

**GIBSON CITY-MELVIN-SIBLEY COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #5**  
**SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES OF**  
**January 31, 2024**

The Board of Education of Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley Community Unit School District #5 met in regular session on Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 4:45 p.m. in the GCMS Board Room located at 307 N Sangamon Avenue, Gibson City. The board was called to order by Board President Josh Johnson, roll was called with members Elder, Leonard, Friday, and Tucker-Davis in attendance. Also present were: High School Principal Kyle Bielfeldt, GCMS Education Association President Susan Riley, Technology Director Walker Willis, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction Erin Nuss, FCSEC Director Jesse McFarling, Secretary to the Board Lori Kristensen and District Superintendent Jeremy Darnell.

Absent: Board members Mussman and Whitehouse

The meeting started with the Pledge of Allegiance being recited by all present.

Recognition of Visitors:

GCMS Future Business Leaders of America Sponsor, Mrs. Conlin and FBLA officers; Chloe Tjarks, Nick Smith, Ryan Carly, and Getty Greer.

The FBLA officers presented to the board a current Chapter Report. The report included information on membership, conferences, events, leadership opportunities, financials and committees within the organization.

A motion to **go into executive session** was made by board member Leonard and seconded by board member Elder at 5:06 p.m. Motion carried by roll call with all board members present voting yes for the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the district including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1).

Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the closed meeting minutes. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).

Student disciplinary cases. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(9).

Discussion of lawfully closed meeting minutes, whether for the purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. 5ILCS 120/2(c)(21).

A motion to **return to open session** was made by board member Elder and seconded by board member Friday at 5:19 p.m. Motion carried by roll call, with all board members present voting yes.

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**Action Items to Consider From Executive Session**

**Accept Requests for:**

**Motion to approve Jessica Robinson as a lunchroom supervisor at the elementary school for two hours per day at a rate of \$15.00 per hour.** Motion was made by board member Tucker-Davis and seconded by board member Friday. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

**Motion to hire Hailey Rutledge as a school social worker at Step 3 MA for the 2024-2025 school year.** Motion was made by board member Leonard and seconded by board member Elder. Motion carried by roll call with board members Leonard, k Elder, Friday, and Johnson voting yes. Board member Tucker-Davis voted to abstain.

**Motion to hire Estelle Keigher as a paraprofessional for 7.5 hours per day at a rate of \$15.00 per hour for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year.** Motion was made by board member Elder and seconded by board member Friday. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

**Motion to approve the maternity leave for Anna Deanult upon the birth of her child.** Motion was made by board member Tucker-Davis and seconded by board member Leonard. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

**Motion for tuition reimbursement for Tyler Van Vickle in accordance with the GCMSEA negotiated agreement.** Motion was made by board member Elder and seconded by board member Friday. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

**Motion to accept the resignation of Sherrie Garner as an elementary school lunchroom supervisor effective immediately with thanks for service.** Motion was made by board member Elder and seconded by board member Tucker-Davis. Motion carried by voice vote with all members present voting yes.

**Additional Agenda Items:** None

**Consent Agenda**

**GCMS Accounts Payable bills approved were \$780,764.56**

Education fund	\$469,231.20
Building fund	\$155,417.45
Debt Service fund	\$0.00
Transportation fund	\$109,073.74
IMRF/FICA fund	\$22,064.98

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Capital Projects	\$0.00
W/C	\$0.00
TORT	\$24,977.19
F/HLS	\$0.00

**GCMS Payrolls approved were \$522,299.10**

Education fund	\$447,495.89
Building fund	\$35,061.47
Transportation fund	\$615.90
TORT	\$39,125.84

**FCSEC Accounts Payable bills approved were \$35,273.00**

Education fund	\$34,469.12
Building fund	\$0.00
IMRF/FICA Fund	\$803.88

**FCSEC Payrolls approved were \$46,191.31 all in the Education fund**

Financial/treasurer's report on behalf of the GCMS District and the FCSEC, Lunch Report, the summary of investment report on behalf of the GCMS District and approval of the destruction of executive session tapes through the end of July 2022.

**Approve Field Trips for:** None

**Approve the following donations:** None

**Approve Facility Use Agreements or Request for Use of School Kitchen/Cafeteria pending proof of insurance and all other district requirements for:**

- FCA Power Camp to use the Middle School July 22-25, 2024.

Approve the minutes for the GCMS Regular and Executive Session Minutes of December 18, 2023 and the Policy Committee meeting minutes from December 13, 2023 as presented.

**Motion to accept the consent agenda** as presented in the board packet. Motion was made by board member Elder and seconded by board member Leonard. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

**Committee Reports:**

**Policy:** Committee members: Miranda Leonard, Janna Friday, Adam Mussman, Jeremy Darnell, and Erin Nuss

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**Motion to approve the recommended changes in Policy Press 113 as presented by IASB and the GCMS Policy Committee.** Motion was made by board member Leonard and seconded by board member Tucker-Davis. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

**Building, Grounds, and Transportation:** Committee members: Adam Elder, Emily Tucker-Davis, Adam Mussman, Rich Doman, and Bob Jones

- Next committee meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2024
- The committee presented an estimate for the blacktop walkway to the new press box and the blacktop parking lot paving by the maintenance shed.
- Potential updates to the elementary school playground and a PreK specific area for recess were discussed.

**Personnel and Finance:** Committee members: Josh Johnson, Phil Whitehouse, Janna Friday, and Jeremy Darnell

- Next committee meeting is scheduled for February 7.

**Strategy and Enrichment:** Committee members: Josh Johnson, Emily Tucker-Davis, Miranda Leonard, Jeremy Darnell, and Erin Nuss

- The committee provided information on the presentation of the strategic planning consultation that took place earlier on January 31. Board members who were involved in the 2-hour session shared their excitement about the future strategic planning for GCMS and stated they look forward to finding ways that GCMS can “level up” and have an action piece to guide them and administrators in planning for the future for the school district.

**Building Administration Reports:**

**High School Principal Report, Kyle Bielfeldt**

Enrollment

- Freshmen - 57
- Sophomore - 73
- Junior - 70
- Senior - 71
- Total - 271

**December Student of the Month:** Shawn Schlickman

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**ILMEA All State Choir Honors:** Lucas Clinton was selected for the ILMEA All State Honors Choir. This is one of the biggest honors a high school musician can receive. He will be performing at the Peoria Civic Center along with all of the other members on Saturday, January 27.

**PSAT:** We had all juniors and volunteer freshmen and sophomore students take the PSAT on Wednesday, January 17. More than 140 students took the test that day. We offer these practice exams so students can gain exposure to the test and can achieve their best score on the test their junior year.

**Junior In-service:** The junior in-service took place on Thursday, January 25 at the Gibson City Bible Church. All juniors attended the full day in-service and heard from speakers regarding SAT results, college expectations, ECCA, life expectations, financial aid, human resources, and senior year scheduling and expectations. This event has been a continual success, and the students all get a lot out of the day. They can talk to Parkland officials, trades representatives, and public and private colleges. We had three GCMS alumni participate as speakers this year which is always a great opportunity to see what former students have accomplished in their lives.

Thank you to Ms. Riley, Ms. Killian, and Mr. Carter for organizing the event and creating a wonderful opportunity for our students.

**Legends and Distinguished Alumni Night:** January 26 marked our Legends of GCMS and Distinguished Alumni Night.

Legends of GCMS are teachers that served as teachers in the Gibson City, Melvin-Sibley, and/or GCMS school district for 25 or more years. We recognized the following Legends this year: Carol Bierman, Joan Ricks, Jill Gibson, Lisa Thames, Tammy Seneca, and Don Worthington.

**Carol Bierman:** Ms. Bierman started teaching Gibson Junior High in 1989 and retired from GCMS Middle School in 2017. During her time as a middle school teacher, Ms. Bierman taught 8th grade science, 7th grade science, and 8th grade language arts. She coordinated the Science Fair for 20 years and was the Regional Science chair for 5 years. Ms. Bierman's most memorable moments were her first time at the State Science Fair with students and moving from the middle school in Melvin to the new building in Gibson City.

**Tammy Seneca:** Mrs. Seneca started teaching at Melvin-Sibley Junior/Senior High School in 1990 and retired from GCMS Elementary School in 2023. During her career, Mrs. Seneca taught US History, World History, Geography, Economics, Psychology, and 5th grade. She coached track and field and cheerleading and was a class sponsor. Mrs. Seneca stated that her most memorable moments were working in all three buildings in the district and working with so

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many amazing people. The laughs she has shared with her colleagues and her students are irreplaceable.

**Jill Gibson:** Ms. Gibson started teaching at Gibson City Junior High in 1990 and retired from GCMS Middle School in 2023. During her time as a middle school teacher, Ms. Gibson taught 7th and 8th grade Language Arts, 7th grade Social Studies, and Here's Looking at You 2000. She coached 7th grade volleyball, Freshman and JV volleyball, and was a varsity assistant coach. Ms. Gibson said that there were too many memorable moments during her time at GCMS to pick just one. She stated that it was an honor to work for a great district like GCMS.

**Lisa Thames:** Mrs. Thames started working at Gibson City Junior High in 1992 and retired from GCMS Middle School in 2023. During her time as a middle school teacher, Mrs. Thames taught 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Math, 7th grade Social Studies, Health, Speech Communications, and Financial Literacy. She was the middle school cheer coach and middle school student council sponsor over the course of her career.

**Joan Ricks:** Mrs. Ricks started teaching at Gibson City Junior High in 1993 and retired from GCMS Middle School in 2023. During her time as a middle school teacher, Mrs. Ricks taught Language Arts, Ancient History, US History, Speech Communications, World Cultures, Science, and Reading. She was the sponsor of the school newspaper and Geography Club. Her most memorable moments during her career were the class plays in Speech Communications and the times in her Enrichment periods.

**Don Worthington:** Mr. Worthington started teaching at GCMS Middle School in 1994 and retired in 2023. During his time at the middle school, Mr. Worthington taught middle school computers and was the district technology coordinator. Mr. Worthington's most memorable moment was when Superintendent Chuck Aubry greatly increased the technology budget so we could get building wide networking, a computer in every classroom and internet access. Mr. Worthington would like to thank Mr. Jim McClard, Mr. Jim Miglin, and Mr. Mike Bleich for taking a chance on him. Mr. Craig Kummerow and Mrs. Kathy Bennett for putting up with him. Mr. Craig Kummerow and Mr. Walker Willis for being the best two tech guys to work with. And the GCMS staff for their patience and flexibility when things went down and all the words of appreciation through all these years.

We inducted two new alumni into our Distinguished Alumni wall this year. Tom Bennett and Scott Bennett were both recognized for their accomplishments and service to GCMS and the State of Illinois.

**Mr. Tom Bennett: Gibson City High School – Class of 1974**

After Gibson City High School, Tom graduated from Eastern Illinois University and became a Science teacher at Melvin-Sibley Jr/Sr High School. After starting a family, he left teaching to join State Farm as an IT manager. He has an MBA from Illinois State University and a DBA from Nova Southeastern University. Always active in the Ford County Republican party, Tom sought

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the Representative's seat for the 106th District, winning it in 2015. In 2023, Tom was appointed to the State Senate for the 53rd District from which he will retire in 2025.

Tom's interests have always been in education. He served on the Gibson City/GCMS School Board during the consolidation of the districts before serving as a Parkland College Trustee. He is a past chair of the Illinois Community College Trustee Association as well as the National Community College Association. In the legislature, Tom has been the minority spokesman on the Appropriations Committee while also sitting on committees for Education, Early Childhood Education and Higher Education.

Tom is known for his ability to reach across the aisle and counts as friends members of all political parties. His integrity and community minded approach to representing his constituents have become legendary; he's known to rarely miss a fish fry, pancake dinner or FFA auction in his 13 county district. He is most definitely a man of the people.

Tom has never forgotten his Gibson City roots. His visits to classrooms to share about the political process keeps him in schools, always his soft spot. He proudly helped establish the GCMS Education Foundation and served as its first chairman. Tom and his wife Kathy continue to reside in Gibson City; their children, Megan and Andy are GCMS graduates and have added 5 grandchildren to the Bennett family.

**Scott Bennett: Gibson City-Melvin-Sibley High School - Class of 1995**

Scott received his Bachelor's Degree in History from Illinois State University and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Illinois College of Law. During his undergrad years, he interned in the Clinton White House and later worked for the Democratic National Committee in Washington DC. He served as a prosecutor in the City of Chicago until moving back to Central Illinois, finally settling in as an Assistant State's Attorney for Champaign County. In 2015, he was appointed to the Illinois Senate and served the 52nd District until his passing in December 2022.

As a State Senator, Scott was known for his wit and ability to disarm political opponents as he sought to build consensus across the aisle. He was a constant champion for those without a voice, including children, the elderly and those with disabilities. In the Senate, Scott chaired the Agriculture Committee and served on several others, including Higher Education and Criminal Law.

Scott's life was one driven by service to others. He was known for his ready availability to visit with any constituent and his unwavering commitment to helping the most vulnerable in his district. He treasured every relationship, even among those with different political stances and used it to broaden his understanding of topics important to those he represented.

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Scott was a proud native of Gibson City, often helping on the family farm during the hectic days of harvest. He never forgot GCMS, maintaining close ties to his classmates and teachers throughout his life. Scott leaves his wife Stacy and twins, Sam and Emma, to carry on his legacy of service to his beloved Central Illinois.

**Upcoming Events**

- Feb. 2 Mid Term 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter
- Feb. 6 CCPE Meeting – 8:30 AM and Admin Meeting – 9 AM
- Feb. 7 Student Principal Advisory Meeting
- Feb. 8 LEAD Team Meeting
- Feb. 12-16 FBLA Week
- Feb. 14 HOIC Meeting – 11 AM
- Feb. 16 SIP Day
- Feb. 19 Presidents Day – No School
- Feb. 19-23 FFA Week
- Feb. 21 EFE Board Meeting – 8:30 AM
- Feb. 22 HS and MS Assembly – Ben Tracy
- Feb. 24 FFA Auction
- Feb. 26 HOIC Music Festival
- Feb. 27 HS Leadership Meeting – 9 AM
- Feb. 28 Board of Education Meeting

**Middle School Principal Report, Kent Nash**

Enrollment Total: 216 Students

- 6th Grade - 63
- 7th Grade - 85
- 8th Grade - 68

**8th Grade Career Day:** 8th grade students participated in career day on Friday, January 19th. Over 40 presenters, many GCMS alumni, came and spoke with our students about their career and how to best prepare for success in high school. Students also met with Mr. Bielfeldt, Mr. Carter, and high school students to learn more about high school course offerings and club opportunities.

**Book Club:** Mrs. Leitz had 21 students attend a book club over their lunch period, after reading the book *New Kid!* This was not an assignment and there was no extra credit, just a chance to read and discuss a great book and have lunch together!



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**Student Council Food Pantry Coin Drive:** In December our student council held a coin drive to benefit the GAH Food Pantry. They collected \$2,006.37!

**Athletics:** The 7th Grade boys basketball regional at Leroy began on Jan. 20 They won the first round game against Blue Ridge. They play in the regional semi-final on Wednesday, January 24 at 6:45 PM.

The 8th grade boys basketball regional is also being played at Leroy. The team opens with a game against Normal Metcalf on Saturday, January 27. The game starts at 12:30 and is being played in the elementary school gym.

Mr. Berry coached in his last regular season home game on Thursday, January 18th. He was presented with a retirement plaque and a reception was held for him after the game. It was a great night to celebrate Coach Berry.

**Elementary School Principal Report, Justin Kean**

Enrollment:

- Pre K - 74
- K - 76
- 1 - 77
- 2 - 72
- 3 - 70
- 4 - 80
- 5 - 61
- Total - 510

Enrollment is the highest it has been in a while. All grades have 70 or more students except 5th Grade.

**PreK Family Event:** The event was held on December 18 with 43 out of the 72 students represented. For those students who were not able to attend, supplies were sent home.

**Check & Connect:** Linda Schmitt and Hailey Rutledge are using this check in system to connect with students who have elevated scores (social, academic, emotional and behavior questions) and data to determine what students would be checked with was gathered from MySaebrs.

**Evaluation:** The second round of formal evaluations for non-tenured staff have begun along with some of the evaluations for tenured staff.

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**E-Learning Days:** There were 8 IEP/504 meetings scheduled for January 23. Five of these meetings continued with an online meeting. The other three meetings were rescheduled for in-person which were requested by the parents.

**Book Fair:** The book fair was originally scheduled for January 22-26. Due to snow days that week, a few of the book fair days were canceled. A big shout out to Stacy Grauer and Tori Ferguson for adjusting and managing the book fair when Jen Carley was out sick.

**Special Education Director, Jesse McFarling:**

No Report.

**Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction - Erin Nuss**

**Curriculum:** Curriculum Annual Review meetings began this month. Every department will meet and discuss how we can get better.

**Professional Development:** On January 25 after school, a continuation of a 3-part PD Series on “Whole Brain Teaching” led by Joanna Willis. The co-teaching, co-planning sessions continue to see high participation rates in the before and after school sessions.

**Substitute Recruitment Event:** Eleven new subs signed up and are ready to work with no waiting on licensure, physicals and background checks. A huge thanks to Lori Kristensen, Walker Willis, Jeremy Darnell, Beth Tabor, and Kristin Welborn who assisted in making this successful event run well.

**GCMS University:** The Monthly Morning Meeting Topic for this month was Face-to-Face Time with Your Administrator. Special thanks to the building leaders and Mr. Darnell for setting aside this time to listen to feedback from our new teachers.

**January 3 Institute Day:** Outstanding feedback from staff on usefulness to their professional Growth. The keynote on personality types was very informative for staff and they met in teams to discuss and do activities together. The breakout sessions focused around specially designing instruction for a variety of learning styles and types. There were a wide array of talented speakers from GCMS and outside organizations such as the ROE, Chicago Public Schools, and IESE. Independent Work Time for Teachers in the afternoon was greatly appreciated and put to good use.

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**Assessment:** 110 students participated in the Voluntary Digital Practice SAT on January 17. A big shout out to Mrs. Welborn for the leg work on setup. State mandated testing begins this month and extends through April.

**Technology Director - Walker Willis**

**Chromebook Repairs:** 1st Quarter - 37, 2nd Quarter - 32, total for the 1st semester is 69

**Football Field:** No new updates this month.

**New High School Copier:** A new BP-70C31 copier has been ordered for the High School Office. The current copier will be moved to the Ag Office next to Mr. Reale's classroom.

**ESports Club:** Mr. Benison has organized a group of students to pilot the ESports program. We are currently prepping the devices and accounts so that the club will begin on schedule.

**Technology Highlights:** On January 17 we administered the PSAT test to over 140 students in the HS Gym. There was a slight delay when everyone first entered the test but after that the platform worked as expected and the test proceeded normally. Overall the district is in good shape for administering the official test later this spring.

**Superintendent Report**

**Solar Update**

Superintendent Darnell reported that the solar panel installation is progressing well. The panels are currently being installed at the middle school.

**Leading Simply Consulting**

Superintendent Darnell has suggested that the Board enter into a consulting agreement with Leading Simply Consulting for strategic planning training and process for the Board of Education, and administrative team. The goals being to continue to improve alignment and coherence to the District's mission, vision and values.

**Motion to approve the consulting contract with Leading Simply Consulting.** Motion was made by board member Leonard and seconded by board member Tucker-Davis. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

**GCMS Transportation Contract Extension**

A two-year extension on the current contract with North American Central School Bus was discussed. The first year of the extension will be an \$85,000 increase and the second year of the extension will see a \$65,000 increase.

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**Motion to approve the two year extension with North American Central School Bus with an increase of 8.1% in year 1 and 4.55% in year 2.** Motion was made by board member Elder and seconded by board member Friday. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

2024-2025 School Calendar

The proposed school calendar for the 2024-2025 school year was discussed with specific notable dates: First day of classes will be Monday, August 19, Christmas Break will begin on December 23, 2024 and end on January 3, 2025. Second semester begins on January 7, 2025. The last day of school is scheduled for May 29, pending any emergency days used.

**Motion to accept the 2024-2025 School Calendar as presented.** Motion was made by board member Elder and seconded by board member Tucker-Davis. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

GCMSEA Memorandum of Understanding

The board discussed the proposed MOU which modifies the tuition reimbursement for the 2023-2024, 2024-2025, and 2025-2026 school years for teachers who wish to earn credit towards or beyond the Master's degree, earn credit towards an applicable endorsement, or complete required coursework for an emergency licensure. Up to \$2,500 per fiscal year can be reimbursed for tuition and fees.

**Motion to approve the MOU with the GCMSEA on Article IV Section 4 as presented.**

Motion was made by board member Elder and seconded by board member Leonard. Motion carried by roll call with all members present voting yes.

**A motion to adjourn the meeting** was made by board member Friday and seconded by board member Tucker-Davis at 6:13 p.m. Motion carried by voice vote, with all members present voting yes.

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Board President Josh Johnson

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Secretary to the Board Lori H. Kristensen