MEETING NOTES

Meeting Notes are not official until voted on by the Board of Education at its following Regular Meeting.

- 1. The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m.
- 2. Members present: Mrs. Crowley, Mrs. Long, Mrs. Murdoch, Mr. Perry, and Mr. Vorst
- 3. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- 4. The Board of Education adopted the agenda as presented.
- 5. K-5 Math Resource Adoption

This agenda item is a notification to the board that we have selected a K-5 math resource, much like we did with ELA. Later this evening, our community will receive an email with information about the resource and the opportunity to review and provide input.

6. Graduation Requirements – Jacob Grantier, Director of Secondary Curriculum

Next up, we have a presentation on the new graduation requirements. If you're not aware, the requirements to graduate from high school in Ohio have undergone many overhauls during my 30-year career. This is the most significant overhaul of those requirements. It's not just a matter of passing a certain number of credits or a test. There's a whole new process. So, Mr. Grantier will share the graduation requirements for the class of 2023 and beyond.

Beginning with the class of 2023, all students in the state of Ohio must meet requirements for graduation that fall into three categories – course completion, competency demonstration, and readiness demonstration. For the next few minutes, we'll discuss these components, our progress in support of students achieving their high school diploma, and our next steps to ensure equitable access to rigorous and relevant learning opportunities for every student, without exception.

State law mandates that students complete 20 high school credits in the following disciplines and require specific student experiences. In science, students must complete biology and one credit of physical science. In math, the four credits must include Algebra II or an equivalent course. In addition, students must study world history, US history, and American government in social studies. Electives must consist of one full credit of fine arts and half a credit of financial literacy.

| COURSE COMPLETION | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| General Course Requirements | State Minimum |
| English Language Arts | 4 units |
| Mathematics | 4 units |
| Science | 3 units |
| Social Studies | 3 units |
| Health | ½ unit |
| Physical Education | ½ unit |
| Electives | 5 units |
| HCSD Requirements | % Digital Connections/Future Ready % Senior Capstone |

Hilliard's local requirements mandate that students accumulate 21.5 credits. In addition to the state requirements, HCSD requires all students to complete future ready successfully, formerly digital connections, a freshman-level course designed to allow students the opportunity to explore educational pathways and future careers and develop competency with business technologies, effective research skills, and oral communication, as well as a culminating capstone experience during 11th or 12th grade.

The Cap Capstone experience allows students to challenge themselves outside the traditional curriculum. An exploration of a career path, an occasion to serve a community, a chance to develop and or explore a particular skill, or a preparation for a specific event. The Capstone encourages self-discovery and responsibility.

Part two of the graduation requirements consists of demonstrating competency in Algebra I and English II on end-of-course exams. A competency score of 684 is required to check this box on both tests. And state law mandates that districts offer remedial support and opportunities to retake these exams to any student who needs to demonstrate competency on one or both tests. After two unsuccessful attempts, students can leverage competency

Students must earn a "competency" score on the Algebra 1 and English II end-of-course tests.

Competency score is a 684.

State law requires districts to offer remedial support and opportunities to retake assessments to any student who fails to attain competency scores on one or both of the tests.

Competency Alternatives: Career Readiness, College Credit Plus, Military Enlistment, and Remediation-free ACT or SAT scores

alternatives such as Career Readiness through Ohio Means Jobs, college credit plus opportunities, military enlistment, and remediation-free ACT or SAT scores as replacements for that competency score.

The third component of Ohio's graduation requirements, which is probably the most convoluted, consists of students opportunities to demonstrate readiness in at least two areas resulting in awarded seals. Nine of the 12 seals are state-defined, and three – community service, fine and performing arts, and student engagement – are locally defined. In addition, students can demonstrate readiness through earning a 12-point industry-recognized credential, military



enlistment, successful completion of an honors diploma, proficiency in English and a second language, and/or proficiency on end-of-course exams in biology, US history, and American government.

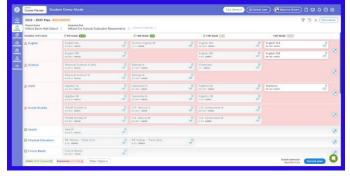
Locally-defined seals allow districts to recognize students' involvement in school-based opportunities and their communities. Participation in extracurricular clubs, service organizations, performing arts ensembles and productions, and accumulated community service hours can meet the requirements of these seals. It should be noted that students must demonstrate readiness in at least two areas and are required to attain at least one state-defined seal to be eligible for graduation.

New state law also requires all students beginning in ninth grade to develop and maintain a graduation plan that is meant to identify academic pathways that most appropriately support a learner's post-secondary aspirations. The student will develop this plan with support from school personnel and in

collaboration with parents and guardians. As students revisit these plans during subsequent school years and make any necessary revisions, the plan is designed to document progress and identify any areas of need so that schools and families can partner in support of every student without exception.

In addition, these plans are used to identify students who need to be on track to graduate with their cohort. So that targeted interventions can be put in place to ensure that all our students have access to responsive support toward meeting the graduation requirements.

Mr. Grantier showed a demo-student record in the SchooLinks platform (college and career-readiness application). We previously utilized a platform called Naviance. It's for career exploration. SchooLinks provides more functionality, especially around statemandated graduation planning.



So, all students in grades 6-12 have access to SchooLinks. Throughout that scope and

sequence, they experience a lot of different opportunities that allow them to explore and experience several post-secondary opportunities. In addition, this platform also allows us to utilize a course planner. So as students begin in future-ready, they can plan out what their four years of high school will look like in terms of the courses they will take to meet those specific graduation requirements. We have worked closely with SchooLinks to ensure that all our local and state requirements are built into this platform. It will notify students, counselors, teachers, and parents if students are off track during their four years. Students can also adjust their courses as needed throughout their school careers. In addition, school personnel has access, and parents can also view these graduation plans as well. On the summary page, we can see the graduation requirements the student completed by the green check marks.

In addition, we have the Ohio graduation planning side of SchooLinks, which will track competency and readiness. This is where state test scores will load in and check the English II and Algebra I competency boxes. Our demo student still needs to meet those requirements. Once there are multiple attempts, then some of these other options become available for students to demonstrate that competency. And then our readiness demonstrations again are those state- and locally-defined seals. As students complete these opportunities, that data is fed into SchooLinks, so we can look holistically at a student's 9-12 experience to ensure they're on track. And as I mentioned before, we can also do experience tracking. So, suppose we have students who are employed or engaged in community service hours or community service projects. Those opportunities can also be built here and contribute to their Ohio graduation plan.

In our transition to SchooLinks, our 9th-12th graders are currently scheduling for the next school year and completing their Ohio graduation plan in the course planner. They will revisit those plans each subsequent school year. We are also in the first round of our at-risk process. So again, state law requires that school districts identify students who are off track to graduate at any time after the first semester of their freshman year, notify their families, and identify necessary and targeted interventions for getting back on track toward graduation. We began the second round of notifications to parents and are working with counselors to devise student success plans and interventions.

The state has also recently changed the honors diploma requirements. So, we'll work under two different honors diplomas rules for the next three years. So, again, students can identify or utilize other criteria. And again, school counselors will work with students who fit those criteria to ensure they complete those honors diploma requirements before graduation.

Our next steps include ensuring equitable access to opportunities throughout the secondary experience and allowing students to explore post-secondary options such as college, career, the workforce, and the military. This includes increased access to college credit plus advanced placement and expanded access to industry-recognized credentialing opportunities in our academic settings.

We continue learning for school staff, families, and students about graduation requirements and the opportunities available to students both in and out of the classroom. Our graduation guidebook leads this, which is available to school principals and counselors. In addition, professional development and communication with building principals, school counselors, capstone coaches, and teachers' class meetings, consistent information shared through canvas courses, and looking forward to the opportunities to provide parents with ongoing updates regarding graduation requirements.

We have a continued focus on student engagement, so every student, without exception, has access to rigorous and relevant learning experiences throughout their secondary journey and the opportunity to develop the human skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly automated and interconnected global society.

And lastly, we are looking for opportunities of aligning, redesigning, or designing new opportunities, experiences, and partnerships that are informed by the state's college, career, workforce, and military readiness component, which at the earliest, will be a part of the school report card in the 24-25 school year.

At this point, I'd be happy to answer any questions.

Mrs. Long thanked Mr. Grantier for sharing this. Where does the seal information fed into the program come from, or how does it interact with everything? Mr. Grantier replied that it depends on the seal. For example, there is a verification process for the Ohio Means Jobs seal. The student can either upload their Ohio Means Jobs form, or a counselor or capstone coach leads a digital process to ensure students meet those requirements. If it is a seal that is dependent on an end-of-course exam or grade, those automatically feed into SchooLinks from eSchoolPlus. Finally, some local and state-defined seals require a staff member to sign off on the experience.

Mrs. Long then asked how many staff members were doing that work in the background. Mr. Grantier said SchooLinks handle the automated work for the seals, like Ohio Means Jobs, student engagement, and community service. Our school counselors, capstone coaches, and teacher leaders are training staff on the new platform. Still, we have individuals in each high school, the online academy, and the innovation campus who help with those verification processes.

Mrs. Long then asked if there would be any new seals or how we decide if there should be other seals. Mr. Grantier said that is determined by the state. They have not indicated that additional readiness seals will be rolled out or that the ones we have will be changed in any way. The biliteracy seal has existed for many years. And many of the other seals that came out of this revamp of the graduation process are in

the mold of that same idea. So, we anticipate everything will remain the same. We never know and will always be reactive and responsive if changes to the statewide requirements come our way.

Mrs. Murdoch said you talked about the plan for all incoming freshmen and asked how we handle all the kids in the transitional groups. Mr. Grantier replied that part of the onboarding process would be to get them into SchooLinks. Many of our students, like those who transfer in, will have to take the Future Ready course, and that's the first opportunity to build that graduation plan. After that, we have specific opportunities in grades 10, 11, and 12 to create a new plan for students who arrived after their freshman year or revisit the existing plan.

Mrs. Murdoch then asked if we had identified potential 12th-grade students that might be at risk given these new requirements. Mr. Grantier replied that these requirements had been in place for several years. So, the last two cohorts of students could either use the old or new graduation requirements. So, our counselors are familiar with this. We do have that at-risk notification process. So, we're working with those individual students; their families fill those gaps as best we can. Also, knowing that time is limited by the time the second semester of their senior year rolls around. So, sometimes that means a student might have to defer graduation if they have too much on their plate and are digging themselves out of the hole.

Mr. Perry also thanked Mr. Grantier for all the work on this presentation. This is this phenomenal stuff. He appreciates the ability to engage and interact with parents directly to know whether their child is on track. I know freshman students and their parents are involved in creating their high school plans, but is there a way to further engage them throughout their child's high school career? Mr. Grantier replied that Covid impacted our in-person parent connections. So, at the beginning of this school year, SchooLinks provided our middle and high school principals with some welcome information to help onboard parents. And we worked closely with our technology department to create a single sign-on so that the same login information parents use to get into canvas can also be used for SchooLinks.

Parents can see everything their kids see around the experiences they are going through in terms of the scope and sequence and if they're on track to graduate. So one of the significant benefits of SchooLinks is that it provides an additional layer of transparency and that parents feel like they are part of the conversation around their child's progress toward graduation. But, of course, we can always continue that communication with opportunities like Parent U or different opportunities available through the website to ensure that parents continue to have equitable access to information.

Mr. Perry asked if the district had a way to ensure parents actively participate because we know educational outcomes are based on the partnership between the district and parents. Even though access is available, not everyone will engage and use all the tools we provide. Mr. Grantier said that the at-risk notification process is our first step in engaging parents of students who are off track. But, I will admit that we can always do better in figuring out ways to engage our parents further and ensure they're a partner in their child's learning experience.

7. The Board of Education adopted the K-5 English Language Arts Curriculum resource.

Mr. Vorst asked the superintendent to give a brief synopsis of the resource and the cost. Mr. Stewart said we selected the Wit & Wisdom curriculum, costing approximately \$1.2 million. It comes with all the curriculum materials and the added benefit of parent resources. Teachers can send those resources to parents to let them know what students are studying.

Mr. Vorst thanked the superintendent and administration for the opportunity to review these materials. It was vital for me to see and feel what we were getting for the cost. He agrees that the parent guide is crucial. Parents genuinely appreciate all communication with them regarding new materials. He found all the historical references. Am I correct that this is not a reading, learning, phonics type of course but more of a supplemental course? Mr. Stewart replied that there are two components to the science of reading. One is the Core 95 program to teach reading skills (phonics). Wit &Wisdom will teach content knowledge and vocabulary (the second component of the science of reading).

Mr. Vorst asked if this was also designed to allow our students on IEPs to participate in regular class work. Mr. Stewart said yes. Another reason this curriculum was selected was because of how well it works with Core 95.

Mr. Vorst said he read a few books and was happy with the variety and interesting stories.

Mrs. Long also reviewed the materials and liked the consistency they will provide among the different schools. It will be helpful for students who may transfer from one school to another. Mrs. Long also thanked the administration for giving the space to review materials and answering all her questions.

Mr. Perry asked if we still retain some autonomy regarding age-appropriateness in the classroom. Mr. Stewart said yes, this does not replace the teacher. The teacher is still the most critical component of the learning experience. One of the conversations we had with the publisher was if they would swap out any materials we feel are inappropriate for our students. Their reply was yes.

Mrs. Murdoch asked for a summary of other programs there were considered and why this is the one that was selected. Mr. Stewart replied that we reviewed five different publishers. We had over 30 teachers broken out into grade-level teams. Each teacher reviewed the resource and then discussed it within their grade-level groups. Wit & Wisdom was the winner at every grade level due to the quality of the resource and how well it works with what teachers are already doing.

Mrs. Murdoch clarified that although Wit & Wisdom offers this resource for grades K-8, we are adopting it for grades K-5. Mr. Stewart said that was correct. The adoption process for a resource for grades 6-12 will not be as complex.

Mr. Vorst asked if the cost of this program is in line with other programs. Mr. Stewart said yes.

Mrs. Murdoch read the following statement: This is one of the most important decisions we as a board will make. We're committing to a sizable investment, and I want to make it very clear that we are not taking this vote without significant research, thought, and consideration. We received feedback from almost 50 community members. And I hope the brief discussion we held before this vote answers any of the concerns that we may have read in that feedback. And overwhelmingly, the community was for this. So, I'm very happy to be able to adopt this curriculum.

8. The Board of Education considered the appeal of the request for reconsideration of materials: *Looking for Alaska*.

Mr. Stewart stated that to have an action taken, we'll need someone to make a motion for a specific action step.

Mrs. Crowley motioned, and Mr. Perry seconded to accept the recommendation of the review committee, and the superintendent can continue to provide parents with the option to prohibit their children from being allowed to check out the challenged book for our current district policies.

Mrs. Murdoch asked how additional motions and discussions could be had since there are three options. Mr. Wilson replied that you could have your conversation now and potentially discuss another option, but we will need to have the roll call on that motion at some point.

Mr. Vorst asked if we vote on whether to do something and if the vote is to do nothing, we move on. Mrs. Crowley said my motion was to accept the recommendation of the review committee and the superintendent and continue to provide parents with the option to prohibit their children from being allowed to check out the challenged book per our current district policies. So, you can discuss whatever you want, but then we'll vote on the present motion. If the current motion does not pass, another motion could be made.

Mrs. Murdoch said she had reservations about the book being in the middle school since the publisher and the National Council of Teachers of English noted that this should be a 9-12 book. However, Common Sense Media recommended it for students aged 16 and up, which would fall squarely in our high schools.

Mr. Vorst said he shared similar concerns. Common Sense Media, American Library Association, and Penguin Distributors recommended the book for students aged 14 and up. This book is in one of our middle schools and all three high schools. So, we're potentially having it available to students as young as 11 and 12. He read the book and understands the appeal to a teenager. It's a coming-of-age story about someone trying to find themselves, and they have a life event where they move to a different area and have to develop new friends and go through that teenage angst most of us are familiar with and maybe went through.

As the father of a 10-year-old, I'm not comfortable with her having access to something like this in two years. I think we have a duty to ensure that everything we provide to our kids is age appropriate. I fully respect the rights of parents and everyone else to do whatever they want at home. And we all know that we have no say or control, nor should we, over what kids do on their phones or iPads at home or watch on Netflix. My opinion is based on my feeling about a book with a fairly graphic sex scene. Even though it's only a brief part of the book, I don't feel comfortable providing access to this to kids of that age. So, my recommendation would be to keep it in the high schools. I will note that the committee that voted on this was a three to two vote, so there was some disagreement amongst the committee members as well. It was a difficult decision. I respect their hard work, but that's where I have this.

Mr. Perry stated that he understood that point. If it were my child, I would have them not read this in middle school. I'd have them read it in high school. But I need to decide based on what I would do for my child. I must choose based on what a parent can do for their child. I'm a little squeamish anytime we override a committee to suggest that a parent can't make that choice for their child. I get squeamish telling an eighth grader's parent that they can no longer access this book and could restrict themselves. For me, this is a parent's choice. So, we're essentially an appellate court at this point. There's a concept in the law of a closed question. When the previous decision could have gone either way or reasonable

minds could have gone either way, you let it stand unless you have a darn good reason to change it. And the reality is that we have parents who say this is fine, and we have parents who say this is not. Parents can go either way, but that's ultimately the parent's decision. I'd be more okay with delaying access to high school students, but again it's a parent's decision.

Mrs. Crowley added that her motion allows parents to prohibit their children from checking out this book. She agrees with Brian that this is a parent's choice.

Mr. Perry added that, interestingly, this board action would codify parental choice in the library, which hasn't been done before. Before now, it's been an administrative decision. Mr. Vorst asked if this would be true for all challenged books. Mr. Perry replied that it would be true for this particular book but would like to ensure it's codified so parents can choose any book in the library.

Mr. Vorst asked if there was a warning on the outside of the book about it containing graphic content. So potentially, a kid could bring this book home, and parents could see that the kid's reading it and not think anything of it. I like the program that we have where you select books that you don't want your child to have access to. And I respect what you're saying. I think that's a good point. I'm glad we have that. And I don't think we are in a position where we would want to go away from that in the future. But I wouldn't say I like the idea that we should expect parents to know what's in every book in every library because nobody has that ability. And I hope that's something we can work towards in the future.

Nevertheless, I talked about this with my wife. If this book was a movie and we put it in the school library and allowed kids the option to watch it in the library, would that be appropriate? And I didn't think it was. I figured it would be a rated-R movie. And I don't feel that is an appropriate offering for seventh and eighth graders. And there's a presumption that when the school offers you something, it's safe and appropriate. So this is part of that due diligence, what we're all doing right now, along with what our IDC directors and our programs and policies that are in place take care of. So that's where I'm at with this, and it's not an easy call either way. I don't know about you guys, but I don't feel in love with having to make this decision because I think both sides have valid points. But I have to vote with my gut and say what I think is best for our kids.

Mr. Perry agreed with Mr. Vorst on most of what he said. It's just that when you talk about safe and appropriate – safe and appropriate for who? We have someone who said that Romeo and Juliet was abhorrent. It was against their faith. So it was not safe and appropriate. It has sex in it. Maybe not as graphic as this book, but maybe it is to some. And that's where I run to this line where we start making these decisions of what's safe and appropriate.

Mr. Vorst added that the line is subjective. If all five of us got a hundred different books and put them on one side of the line...Mrs. Crowley said that's why she errs on parent choice. Parents can choose whether their child can or cannot read a book. Once the book is already there, you need a good reason to take it away. I read the committee's report. It's incredibly thorough, and they did a great job. And even though it was a split vote, they decided to move forward with it in all areas.

Mrs. Long asked for the expertise areas of those on the committee. I don't want you to identify them by name, just their expertise. Mr. Stewart said there was an administrator, a board member, two media specialists, and two teachers from that content area. Mrs. Crowley added that all were very professional and wonderful people.

Mr. Vorst asked for the motion to be restated. Mr. Stewart said Kara's motion was to uphold the committee's decision and the superintendent's recommendation. And to give parents the right to deny access to their children to this book. Mr. Vorst then said, so, if this passes, the appeal is denied, and if it doesn't pass, we will vote on whether to keep it. Mr. Stewart replied that another motion would need to be made if the current motion failed.

Mrs. Long asked if it was toward the end of the year when parents were given the opportunity to opt out of library books. Mr. Stewart said it was discussed at a December board meeting and rolled out at the beginning of 2023. Mrs. Long asked how much activity there had been on the opt-out. Mr. Stewart said he didn't have a firm number, but it wasn't many. Mrs. Long asked if those were parents of elementary, middle school, or high school students. Mr. Stewart replied that they were primarily elementary parents.

Mr. Perry asked if those elementary parents want to restrict elementary books or books they will access in middle or high school. Mr. Stewart said that he didn't have that information.

Mrs. Long asked if this was the first time the district had given parents this opportunity. Mr. Stewart said he doesn't believe the district had a process in place before now. There had been individual conversations with parents in the past. However, this is the first formal process they can access anytime. Based on this response, Mrs. Long noted that we continuously improve our practices in understanding our parents' needs. And this isn't the end of the continuous improvement piece because the policy committee has looked at these policies, and I know they're up for second reading this evening. She thinks this board has a huge commitment to support and ensure we have the right stuff. And then I also understand that in September, we adopted criteria for K-12 for the IDCs to follow when purchasing books. Mr. Stewart said that was a year ago, but we put a process in place and trained the IDCs on it multiple times. Mrs. Long said so, we are continuing to improve as a district.

Mrs. Long also thanked everyone on the committee for their time and work.

Mr. Stewart confirmed a link on each building's website for parents to opt out or restrict certain books. Books can be restricted by title only, but parents can search by keywords and genre. Mr. Vorst said that if that process was more thorough and better understood by parents, he might feel differently about this appeal.

Mrs. Long stated she wanted to ensure that the district understands that this vote comes with the understanding that we will continuously improve. What we have rolled out already is good, but we can continue to improve because parents need to be part of what their children have in their backpacks to read.

- 9. Policies submitted for a second reading:
 - a. IIAC Media/Resource Materials Selection and Adoption
 - b. IIAC-E Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Media/Curriculum Materials (New)
 - c. KLB Public Complaints About the Curriculum or Instructional Materials
 - d. KLB-E Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library/Curriculum Materials (Rescind)

Mrs. Murdoch said that as these policies are currently and the proposed changes in front of us tonight, it will take eight years to get through all the books that have been challenged. So therefore, we should

send this back to the policy committee to see if they can create a better, more timely process. Mr. Stewart agreed with that and said he had contacted the district's attorney to begin that work.

Mr. Perry added that two board members could bring this back to the policy committee. Still, he would like to see some form of quantifying the ability for parents to restrict each book in the library that they don't want their child to access. He thinks it should be in policy that we will grant the parents the right to do that for their child.

Mrs. Long said the policy committee spent an entire meeting on these two policies, so she would like feedback from other board members to return to the policy committee.

Mr. Perry said you mentioned a way for the committee...(inaudible)... there are three different options, and you could end up with a split vote (2-2-1) which would be a tie. He believes it can be fixed by having two different votes. One vote to change the current status from where it is, yes or no. And if the answer is yes, remove it entirely. He thinks that would end there ever being a tie. Does that make any sense?

Mrs. Long said we still have three choices and five people. Mr. Perry said you would have two choices. First, do something with the book, yes or no? Change it or not. If it's not, it says where it is. If the answer is yes, go to part two, which is to move the book from where it's currently located (from middle to high, whatever) or remove it entirely. That way, you only ever have yes or no, can't tie, and then move or remove, can't tie.

Mr. Stewart said that if the board wishes we take another stab at it, we will go back to the drawing board.

Mrs. Murdoch would like to see a way to include the community on that book review committee. Mrs. Crowley asked her if she had any ideas on how to select community members. Mrs. Murdoch replied that some groups had taken applications and then randomly selected from those applications. She doesn't have a strong opinion one way or another.

Mrs. Murdoch would like to the timeframe to be reviewed and shortened....90 days per book gets us to eight years.

Mr. Perry agrees that the timeframe needs to be faster, but are we committing our administrators to power through books day in and day out? Because if we're expecting them to go through 35 books per window, they're not doing anything else. Mrs. Murdoch thinks there's a happy medium between eight years and 90 days...you can have multiple committees. There are lots of ways to figure that one out.

Mr. Vorst thinks community involvement, particularly with the complainant, is important, so they can share their concerns with the committee. Mrs. Crowley said that they did get to that in writing. Mr. Vorst said yes, all the complaints were filed in writing. He believes you can get a better understanding by engaging those folks in the process.

- 10. At 7:27 p.m., the Board of Education caucused to executive session:
 - a. To prepare for conducting or reviewing negotiations or bargaining sessions with public employees.
 - b. To consider the investigation of complaints against a public employee.
 - c. Negotiations with other political subdivisions respecting requests for economic development assistance.