



Board of Education

Minutes

The Board of Education

A Called School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of was held Monday, March 8, 2021, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg B., 3205 Jenny Lind Road and virtually per CDC guidelines.

Mr. Hanesworth, president, called the meeting to order. Other board members present were Ms. Susan McFerran, Ms. Talicia Richardson, Mr. Dalton Person, Ms. Yvonne Keaton-Martin, Ms. Dee Blackwell and Mr. Wade Gilkey. Dr. Terry Morawski, Superintendent, Mr. Martin Mahan, Deputy Superintendent, Ms. Sherri Penix, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Campus Support, Mr. Charles Warren, Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Darian Layes, Executive Director of Student Services, Mr. Vance Gregory, Executive Director of Technology, Ms. Zena Featherston Marshall, Executive Director of Communication and Community Partnerships, and Ms. Nadine Brooks, Secretary to the Superintendent were also present.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski reported that a committee met to study prom and graduation options. Data from a survey of 728 students and parents has been collected. Dr. Morawski stated that he expected to have further guidelines from the State and City as well.

Dr. Morawski reported that the bond refinancing did not meet market expectations and Stephens Inc. advised the District not to go forward at this time.

Dr. Morawski stated that the District had consulted with the Sebastian County Election Commission and the plan is to hold early voting at the Sebastian County Courthouse with several election sites available on May 18 Election Day.

Dr. Morawski reported that upcoming board meetings would include a presentation on mental health since May is Mental Health Awareness Month, an HPM Budget Presentation, Grade Reconfiguration and Policy Updates.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CALENDAR OPTIONS FOR 2022-2023 (AMENDED)

Ms. Penix presented an amendment to the 2022/2023 calendar to reflect the change in graduation dates for Northside High School and Southside High School. The graduation dates alternate each year so this indicates the change from the 2021-2022 school year calendar.

The administration recommended the Board of Education approve the 2022-2023 calendar with the amended changes to the graduation dates.

Ms. McFerran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, to approve the 2022-2023 calendar with the amended changes to the graduation dates as presented. The vote passed 7/0.

CONSIDER AUTHORIZATION OF THE SALE OR DISPOSAL OF COMMODITIES

Mr. Warren submitted two additional commodities (supplemental listed below) to be added to the previous list for the general public auction on March 18, 2021.

Truck M-3	1994 Chevy ½ ton truck	VIN 1GCEC14ZXSZ250209
Forklift 1961	Hyster 30 Model# S30XL	Serial: B010B02741E

Ms. Richardson asked with COVID restrictions if there would be a virtual auction as well. Mr. Warren stated that he would not know this until a later date.

The Administration recommended the Board consider authorizing the sale or disposal of the listed commodities. Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to authorize the sale or disposal of commodities as listed. The vote passed 7/0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE SUBMISSION OF AN INTENT TO APPLY FOR AN ARKANSAS PUBLIC CHARTER LICENSE

Mr. Mahan stated that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will continue to allow and regulation waivers for the virtual option to continue during the 2021-22 school year.

The district would like to begin the application process of pursuing a charter school license. Submitting an application is necessary to pursue a charter license that would allow for the necessary waivers needed to create a Virtual Option Conversion Charter School.

Dr. Hall presented the application process indicating that the District would like to apply for Conversion Charter School. The school would have its own LEA. The District would transition from a virtual option to a virtual school or academy. The goal would be to meet the needs of the diverse population. The school could offer an option for home schooled, medically fragile, accelerated learning or other circumstances that do not give students an opportunity for success at a traditional school. Dr. Hall reviewed the timeline beginning with the intent to apply due on April 19 and the charter school opening in August of 2022.

Dr. Hall stated that teachers and staff would be housed at the Peak Innovation Center. Several charter schools throughout the state were reviewed as models. Fayetteville and Van Buren were looked at more in depth. The curriculum would be the Fort Smith Public Schools.

After discussion, Mr. Gilkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, to approve the submission of the Notice of Intent to Apply for an Arkansas Public Charter School License document to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The vote passed 7/0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION FOR DIGITAL LEARNING PROGRAMS

Mr. Mahan stated that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will continue to allow standards and regulation waivers for the virtual option to continue during the 2021-22 school year. Districts are required to submit an application to DESE to continue the digital learning program (virtual option) for the 2021-22 school year.

Dr. Samantha Hall presented the options for Districts with the State's specific criteria. The District is intending to use the Pearson Connexus Platform for one more year. Dr. Hall stated that this application is due by May 1 but districts have been asked to submit the application as soon as possible.

Ms. Richardson inquired about protecting teachers' materials that they have personally prepared. Dr. Hall was not aware if Pearson could access it directly but would check. Mr. Mahan referenced that some material used was a collaboration of several teachers from initial preparation for digital learning.

Mr. Person asked if at some point policies will be revised specifically for digital learning. Dr. Hall and Mr. Mahan stated that they had begun to work on policies relative to digital learning.

After discussion, Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Keaton-Martin, to approve the submission of the application for the digital learning programs to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The vote passed 7/0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF FORT SMITH FOR SKOKOS FIELD AT KELLEY PARK BALLFIELDS.

Mr. Person recused himself from this discussion and vote.

Mr. Mahan stated that with the installation of the artificial turf at the Kelly Park Ballfields, the Southside High Schools Girls' Softball Team began utilizing Skokos Field for practices. The team has been utilizing Skokos Field since February 1, 2021. The city has been working with the Fort Smith Public Schools and the Fort Smith Church Baseball League to prepare a lease agreement that would allow the continued use of the fields by both parties.

Mr. Mahan stated that the District has been released from its current contract with Hunts Field. He reported that the fees are the same as current fees.

Mr. Gilkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the Fort Smith Public Schools to enter into an agreement with the City of Fort Smith to lease Skokos Field at Kelley Park Ballfields. The vote passed 6/0.

Mr. Person returned to the meeting.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE RECOMMENDATION OF A FREQUENCY CHANNELS
BROKER/AGENT SERVICES**

Mr. Mahan reported that several broker/agent services had reached out to the District about representing the District in selling these frequency channels. He yielded to Mr. Gregory to present this item.

Mr. Gregory presented an overview of the District's Educational Broadcast Service (EBS) frequency channels. He explained that this type of broadband is not like what an internet provider such as Cox would provide. In 1963 the FCC gave school districts a license for specific channels on radio waves to deliver educational content. This gave districts the opportunity to deliver broadcast for live tv and pre-recorded educational content. These channels were specific to a geographical region. In the 80's Districts were allowed to lease 95% of these channels if they wanted to. Fort Smith Public Schools is one of two schools that has not leased or sold their channels and has full ownership. In the 90s and into the 2000's, the FCC requested proof that the District is using these channels and the District provided this. In January of 2021 the District issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to pursue leasing or selling these frequency channels. The District received responses from three Broker/Agents. These vendors were scored in several categories. Select Spectrum was the highest scoring vendor. Mr. Gregory explained that the District is not locked into selling but these frequencies could be valuable to wireless companies. It is not cost effective to use these frequencies for internet service to be provided to students but the sale of these could allow negotiation for internet access.

After discussion, Ms. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Ms. McFerran, to approve the district to partner with Select Spectrum in order to promote the sale of the district's channels within the EBS frequency spectrum. The vote passed 7/0.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms. Penix reported that several recommendations for employment were presented this evening. She made reference to the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction position. This position was formerly held by Mr. Marty Mahan.

Ms. Keaton-Martin made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the professional staff recommendations as presented. The vote passed 7/0.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

Mr. Gilkey asked that the administration provide answers to students and parents regarding graduation and prom in the next few weeks.

Ms. Richardson stated that the city has recently passed new mandates as well and there is a lot of planning that goes into providing events.

The District will still have to follow mandates and guidelines from the State and City.

Mr. Person asked if the mask mandate and other COVID related measures are still in effect. Dr. Morawski stated that these measures are still in place.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Bill Hanesworth, President

Dee Blackwell, Secretary