

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 126  
PRAIRIE JUNIOR HIGH  
11900 South Kostner  
Alsip, IL 60803  
May 11, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Board and audience stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Pro-Tem Secretary Zaker called the roll.

Present: Marigrace Sinnott-Snooks, President  
Joe LaChica, Vice President  
Therese Zaker, Pro-Tem Secretary  
Harry Tannehill  
Muna Conley  
Jennifer Warrick

Absent: Lori Pierce

Also Present: Craig Gwaltney, Superintendent  
Steve Gress, Assistant Superintendent  
Lori Connolly, Director of Teaching and Learning  
Nicole Leggett, Bilingual Director  
Various audience members (see attached sheet)

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Harry Tannehill moved, seconded by Joe LaChica, "To approve the minutes of the April 13, 2023 Regular Board Meeting". Upon roll call, the vote was as follows: Aye: LaChica, Conley, Sinnott-Snooks, Tannehill, Zaker. Nay: none. The motion carried 5-0.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Harry Tannehill moved, seconded by Muna Conley, "To approve the Consent Agenda". Upon roll call, the vote was as follows: Aye: Conley, Sinnott-Snooks, Tannehill, Pierce, LaChica. Nay: none. The motion carried 5-0.

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

Steve Gress reported we received a FOIA from SmartProcure and Hope and we responded in the proper amount of time.

**STAFF/STUDENT/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Union PSRP Local 943 President Connie Kotas addressed the board regarding the paraprofessional salary schedule that is currently in place and asked that the School Board consider making a change to it before their next contact date.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Joe LaChica moved, seconded by Therese Zaker, "To amend the 2023-2024 School Calendar to abate the five Emergency Days". Upon roll call, the vote was as follows: Aye: LaChica, Conley, Sinnott-Snooks, Tannehill, Zaker. Nay: none. The motion carried 5-0.

Harry Tannehill moved, seconded by Joe LaChica, "To approve the resolution that appoints Mrs. Jennifer Warrick to fill the School Board vacancy for Alsip, Hazelgreen and Oak Lawn School District 126". Upon roll call, the vote was as follows: Aye: Tannehill, Zaker, LaChica, Conley, Sinnott-Snooks. The motion carried 6-0.

Mrs. Warrick took the Board Oath.

## EDUCATIONAL REPORT

Lori Connolly reported that the district once again is providing our students with opportunities to support summer learning and encourage reading. Students in grades K-2 will receive take-home backpacks from the Teacher Created Materials Company containing a standards-based grade-level workbook with engaging activities for all content areas as well as a collection of 6 fiction and nonfiction books. Students in our two-way immersion (TWI) program will receive backpacks containing Spanish content. Students in grades 3-5 will receive the first in a series book called The Tyrell Show written by Miles Grose. Students in grades 6 and 7 will receive the summer reading book called Alabama Moon written by Watt Key. In addition to these books, our TWI students in grades 3-7 will receive a book written in Spanish called I Survived the Attack of the Grizzlies, based on a true story.

Lori also gave a summer school update. She mentioned the district restructured the enrichment summer school last year to be a full-day program with a STEM focus using the Camp Invention modules from the National Inventors Hall of Fame. We are again following this same model for this year since it was so successful. I'm excited to let the school board know that we have over 260 students enrolled in this program! That is 75 more students than last school year. The district will provide a Camp Invention t-shirt, breakfast, lunch, and transportation. Prairie Jr. High Assistant Principal, Brian Nievera, will be the enrichment summer school principal. It will be held the week of June 12th.

Lori discussed defined STEM as an online resource aligned to state science standards that provides STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) based performance tasks, including real-world career-related tasks. The elementary teachers K-6 have used this platform to support science instruction, but it has recently undergone some significant upgrades. A professional development session was provided for the teachers to learn more about the enhancements. In addition to the training, teachers had the opportunity to participate in a cohort study. This cohort team met several times after school over the course of two months with a trainer who took the teachers through a deeper dive into the tasks with a focus on building student collaboration, promoting student voice within the tasks to support choice, and differentiating tasks to support and extend students' learning needs. Teachers in the cohort are sharing what they learned with other teachers to help build capacity and expand on the usage of this valuable instructional resource.

Lastly, Lori spoke to the board regarding the new addition of the STEM Lab at Prairie Jr. High School comes with the need for a STEM curriculum. Much time has been dedicated to planning for the incorporation of the STEM lab into the junior high schedule for the next school year. Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is an activity, project, and problem-based STEM curriculum that centers around real-world activities, projects, and problems that help students understand how the knowledge and skills they develop in class may be applied to everyday life and careers. Students work collaboratively to lead their own learning through learning modules. In these modules, students are introduced to and experience careers through the modules. Next school year, Prairie will be incorporating two learning modules: Design and Modeling and Energy and the Environment. The Design and Modeling unit challenges students to apply what they have learned throughout the unit to design a therapeutic toy for a child who had cerebral palsy. The Energy and the Environment unit investigates the impact of energy on our lives and the world. Students are challenged to design alternative energy sources and evaluate ways for reducing energy consumption. These two units are each a trimester long and will be incorporated into the advanced art and advanced info tech classes for next year. Expanding the STEM program will continue to roll out in the following years.

Craig Gwaltney spoke about the District 126 Discipline Committees meeting and that there have minimal changes to the upcoming school year student handbook. All guidelines addressed by the ISBE and the state have been addressed.

Craig Gwaltney gave the construction update that all construction is on schedule. The new lot as Stony will be completed next year because of issues with moving Com Ed poles but great progress has been made thus far. The parking lot at Hazelgreen will not be done this year because of issues with the current contractor not responding to our continued requests.


## FINANCIAL

Muna Conley moved, seconded by Therese Zaker, "To direct the superintendent to prepare the 2023-2024 Budget". Upon roll call, the vote was as follows: Aye: Sinnott-Snooks, Tannehill, Pierce, Warrick, LaChica, Conley. Nay: none. The motion carried 6-0.

## ADJOURNMENT

Harry Tannehill moved, seconded by Therese Zaker, "To adjourn the meeting". Upon roll call, the vote as follows: Aye: Conley, Warrick, Sinnott-Snooks, Tannehill, Pierce, LaChica. Nay: None. The motion carried 6-0 at 7:30p.m.

  
President

  
Secretary