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School Board Meeting

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Agency: Akron Board of Education

Date: Oct. 7, 2024

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Summary

- The Akron Public Schools Board of Education voted to publicly recognize APS and Superintendent Michael Robinson in light of stories the community has heard about the district. In a resolution, the board wanted to highlight the accomplishments made by scholars and staff under Robinson's leadership.
- Robinson will review more of APS' success and plans for the future at his [State of the System](#) address on Oct. 30.
- The board accepted a donation by Paul Thomarios of a rocket memorial and two bronze statues honoring Akron alumnae astronaut [Judith Resnik](#) and Jean Hixson, the second woman to break the sound barrier.

Follow-Up Questions

- If the Safety Town Program goes into the middle schools, will the students be as open and responsive as the younger students have been?
- Why have the negative stories the community has been hearing about APS had such a negative impact on how they view APS?
- What is the State of the System address?

Notes

- Board members present
 - Barbara Sykes
 - Rene Molenaar
 - Carla Jackson
 - Diana Autry

- Summer Hall
 - Bruce Alexander
- Superintendent Michael Robinson was also present at the meeting
- The meeting can be [viewed here](#)
- During **opening formalities**, Autry asked for a motion to amend the board agenda to add Resolution 24-146, which celebrates the district, staff, scholars and superintendent for their accomplishments. It's Item 30.1 under new business. The board voted to add this to the agenda, with five yeas and one abstention (Molenaar).
- During **recognitions**, Robinson requested approval from the board for the donation of a rocket memorial and two bronze statues from Paul Thomarios to Resnik Community Learning Center. Thomarios spoke with Robinson earlier this year about placing a rocketship memorial for a former classmate and friend [Judith Resnik](#) at Resnik. The bronze statues are in the likeness of Judith Resnik and [Jean Hixson](#), a teacher of Thomarios and the second woman to break the sound barrier. Members approved the motion to accept this donation.
 - Robinson also requested approval of 16 maple trees donated by [Keep Akron Beautiful](#) for the following CLCs: David Hill, Glover, Leggett, McBright, Sam Salem and Voris. Members approved the motion.
 - Officials of the Safety Town program gave a brief presentation about what they do in their program. They are currently celebrating five years of partnership with the district. "We are the only district in the state of Ohio to incorporate (Safety Town) into our curriculum," learning specialist Katrina Halasa told the board. She said that, usually, kids attend this program in the summer, which brings in 200 to 300 kids each year. With the APS partnership, 14,000 students go through the program every year. Lessons are taught from the Akron Fire Department, Akron Children's Hospital nurses, Akron Police Department and [Petermann Bus](#).

Board members' reflections

- Community reflections- Molenaar spoke about a recent visit to [Helen Arnold Community Learning Center](#). The learning center has a very active and productive [Family Resource Center \(FRC\)](#). She said "Principal Lamonica Davis is the glue keeping the building together." She said she's a role model when it comes to giving help and asking for and receiving help.
- Alexander went to the [APS Athletics Hall of Fame](#). Three women were

inducted along with several men.

Superintendent report

- Robinson thanked teachers for all they do, adding that World Teachers Day was Oct. 5. School Bus Safety Week is Oct. 16- 20, and he thanked the school bus drivers for all they do as well.
- District is being proactive about [Senate Bill 313](#), which enacts Alyssa's Law regarding school wearable panic alert systems.
- “There is no price tag on safety,” Robinson said.
- Jackson asked Robinson how much and if any money APS received from federal or state sources for school safety. Robinson said they are looking into what grants are available. Treasurer Stephen Thompson said APS received \$500,000 two years ago.
- The **Finance Committee** has to approve the five-year forecast by Nov. 30.
- **Legal Contracts and Board Policy:** Molenaar said the committee has not met since the last meeting. The next meeting is Oct. 28 and they will discuss House [Bill 214](#), which goes into effect on Oct. 24. Among other things, this bill requires “each public school to adopt a policy that reasonably accommodates the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of students; to require each public school to adopt a policy regarding certain expectations related to the performance of staff member professional duties;” The committee will also consider [Senate Bill 29](#) which goes into effect Oct. 24 and covers educational records and student data privacy.
- **Finance & Capital Management** -Early voting starts Oct. 8 and continues for the next 22 days.
- **Instructional Policy & Student Achievement’s** next meeting is Oct. 14.
- **The Equity Committee** is scheduled to meet Oct. 15.
- A motion to approve [minutes from last meeting](#) on Sept. 23 was approved.
- Motion to approve personnel recommendations in categories 10 - 20 is moved.
 - Molenaar voted against 11-2 employment of a multimedia specialist and 15-1, employment of support staff, personnel assistant

- Consent agenda – approval of the resolutions and motions from category 25.
 - Hall abstained from items 25.1, 24-141
- Business Affairs – Robinson asked for approval of recommendations from category 27. Items were approved, though Molenaar abstained from 27.10
- There was no unfinished business
- Item 30.1 under new business is a resolution proclaiming the excellent progress of the APS district and congratulating scholars, staff and the superintendent.
 - Molenaar abstained from this motion as she was unaware of it and wanted time to go over it.
 - Motion passed 5-0 with 1 abstention
- The board moved to executive session to discuss employment issues at 7:13 p.m.

Notes to reader: Unless quotation marks are used, all text is paraphrased. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@signalakron.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.