

GARDNER – SO. WILMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT #73

BOARD BRIEFS

Highlights of the Regular Meeting

AUGUST 20, 2025

PUBLIC COMMENT: We had several community members and faculty/staff in attendance at tonight's meeting to discuss sports & coaching. The following individuals publicly addressed the board – Sarah Halpin, Scott Halpin, Scott Grimes, Jillian Wills, Susan Heerd, Terese Kukman, Jim Lesaik, Pete Millette, Rick Enerson, and Jen Arrambide.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT: Mr. Andrew Johnson, Principal, reported on:

- The theme for this year is – Ignite the Spark, Illuminate the Future.
- Teacher Institute Days – Aug. 11 and Aug. 12.
- Staff reviewed new procedures in Teacher Ease
- New staff members this year – Andrew Johnson, Crystal Aukland, Travis Duley, Corey Haynes, Danielle Diamond, Kathy O'Hagan, Cole Westmoreland, and Jan Lestina.
- Find Your Way Day – Aug. 7 and Freshman Orientation – Aug. 11
- First day of school – Aug. 13 – went well. The freshman class received their Chromebooks. Seniors discussed Open Campus for lunch.
- Aug. 14 – School photos and bus evacuations were completed.

DIRECTORS' REPORTS:

Chris Ruddy, Director of Student Services, submitted her report online to board members reviewing the start of the new school year:

- Find Your Way Day was held on Thursday, Aug. 7th, for incoming freshmen and new students.
- We have 10 brand new students this school year. Our enrollment is growing and is up from last year. Currently, our enrollment is 173 students.
- PSAT – Juniors can test for FREE in October.
- SAT – GSW is an approved testing site again this year. We will hold SAT testing on Saturdays throughout the school year, starting this Saturday, Aug. 23. We have 15 students signed up.
- Senior Interviews will start in September.
- Official High School Transcripts – students will need to use Parchment, an online program. It will be FREE to Seniors until July 2026.

Crystal Aukland – Athletic Director – reported on the Fall Sports Season:

- Golf – We have one girl and seven boys golfing in our co-op with Dwight Township High School.
- Cross-Country – We have three students, all freshmen, running c/c with Dwight Township High School.
- Boys Soccer – We have five boys playing soccer with Reed Custer High School.
- All supplies have been ordered for coaches for the school year.
- First Aid Kits – every coach now has their own kit.
- EMTs – we are currently scheduling for home games
- Coach Evaluations – Mr. Johnson, Principal, will be evaluating coaches.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS REPORT: Mrs. Avery reported on:

- We have several leaks in our boiler system that required repair.
- Maintenance Grant – this is submitted yearly.
- HVAC project – still looking into pricing on this project
- Marquee – is at the end of its life. We are considering purchasing used panels from another school to replace our damaged ones. We are also looking at new models and pricing options.
- Window Vinyl – GSW window design for our gym door area and a few other big window areas around the building. This project will elevate our gym with a sense of Panther Pride and offer security within the building.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT: Mrs. Avery presented on the following:

- Reported on the Tentative Budget Report – We do have a balanced budget. We will present next month at the Sept. board meeting. We have to hold a Public Meeting, which is scheduled for Sept. 17, 2025, at 7:00 pm.
- Threat Assessment Plan and Protocols – we have to review and approve annually. All school districts have to approve this annually.
- FCA – Fellowship of Christian Athletes – Two teachers are going to start up this group. It is strictly a volunteer position, and the teachers will be providing supervision. A new group will meet on Saturdays at GSW HS. Students will lead this group. They will be sent to a training camp to learn how to instruct these meetings.
- Student Growth Assessments – A rule change made this evaluation piece mandatory for teacher evaluations, but the GSW PERA Committee has decided that teachers are no longer required to do it.
- Grundy County Special Education Co-op update – Mrs. Susan Avery and board member Katy Wepprech attended a meeting on August 19th. GCSPEC has 240 total employees. They have acquired an additional property. The strip mall location will house programs with the Grundy County Special Education classes for their students.

BOE MEMBERS REPORTS:

None at tonight’s meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Accept the Resignation of Career and Tech Ed Teacher – Mrs. Donna Vertin
- Affirm the recommendation to hire a Career and Tech Ed Teacher – Mr. Travis Duley
- Approve the recommendation to hire a Spring Play Director – Ms. Marshall Harris
- Approve the recommendation to hire an Assistant Girls’ Softball Coach – Elaina Bach
- Approve the Threat Assessment Plan and Protocols for FY26
- Approve the Public Hearing for the FY2026 Budget – September 17, 2025, at 7:00 pm
- Approve the first reading of Press Plus Policy 119, as presented by IASA
- Approve the recommendation for the assignment of Class Sponsors: Freshman – Angel Dallio, Sophomores – Jillian Wills, Juniors – Danielle Diamond, Seniors – Patricia Boaz.
- Affirm the recommendation for assignment of teacher mentors for new teachers: Allan Wills, Jen Arrambide, and Nicole Leigh.
- Approve the recommendation to hire Boys’ Basketball Supplemental Coach for Boys’ JV and Varsity Basketball – Chris Bexson
- Approve to apply for the School Maintenance Project Grant
- Affirm Helm Construction to do boiler repairs
- Accept the resignation of Orange Crush Sponsor – Mrs. Nicole Leigh

- Approve the FCA Club before school (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) – Mr. Adam Leigh and Mrs. Nicole Leigh.
- Approve an Orange Crush Sponsor – Ms. Danielle Diamond

OTHERS:

BOARD OF EDUCATION

President: Terry Schultz

Vice-President: Kori Speed

Kristen Ashley, Janelle Biros, Elli Monferdini-Wilkey

David Simms & Katy Wepprecht

Principal: Mr. Brian Davis

Superintendent: Mrs. Susan Avery