

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 186, SPRINGFIELD,**  
**SANGAMON COUNTY, ILLINOIS**  
**Tuesday, January 16, 2024 (5:30 PM)**

The Board of Education convened in Regular Session on January 16 A.D., 2024, at 5:30 p.m., there being present thereat:

Present: Micah Miller, President  
Julie Hammers, Board Secretary

Erica Austin  
Sarah Blissett  
Ken Gilmore  
Debra Iams  
Buffy Lael-Wolf  
Anthony Mares

Jennifer Gill, Superintendent  
Harrison Gray, Student Representative

**CALL TO ORDER**

**1.1 Roll Call**

President Miller called the meeting to order.

**APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Approval of Executive Session**

**Resolution:** That the Board of Education approves adjournment to Executive Session to consider the following items:

- 2.1 Student Discipline and Other Matters Concerning Individual Students - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9, 10)
- 2.2 The Appointment, Employment, or Dismissal of Employees – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)
- 2.3 Pending and Imminent Litigation - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)

**ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member (**Sarah Blissett**) Moved, Member (**Micah Miller**) Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'That the Board of Education adjourns to Executive Session to consider the following matters: 2.1 Student Discipline and Other Matters Concerning Individual Students - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9, 10), 2.2 The Appointment, Employment, or Dismissal of Employees – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), 2.3 Pending and Imminent Litigation - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).'

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: 4 Nay: 0. The motion **Carried 4 - 0**.

Those voting "aye": Blissett, Lael-Wolf, Mares, Miller  
Those voting "no": None

## **Adjournment to Executive Session**

The meeting adjourned at 5:41 p.m. and reconvened at 6:37 p.m. Upon reconvening, it was noted that seven Board members were present as Ms. Austin, Mr. Gilmore and Mrs. Iams joined the meeting at 5:41 p.m.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **3.1 Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Miller asked those in attendance to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge of Allegiance was then recited.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

### **4.1 Approve the Agenda for January 16, 2024**

Resolution: That the Board of Education approves the agenda.

## **ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Anthony Mares)** Moved to approve the agenda. Member **(Sarah Blissett)** seconded to approve the ORIGINAL motion, 'That the Board of Education approves the agenda.'

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: 7 Nay: 0. The motion **Carried 7 - 0**.

Those voting "aye":	Austin, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf, Mares, Miller
Those voting "no":	None

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **5.1 President's Comments**

Mr. Miller read the following statement:

#### **Public Comment**

*Public comments will occur during the Public Comments portion of the meeting. The Board will not allow interruption during the meeting. If you are interested in addressing the Board, fill out the required Public Participation form and submit it to Ms. Hammers. Alternatively, those wishing to participate via the telephone may email their name, phone number, and topic of discussion or agenda item number to [boe@sps186.org](mailto:boe@sps186.org).*

### **5.2 Student Report**

Student Representative Gray thanked those who organized the annual Unity Day event. He reported that there was a good turnout for the event. Additionally, he reported that schools are taking up collections of non-perishable items and money for the annual Spirit of Giving, which will benefit St. Martin de Porres, Washington Street Mission, Midwest Mission, and the African American History Museum. The fundraiser is held in conjunction with Unity Day and the City Basketball Tournament each year. He reminded students that tickets for the City Tournament are available at each of the high schools for a reduced price.

Ms. Blissett commended Mr. Gray and other members of the Superintendent's Student Roundtable for their work in making Unity Day a success. There was a brief discussion regarding the event's activities.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### **6.1 Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Gill reported that Pat Cross, who was a dedicated supporter of District 186 and Special Needs classrooms, as well as Bill Evans and Bruce Barrows, retired long-time Springfield High School teachers, recently passed away. She gave condolences to the families of these individuals and spoke to the contributions each made to the District. A moment of silence was then observed.

#### **Celebrate 186**

Superintendent Gill provided the bi-weekly Celebrate 186 presentation. Copies of the presentation have been filed with the Official Minutes. The report covered the following topics.

#### **E-Learning Day**

Superintendent Gill reported that 76% of students attended the District's first E-Learning day, which was called due to treacherous weather conditions. She reported that Feitshans Elementary had the highest attendance rate with 97% of students logging in and participating in lessons. Additionally, overall 80% of students in middle and high school logged in. She reported that all employees, students and families will continue to be provided with the expectations surrounding attendance on E-Learning Days. She noted that the District is allowed five E-Learning Days before the traditional emergency days must be used for inclement weather. She indicated that she and other Superintendents in the area keep in touch before any inclement weather days are called to provide consistency across the county and general area.

#### **Springfield High School Wrestling Wins City 2024**

Superintendent Gill congratulated the Springfield High School Wrestling team for their recent first-place finish in the City Wrestling Tournament.

#### **Boys and Girls City Basketball Tournament**

Superintendent Gill reported that the boys and girls City Basketball Tournament will take place from January 17 - 20, 2024, at the Bank of Springfield Center in downtown Springfield. Wednesday and Thursday games are currently scheduled for 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Friday's games are currently scheduled for 4:00 p.m., 5:42 p.m., 7:22, p.m. and 9:12 p.m. Saturday's games are scheduled for 3:00 p.m., 4:45 p.m., 6:30 p.m., and 8:30 p.m. She noted that the listed times are all approximate as games will begin 20 minutes after the previous game's end. She noted that students in elementary and middle school must be accompanied by an adult.

Jason Wind, Director of School Support, reported that doors will open an hour before game time for each game. He noted that attendees are encouraged to leave large bags at home as bags will be searched upon entrance. Additionally, loitering will not be allowed during the games inside or outside the auditorium.

Superintendent Gill then provided information regarding the Spirit of Giving campaign.

Mr. Mares asked for additional information on pickup and drop-off for the tournament. Mr. Wind reported that students may be picked up on 9th or Washington Streets. He indicated that doors close at halftime of the last game of the evening. Additionally, there is no re-entrance into the games. Ms. Blissett asked about prohibited items. Mr. Wind reported that items prohibited at school are also prohibited at the games.

Mr. Wind then provided information on ticket sales.

### **Lanphier High School Ribbon Cutting**

Superintendent Gill thanked those who attended the Lanphier High School ribbon-cutting ceremony. She noted that students will move into the new portion of the building on January 17, 2024. Cabinet members will be at the school providing support to students for that first day in the new portion of the school. She reported that the final touches on the building construction continue.

### **District 186 Career Fair**

Superintendent Gill reported that the District will host a career fair on Thursday, January 25, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and again from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the District's Administrative Center, 3063 Fiat Avenue. She indicated that there are immediate openings for clerical staff, crossing guards, food service workers, substitute teachers, teaching assistants, paraprofessionals, and custodial staff with on-site interviews for paraprofessionals conducted during the career fair.

There was then some additional discussion regarding the recent weather, its impact on buildings, and E-Learning.

### **School Celebrations**

Dr. Nicole Moody introduced Chelsey Ziebler, Principal of Jefferson Middle School, and Jennifer Butcher, Principal of Ridgely Elementary School, who addressed the Board with celebrations from their buildings.

#### Jefferson Middle School

Ms. Ziebler shared photos from Jefferson Middle School. She reported that the school has celebrated a large drop in chronic absenteeism from 72.54 to 62.57. Additionally, a survey on climate in the school was completed by almost 95% of all stakeholders. ELA proficiency almost doubled from 14 to 27 students. The school saw growth in both math and ELA, as well as growth in every category on the Panorama Student Survey. She then overviewed contributions to the growth, which include a focus on engagement and relationships in the classroom, the hiring of a school improvement coach, accountability to students for learning through the use of student-led conferences, a focus on building-wide social-emotional learning, instructional practices focused on the 4 P's, a renewed commitment to AVID implementation, the creation of a literacy-centered culture with daily silent sustained reading practices, and a school-wide day dedicated to making math fun in every subject area.

#### Ridgely Elementary School

Ms. Butcher reported that Ridgely moved from a Targeted to a Commendable school designation with one of the targeted student groups showing growth on the math portion of the IAR assessment, as well as a significant decrease in the chronic absenteeism rate from 48% to 36%. She noted that the wonderful staff, increased use of data in the MTSS structure/process, expansion of AVID K-5th grades in the building, overall improved attendance rates, and a focus on the climate and culture of the building have all contributed to the growth. She further reported that to continue the growth, the school has created Academic Parent Teacher Teams. The school also uses parent mentors, sets goals, hosts Saturday Academies, has implemented AVID schoolwide, has created a welcoming environment for families and community engagement, and has developed supportive partnerships, such as with the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **7.1 Old Business**

There was no old business at this time.

## **7.2 New Business**

There was no new business at this time.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **8.1 Public Comment**

Mr. Miller asked if there was any public comment. There was no public comment at this time.

## **PRESENTATIONS TO THE BOARD**

There were no presentations to the Board at this time.

## **BUSINESS REPORT**

### **10.1 Business Report**

Board members were provided with the Monthly Business Report for December 2023. Copies filed with the Official Minutes are available for public viewing on the Electronic School Board website.

Steve Miller, Director of Business Services, reported that for December 2023, Education Fund revenues totaled approximately \$3.3 million, with expenditures totaling approximately \$11.6 million. In the Operations and Maintenance Fund, revenues for the month totaled approximately \$5,000, and expenditures totaled approximately \$1.4 million.

Mr. Miller then provided the Investments Balances Report. He noted that as of December 31, 2023, the District had a combined cash balance of approximately \$98.4 million in the bank for all funds. For the operating funds only, which include the Education Fund, Operations and Maintenance Fund, Transportation Fund, and Working Cash Fund, the total cash in the bank was approximately \$48.4 million. Total investments are approximately \$105.1 million. Year-to-date earned interest on all cash accounts for the month was approximately \$2.4 million. The interest rate on all cash accounts on December 31, 2023, was 2.5% or 250 basis points. The total balance of cash and investments for all funds as of December 31, 2023, was approximately \$203 million. Mr. Miller reiterated that for the operating funds only, the balance was approximately \$48.4 million. He noted that the District also shows recorded County sales tax proceeds received during December 2023 of approximately \$1.13 million for the September collection period, with total collections of the tax of approximately \$50 million since its inception.

Next, Mr. Miller provided a graph comparing the Education Fund expenditures by month between fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024. He reported that the District had used 39.49% of its budget by the end of December of the 2023 fiscal year, compared to having used 38.16% of the budgeted funds by the end of December of the 2024 fiscal year. This is a difference of approximately 1.33% or \$2.1 million. With the next graph, Mr. Miller provided the same informational overview for the Education, Operations and Maintenance, and Transportation Funds. He noted a difference of 1.87% or approximately \$3.5 million less funding used through the end of December of the 2024 fiscal year as compared to the end of December of the 2023 fiscal year.

Mr. Miller then followed up on some questions from the January 2, 2024, Board of Education meeting related to outstanding payments from the State of Illinois. He reported that the amount due the District from the State of Illinois changes on an almost daily basis.

There was then some additional discussion regarding the use of funds, trends, and anticipated spending.

## **CONSENT ACTION ITEMS**

### **11.1 Approval of Consent Action Items**

Approval of consent action items as listed in the agenda.

**Resolution:** The Superintendent recommends approval of the consent action items 11.2 through 11.6 as described in the corresponding resolutions.

### **ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Anthony Mares)** Moved, Member **(Sarah Blissett)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'The Superintendent recommends approval of the consent action items 11.2 through 11.6 as described in the corresponding resolutions'.

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **7** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried 7 - 0**.

Those voting "aye":	Austin, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf, Mares, Miller
Those voting "no":	None

### **11.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Session and Regular Meeting of January 2, 2024**

**Resolution:** WHEREAS, the Board of Education of Springfield School District 186 reviews the minutes of the regular session and the executive session of the previous Board Meetings; and

WHEREAS, copies of these sets of minutes were distributed to the Board in the board packet prior to this meeting;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the aforementioned sets of regular session and executive session minutes and directs the Secretary to include them in the official records of the Board of Education meetings.

### **11.3 Approval of Payroll and Bills Payable**

**Resolution:** That the Board of Education approves payroll and bills payable as shown in the attached report.

### **11.4 Approval of Travel for Springfield High School Band**

**Resolution:** WHEREAS, the Springfield High School Band has requested permission to travel to Washington, D.C. to perform at the Marine Corps Museum; and

WHEREAS, the Springfield High School Band agrees to raise all necessary funds and abide by all rules and regulations of Springfield School District 186;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Springfield High School Band has permission to travel to Washington, D.C. from February 29 - March 4, 2024.

### **11.5 Approval of an Agreement with American Institutes of Research**

Agreement

Each of our schools that received a newly designated Intensive or Comprehensive Summative Designation as a result of their 2023 Illinois Report Card data will receive additional supports from ISBE this year to support their school improvement efforts. This additional support includes engaging in work with ISBE-designated consultants who will conduct needs assessments at each of the schools. These needs assessments are proposed to provide feedback to the schools on areas of continued or additional focus for school improvement. As a part of the process, each district's Board of Education must approve a consulting agreement/contract. This agreement is to conduct school-level needs assessments in support of the Illinois State Board of Education's work with intensive schools in District 186.

Cost: \$390,462

**Resolution:** WHEREAS, Springfield Public School District 186 has developed Work Plans for School Improvement; and

WHEREAS, the designated schools (Dubois, Fairview, Feitshans, Harvard Park, Matheny-Withrow, Washington, Jefferson, Grant, Southeast) have identified a need for support in developing priorities using listening and learning visits, data review and root cause analysis, and school strategy research and development; and

WHEREAS, the American Institutes for Research is an approved partner that can provide these supports;

NOW THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves an agreement with the American Institutes for Research for a total amount of \$390,462 to be paid by ISBE School Improvement funds.

#### **11.6 Approval of the Resolution Abating the Working Cash Fund**

The School Code of Illinois allows for a transfer of funds to accommodate cash flow conditions. This resolution permanently transfers the monies received from the Working Cash bond sale to the Capital Project Fund.

**Resolution:** WHEREAS, the Board of Education of Springfield School District No. 186, Sangamon County, Illinois, has heretofore created and maintained a working cash fund in and for the District;

and WHEREAS, Section 20-10 of the School Code of the State of Illinois, authorizes the Board to abate the Fund;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board authorizes, ratifies, and approves permanent abatement of \$5,475,591 from the Working Cash Fund to the Capital Projects Fund.

### **ROLL CALL ACTION ITEMS**

#### **12.1 Approval of Personnel Recommendations**

**Resolution:** The Superintendent recommends the adoption of the Personnel recommendations, as presented.

#### **ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Micah Miller)** Moved, Member **(Anthony Mares)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'The Superintendent recommends the adoption of the Personnel recommendations, as presented.'

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **7** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried 7 - 0**.

Those voting “aye”: Austin, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf, Mares, Miller  
Those voting “no”: None

**12.2 Adoption of a resolution providing for the issue of not to exceed \$10,600,000 General Obligation Limited School Refunding Bonds, Series 2024A of Springfield School District No. 186, Sangamon County, Illinois, and for the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest on said bonds**

Approval of the issuance of 2024A bonds – The bonds will not be refunded in the event that market conditions do not provide sufficient savings.

**Resolution:** BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the attached resolution as presented.

**ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member (**Micah Miller**) Moved, Member (**Anthony Mares**) Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the attached resolution as presented.'

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **7** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried 7 - 0**.

Those voting “aye”: Austin, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf, Mares, Miller  
Those voting “no”: None

**12.3 Student Discipline**

**Resolution:** That the Board approves the student discipline as discussed in Executive Session and summarized by the Superintendent, as follows:

- That one 8th-grade student be hereby expelled from further attendance at Lincoln Magnet School through the end of the 2023-2024 school year with a program.

**ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member (**Sarah Blissett**) Moved, Member (**Micah Miller**) Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'That the Board approves the student discipline as discussed in Executive Session and summarized by the Superintendent, as follows:

- That one 8th-grade student be hereby expelled from further attendance at Lincoln Magnet School through the end of the 2023-2024 school year with a program.'

Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **7** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried 7 - 0**.

Those voting “aye”: Austin, Blissett, Gilmore, Iams, Lael-Wolf, Mares, Miller  
Those voting “no”: None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**13.1 Next Regular Meeting — Monday, February 5, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. — Board Room**

**13.2 Upcoming District Events**

January 17-20 - City Tournament



### **13.3 Freedom of Information Act Report**

#### **Additional Announcements**

Superintendent Gill provided information regarding some upcoming Fine Arts events. She reported that the African American History Museum is currently hosting a display of student artwork from District students. Additionally, on February 23, 2024, there will be a solo and ensemble contest at Springfield High School. The 1900 Art Gallery Exhibit and Reception will be held on Thursday, March 14, 2024, at Grant Middle School. Lastly, the All City Music Festival will be held on March 26, 2024, at the University of Illinois - Springfield Brookens Auditorium.

Ms. Lael-Wolf thanked the high schools for hosting their Freshman Preview Nights to help prepare 8th-grade students for high school. Ms. Austin reported that the Southeast High School Class of 2004 will host an event in preparation for their class reunion on Saturday, January 20, 2024. Mr. Miller thanked District leadership for their support of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast, as well as Frontiers International for hosting the popular event.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Miller declared the meeting adjourned until Monday, February 5, 2024. The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

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Micah Miller, President

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Julie Hammers, Board Secretary

Dated: February 5, 2024