APPROVED

Frayser Community Schools

Minutes

August 2023 Frayser Community Schools Board Meeting

Date and Time
Tuesday August 8, 2023 at 5:30 PM

Location
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85135812397?pwd=RFhoQ05UQytobjZiV1gvU3dQNUlWQT09
Meeting ID: 851 3581 2397
Passcode: N74qcy

Directors Present
A. Cathey (remote), A. Jacobo (remote), C. Jackson (remote), C. Reddick (remote), C. Tolbert (remote), K. Adams (remote), K. Armstrong (remote), S. Gibson (remote)

Directors Absent
R. Robinson Jr

Ex Officio Members Present
B. White (remote)

Guests Present
B. Lawson (remote), C. Perry (remote), D. Clark (remote), F. Bearden (remote), L. Warren (remote), S. Gipson (remote), T. Hervey (remote)

I. Opening Items

A.

Record Attendance and Guests

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Cathey called a meeting of the board of directors of Frayser Community Schools to order on Tuesday Aug 8, 2023 at 6:35 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

K. Adams made a motion to approve the minutes from June 2023 Frayser Community Schools Board Meeting on 06-20-23.
S. Gibson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

II. CEO Updates

A. Remember the Vision

Dr. Bobby White:

- I want to combine remember the vision with the academic report. Dr. Clark or Dr. Harvey has anything they've witnessed over the last two days that stuck out to them regarding who we are as an organization. When is the first couple of days of school? So many times, some things just happened, and you're like, wow, I know why we do this work. I wasn't there on Monday. But you guys have been there and want to know if you've seen anything. Dr. Clark or Dr. Hervey give us an example of something representative of who we are that connects to the vision. This is remembering the vision, and I wanted it to be in real-time that has happened over the last couple of days, during the first two days of the school year.

Dr. Lawanda Clark:

- There was a level of high expectations and excellence that I've seen on all three campuses. And it's about more than just the teachers showing up. I walked into Mr. Turner's room the other day, and he said Dr. Clark, I'm working on a culturally responsive classroom. And he was so proud to show me things that he had in his room that are representative of the black and brown kids and he's teaching. I spoke to Miss Daphne today about contacting Mr. Lawson. She went through a room and saw some rules or expectations that we not written in a positive light. And she said she just had a just a general conversation. I am trying to remember the teacher's name. And she went in today and saw an immediate change in how they had now decided to write their expectations in the classroom which was to include the voice of the students. And so, for me, just watching them recognize the presence in the voice of the kids is what I've seen on all three campuses this year. I was so moved by seeing it. And even the PLCs today that I lead with Mrs. Moore

at Westside, we've made sure that the teacher's voices were activated regarding teaching and learning. And so, I'm in a calm but reflective space about what it means to see this taking place. I don't know what's to come of it, but it's good. And like I told Dr. Peterson, you have everything you need right now, at this moment, to make it happen at Westside. You have teachers that recognize students as students, not just numbers or data points. I've been watching the teacher's and students' engagement for two days, Dr. White; it's awe-inspiring when I'm looking at it. I know this is only one year for me, and I'm looking at it through different lenses. But I see a lot of human acknowledgment if that makes sense. I see a lot of human-to-human, not just you're the student and I'm the teacher. You're a child, and I'm the adult. I see a lot of mutual respect even with the parents coming in. And the way the office staff have been excited to see them when the parents are excited to talk to Mr. King about getting the kids registered. So when it comes to remembering the vision, if the vision was a person, I've seen it in the last two days on all three campuses.

III. Finance

A. Finance Committee Updates

No financial update this month.

IV. Academic Excellence

A. Academic Excellence Committee Updates

Mr. Brett Lawson:

- Let me start by giving you all an update on enrollment. Then Dr. Harvey will talk to us about the summer boost program. I'll spend a minute on testing data, and Dr. Clark will speak to us about academics and curriculum updates. But we're off to a good start on student enrollment. We are about where we were last year as of today and the process we're doing this year is slightly different. We're getting parents to log into the portal so that they will learn how to do that and check on student attendance and grades throughout the year. And also, we will have better information to connect with them using our parent's square tool. So right now, our warm body count is 444 between the three schools, and I know that sounds low, but it's not incredibly alarming given that we have 561 students that are currently approved and registered, and we have pending approvals for another 100. So altogether in the system, there are about 600 students, and that's normal, where we are usually at this point—trying to get the word out and get them to enroll in advance in our online system to get them approved. But there are just some technical issues that parents are facing. Due to those issues, they need to come in and talk with the office staff and sit beside them to get through the process. And as

I visited the schools, I saw the office staff helping parents get registered. So I'm encouraged by that.

Dr. Tonya Hervey:

- Good evening, everyone. Happy to say the summer boost program was a huge success. Ms. Latoya Black was the coordinator for our region. And she asked us to apply again next year because she appreciated how well we coordinated the documents on time. But most importantly, our students did show growth in their post-assessment. And so, the students learned four measurements of the grade ELA standards and four measurements of the grade math standards. And I'm proud to say that in every school, at least 60 to 80% of our kids show growth on those eight standards taught throughout that work where we ended on July 14th, and kids tested on the 12th and 13th. We received 70% of the funding from the grant about three and a half weeks ago, and we are currently waiting for the remaining 30%. So it was overall a great success. The kids had a fantastic time. They went to Magic Springs, they had food truck days in school to help encourage them to come every day, they went to paintball parks, bowling at the Pyramid, and to the zoo. The Humes kids also participated in robotics in addition to their ELA and math classes. Overall, the summer boosts program was a huge success. If you didn't know, all the teachers and staff gave up the two-week summer vacation to work with our students. Thanks to everyone who participated in the summer boost program. We couldn't have don't it without them.

Mr. Brett Lawson:

- Thank you, Dr. Hervey. Also, the staff who worked with this program were very appreciative. This was an outside grant-funded program, and they got paid very well. The last month was not technically part of our mission per se around that camp, but it is good to reward folks working so hard for us during the school year, especially when they put in that much time during the summer because that was much longer. So the folks who worked, especially the administrators, had very, very little summer at all.

- We are still waiting on our TVAAS data and I want to wait until all that comes in before presenting that information. I can get an accurate, balanced picture of our academic performance last year as soon as we get that. Dr. Clark will give us an update on academic and curriculum issues. We have made a lot of changes this year. And she's been working very hard to prepare the MCLs and the teachers for this.

Dr. Lawanda Clark:

- Hi, it's me again. I gave curriculums to everybody. So on the high school level, the math, science, and social studies departments got new curriculums for this year. They got the digital access or digital suite because we will do the digital platform with our students having a two-to-one laptop ratio. Now on the middle school level, I'm proud to say that we have now aligned the curriculum across Humes middle school and Westside, so they have the same instructional resources, which is excellent because now those teachers from two different schools are asking to collaborate to strengthen the instruction that they're delivering. So that's exciting to hear. But they have iReady for math, HMH, and McGraw Hill for science and social studies and on a high school level, they have iReady for math. We renewed Elevate K-12 and then, they have HMH for econ, and we're partnering with Junior Achievement to supplement our social study program at the high school level. So they all have that we've all had initial training regarding the demo on accessing that. We're also waiting for the helpdesk to complete the rostering so teachers can dig into the curriculum. They are ready. Some of the books have already started arriving, so they can go in and start working with that and comparing their scope and sequence to the pacing and the case pacing. When I tell you it's just day two and teachers are digging into the curriculum is exciting for me because we're planning to go over this summer, and we weren't able to do so. But now, to see that they are doing some research on their own and saying, Hey, this curriculum will allow me to do this. Am I going to have a digital platform to do this? They're excited to see the many different ways that will be able to impact instructions for the students and develop themselves as well. So it's exciting what we will do academically this school year. It's exciting to have the two middle schools eagerly collaborate to support each other. And it's even more exciting to see that the high school will have the curriculum they need for social studies. Having the instructional resources they need to move children this year is exciting.

V. Governance

A. Governance Committee Updates

K. Adams made a motion to Candice Riddick as Board Chair Arlinda Cathey as Vice Chair Charia Jackson as Treasurer.
S. Gibson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
Dr. Bobby White:

- Over the last couple of years, we've been talking about this moment when we would have the opportunity to continue to run the schools under Memphis Shelby

County Schools. Last year, we were successfully approved to continue running Westside and we were confident we could do that with these other two schools as well. But as fate would have it, it didn't turn out that way and the most significant caveat around Humes was the enrollment. Board members felt that it was financially too risky to continue running that school with the number of students and enrollment. Of course, my push is, let us worry about that, it's our school, we're the ones who have to take the financial risk, but that was their rationale as it relates to Humes.

A lot is going on if you know the neighborhood and understand the community. When we took the school initially, it was frowned upon because when Gestalt pulled out of Klondike and Klondike closed, then Gestalt pulled out of Humes, the thought was Humes was going to close, and that opens up that community, which is already happening and has a lot of movement. Some say it's been gentrified. At this point, I don't see it as total gentrification, but it is definitely changing. And so Humes being closed is something folks have wanted to happen for a minute. Now, it's just an opportunity for them to allow that and I feel like we've been standing in the way, but we're standing in the way for the right reasons. We were standing in the way because we wanted to assure the few families who still stay and live in that area that those children had a school they could walk to; they'd be proud of that we're their neighborhood school. But we were unsuccessful.

- MLK was more of a slam dunk because of the communication we had had over the last year, more specifically, over the previous six months with the interim superintendent. Mr. Lawson and I, along with her and her legal team, created an MOU that stated what the partnership would look like with us running the school until the new high school was built. And so we thought we had the votes because we weren't attempting to run MLK for ten more years. We wanted to partner with the district and continue running the school until the new high school is built so that the students won't experience the changes. Still, now there will be three changes instead of just the one seamless change of Frayser Community Schools and MLK closing as the new high school is built, and then those babies will go to the new high school. Now, this year is going to be the last year with Frayser Community Schools. Next year will be their first year under Memphis Shelby County Schools; two or three years after that, they will be going into a new high school. It's a lot of movement that I don't think is best for the community. I've shared this with Mrs. Cathey and Ms. Reddick; this one hurt. It was surprising, and after the hurt, pain, and anger, you know, the smoke cleared. Then, we had to start thinking about the worst-case scenario, which is what I had already thought about. What's the worst-case scenario? But I went through all those emotions before settling back into here's what we do now. One of the other things that a board member said to me was the fear that because a charter application is ten years if you're approved for ten years, somehow, we could have backed out of our agreement to close the school down. Once the new high school was built, they wanted to avoid getting into any legalities with us related to that. I'm giving you some context around some of the events. It was shocking and disappointing. But here's where we are now and

so we're excited about the opportunity of building a super school at Westside. There will be the opportunity to combine all the folks who have our best and brightest at Westside. There's an opportunity to recruit students who are currently at Humes to Westside, those sixth and seventh graders, and have an excellent middle school with the most talented folks in our organization. We already have the best-kept secret, Westside, in my mind. And I'd argue that we will have the best middle school in the city, with all of our talent and energies being geared towards that one school. The fact that we are in the throes of purchasing the building to own the property and know that we have ten additional years to get it right. And to get back to exactly why I started this organization in the first place is something every team member is excited about. Now, I think there have been times throughout the years that I specifically got so caught up in 'Oh, we need to grow; let's get another school, let's get another school.' We're thinking about this, we're thinking about that; that maybe we lost sight of the vision from time to time and I believe now there's been a refocus, A refocus of who we are in understanding where we are, what the possibilities are, and where we can be. I think the irony around all of these guys is that 12 years ago, or 11 years ago, I was getting kicked out of Westside by the Achievement School District when I was the principal there because the State Department was taking it over. And now, ten years later, that school is actually ours. We will buy the building and have it for ten years and then be able to apply to have our charter renewed every ten years after that. So, I thought there was a bit of irony around that. And it just makes me want to dig my heels in and for us to really, really be great again at Westside and do what we pride in the community that we're going to do. Yes, we're disappointed about not having those other two schools. I think that if we recognized that we're not going to be able to continue to run Humes under those conditions for long, many times during board meetings, we've had conversations about, Hey, what is the trigger? What's that number, we can no longer afford to operate Humes. And, of course, since we're one hundred percent in support of the new high school being built in Frayser, we knew that that would only last for a while, too, that we would not be in MLK for the next ten years. So even though this is disappointing, it only is coming a few years prematurely. And we should be very well set with understanding what we do now and moving forward. And actually we're excited about the opportunity that we have right now.

Mrs. Arlinda Cathey:

- So, once this information came down due to the vote last month with the Shelby County School Board. Dr. White and I got on a call with Ms. Reddick to talk through a few things in terms of the board. I wanted to share a few quick updates with you all. We previously were in a space where during a specific time of the year, we're actively recruiting new board members. We want to pause recruitment and onboarding new board members so we can continue to move through this

process, fully understand our new priorities, and set some goals as of right now. There were a few board members who provided recommendations on some potential candidates. At this moment in time, we're comfortable with the makeup and structure of our board, as well as the commitment of all of our board members that we currently have. So we're going to press pause with recruitment at this moment in time.

- In terms of a board retreat, we generally use August or at least early September as an opportunity for a board to get together for a board retreat and it's tied to strategic priorities that have been set for Frayser Community Schools as well as each of the different schools. We also decided to press pause on our regular retreat for this year because we've got a different set of priorities in front of us, that may require additional training and opportunities for our current board to think through how we can partner with FCS to be successful in this space we're in. We're going to press pause on that and have some conversations amongst each other around what would be the next steps for us. Before I move into the next set of updates, I want to pause to see if there are any questions or concerns. We'll follow up with everyone if we are looking for any specialized individuals to join the board to fill any vacancies. We'll follow up with everyone about what's going to be our next steps in terms of more training and retreat planning if we choose to have any. We may decide to retreat towards the beginning of 2024, as opposed to this actual 2023 calendar year. We're still in a place where we carry on with our regular board meetings.
- We will be reconvening for our committee meetings next month as well; for us to be able to do that, we also need to move forward with our annual board elections. We select who will step into the key leadership roles tied to this board, including the Board Chair, Vice Chair, Board treasurer, and Secretary, which I included in the agenda today. I'm super excited about shifting into just a new age of leadership on this board with Ms. Reddick. We had several conversations over this past summer about her feeling ready and excited about stepping into the board chair role. For the sake of succession, I think it always helps to have someone recently serving as your number two, so if anything comes up or if we're working together, by chance. I did not want to disappear. So, I decided to nominate myself to serve as Vice Chair and support Candice in her role as a board chair. Next, I'm excited that Ms. Jackson has agreed to nominate herself as board treasurer. I want to say thank you. Thank you. Thank you to Ms. Adams for stepping into the fold last year to be in that role. Whenever I reached out to her and asked her to do something, she says yes. Even if, by chance, she wants to do so, we've got another board member who's ready to provide insight and scale into that space. And now we do have a vacant position. That is for our board secretary. So, our board secretary will work closely with Ms. Warren, who captures and drafts our minutes from every board meeting. You will proof those minutes to ensure that they're reflective of all of the conversations that are had and ensure that minutes are released, not the day of the board meeting, like I've been doing. Those are minutes that can be

shared and posted closer to after the board meeting has been recently completed. So if you are interested in serving as Secretary, please call me. Let me know. We can talk through it, and I can help you get up to speed. Ms. Warren has been doing a fantastic job with our board minutes. Thank you, Ms. Warren, we appreciate you. But we will prepare now for a vote unless someone wants to nominate themselves in any of these leadership roles because you feel compelled to do so. I am prepared to vote for Ms. Redick as board chair, myself as vice chair, and Ms. Jackson as board treasurer. We will have a vacant seat for Secretary, but I'm hoping that by the next meeting, we will have someone to step into our secretary role. So, I'll pause just before I ask for a motion.

- I will go ahead and ask for a motion to adopt the slate of candidates nominated for the FCS executive committee of the board. Ms. Reddick is the Board Chair, I as Vice-chair, and Ms. Jackson is the board treasurer. I'll ask for a motion for us to go ahead with the slate of candidates. And then I'll need a second, so if anyone can move forward with not accepting this slate of candidates, I'll ask for a second. So, now that we have properly seconded that motion, we can move forward with the actual vote. So, all those in favor of accepting the slate of candidates as we set forth with Ms. Reddick as Board Chair and myself as Vice-chair, Ms. Jackson as treasurer, please say aye. Aye. Any opposed? Okay, none abstain. So that was across the board. Congratulations to Candice, who will be serving as your board chair moving forward. I'll set some time aside to get her up to speed. So next month, You all won't hear my voice that much anymore, which will be good. I'm still excited to lead governance and ensure you know our governance report is up there, but you guys will hear more from Candice.

Dr. Bobby White:

- Our board meetings are as efficient as professional and as tight. And it's as clear as any board meetings you will ever participate in. Mrs. Cathey, manages and leads us in a way that I have not had in all ten years we've had Frayser Community Schools. If you have seen some of the stuff that goes on with the Shelby County School Board, you know it takes a competent, strong leader to pull everything together. Every time everyone meets, there's a seamless process so it doesn't feel all herkie jerky, and everything's all over the place. Just the fact that you all could vote on that slate. And the motion was so clear what it was that you guys were voting for. It's refreshing, given some of the things we've seen in what we dealt with a couple of weeks ago with the school board. So again, I want to say I appreciate you so much for being the person that I talked to the most, essentially my boss, and just being a friend, a colleague, and leading us in a way that we haven't had since the inception of Frayser Community Schools. I'm going to miss you being the chair. From the bottom of my heart, I appreciate you.

VI. Development

A. Development Committee Updates

No Development updates for this month.

VII. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
L. Warren