is just not telling the truth and they need to deal with that.
- My hope is that we can get back to doing what we know how to do and doing it well.

- Thank you for what you have done. Thank you for patience and kindness.

At this time, Vice-Chair Brooks-Buck left the dais and exited the building to return to the hospital.

Board Chair Byrum:

- Ditto to most everything said in these remarks
- We are a board; we should be a team and team players have certain norms and protocols we need to follow.
- No one on this board is perfect, we make mistakes.
- No one up here other than Mr. Waller is an Attorney; no one up here other than Dr. Gordon is the real Superintendent and we need to realize that.
- We all have our expertise and bring to the board, different ideas and individual personalities and we all need to work together moving forward.
- Dr. Gordon came to us in October and has had a very rapid learning process from October to June if we would look back and think what we've been through in these months, I still believe we are building the best SPS.
- Thank you staff and all our people who have worked so hard; thank you parents, teachers and students. Virtual learning is a new experience, but I think it's we'll see for the future.
- We have to adjust; these are changing times and we're living in troubling times all over the world.
- We need to learn to love each other and trust in God and learn to work with each other.
- We still must have rules and regulations and have to enforce them.
- This has not been an easy experience for anyone on this board over the last few months.

INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no questions.

ADJORNMENT

The Board Chair adjourned the June 11, 2020 Monthly School Board Meeting at 11:18 p.m.

Phyllis C. Byrum, *Board Chair*

Tarshia L. Gardner, *Clerk*