

Princeton R-V Board of Education Meeting (April 8, 2024) Press Release

The Princeton R-V Board of Education held their regular monthly meeting on Monday, April 8, 2024. The following highlights of the board meeting included:

Board of Education Meeting

- The Board Approved Verification of the Princeton R-V Board of Education Election as presented. The following were final results: Chet Ellsworth 191, Danny Derry 161, Seth Renfro 116, & Blake Boxley 216.
- Incumbent Blake Boxley along with Chet Ellsworth were elected to the three-year term.
- New Board member Chet Ellsworth was administered the oath of office and sworn in as a new board member by the School Superintendent.
- Superintendent Jerry Girdner honored outgoing board member Chad Smith with a plaque, recognizing his dedicated (3 Terms) nine years of service
- The board of education voted Ron Parson as President and Nathan Evans as Vice President.
- The board of education voted Marcie Davis as Secretary and Karla Meinke as Treasurer.

The consent agenda was approved consisting of Call Meeting to Order

- A) Approve March 11, 2024 Board of Education Minutes
- B) Approve Bills for Payment and Any Necessary Fund Transfers
- C) Financial Report

Announcements

- A) May BOE Meeting – Monday, May 13th 2024 @ 5:30PM
- B) Award & Baccalaureate -Wednesday, May 1 –New Hope Baptist Church--6:30 pm
- C) Graduation--Friday, May 3--7:00 pm
- D) Prom--Saturday, April 20

Old Business

- A) The Board Approved a Bid for a 2025 Thomas-C2, 71 passenger school bus for \$134,534.00
- B) The Board of Education approved the Preschool program to include 3-year-old students for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year. Currently, we have only 12 four-year-old students enrolled for the next academic year. With two classrooms available, each capable of accommodating up to eleven students, a maximum of 22 students for our program.

New Business

- A) The Princeton R-V District requires tuition for individual students and the Spickard School District to cover the expenses associated with educating students. Princeton receives no financial support from state, county, or local sources for high school students from Spickard, as all funding for Spickard's 7-12 graders is allocated directly to the Spickard district. This results in Spickard residents' taxes funding education for all students in their district, extending beyond those attending K-6. Missouri statute 167.131 mandates districts without comprehensive high school programs to cover tuition and transportation costs for students attending high school elsewhere, requiring Spickard to pay tuition.
The current tuition rate is under review due to challenges such as decreased local assessed valuation and declining enrollment at both Princeton and declining enrollment of tuition students from Spickard. Additionally, recent legislation poses financial strain, including Senate Bill 727, which significantly increases minimum teacher salaries. This increase, while initially supported by state grants, could strain long-term funding resources. The current cost to educate a Princeton High School student is approximately \$14,724.60, yet the current tuition rate of \$6,375 falls significantly below this cost. Thus, the school board approved the recommendation to increasing tuition for new non-resident students to \$11,000. Existing non-resident (Spickard District and Individual) students will benefit from a grandfather clause, maintaining their tuition at the current SAT rate (\$6,725). All tuition students who fulfill the Gene Kauffman Scholarship requirements will continue to maintain their eligibility for the scholarship.
- B) The board of education approved Summer School for 2024. This program has become a possibility due to the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Summer School Grant.

- C) Prior to the 2022 summer school, Princeton had not hosted summer school due to the unique state funding formula. Princeton could have lost significant funding from the small schools grant and the hold harmless provision. Summer School will be available for students K-12 and will also include Drivers Education.
- D) The board reviewed a presentation and enrollment data, along with recommendations from Athletic Director Mike Schmidli. Mr. Schmidli outlined projections indicating a potential 25% decline in enrollment at Princeton's Junior High/High School building by year 2028, 2029, & 2030, which will consequently impact participation in sports teams. In response to this challenge, Princeton has taken proactive measures, including entering into cooperative agreements with Mercer and Newton for football. Additionally, Princeton has previously worked with Mercer for Junior High Softball, and the board approved extending an invitation to Mercer to participate with Princeton in JH Softball for next year. Furthermore, the board discussed exploring potential future opportunities with Mercer in other Varsity sports, with plans for ongoing evaluation and consideration as needed.
- E) The Board of Education has received recommendations from school administrators to initiate a review process for the implementation of random drug testing for students. As drug use and abuse among youth continues to escalate with the states recent legalization of marijuana, the school remains committed to deterring and preventing student drug use. Under this program, students in grades 7-12 would be required to consent to random drug screenings as a condition of participation in MSHSAA-sponsored activities or the A+ program.

Students who test positive for drugs or violate the screening process may face suspension or exclusion from covered activities. It's important to note that the sanctions outlined in the proposed policy are focused solely on limiting the opportunity for participation in MSHSAA-sponsored activities or the A+ program. Any violations of the district's discipline policy regarding drugs and alcohol will be subject to the appropriate consequences as outlined in that policy.

The board of education will review information and utilize the May and June board meetings to discuss and assess the proposed drug testing program. Community input is highly encouraged during this evaluation period, and all are invited to provide feedback to board members or administration as part of the review process. Several neighboring school districts already have established testing programs in place. Among them are South Harrison, Stanberry, Milan, Brookfield, Worth County, King City, Albany, Putnam County, and Green City.

The board entered closed session at approximately 7:30PM

Closed Session – the tentative agenda of this meeting includes a vote to close part of the meeting pursuant to R.S.M.O. 610.021– (2) Leasing, purchase or sale of real estate, (3) Hiring, firing, and disciplining of particular employees, (13) Individual identifiable records and ratings, (14) Records which are protected from disclosure by law

The board returned from closed session at approximately 8:30PM

Announcements

- The Board has approved Merideth Ussery as the Junior High/High School Principal for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, with a two-year contract. Merideth Ussery will receive a base salary of \$72,000.
- The Board approved the extra duty resignation of assistant football coach Wes Guilkey.
- The Board approved the extra duty resignation of National Honor Society sponsor Heather Hall.
- The Board approved a 10.5 month contract for HS Counselor Heather Hall.
- The Board approved an extra duty assignment for testing coordinator Lori Puls.
- The Board approved an extra duty assignment for Trap Team sponsor Kurt Meighen.