



## Board of Education

Minutes of  
The Board of Education

A Regular School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held Monday, September 25, 2023, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg. B, Auditorium, 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

Mr. Person, president, called the meeting to order noting seven board members were present. Other board members present were: Ms. Talicia Richardson, Mr. Phil Whiteaker, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Ms. Sandy Dixon and Ms. Susan Krafft. Mr. Matt Blaylock joined via Zoom. District administrators present included: Dr. Terry Morawski, Superintendent; Mr. Martin Mahan, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Chris Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Campus Support; Dr. Tiffany Bone, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; Mr. Charles Warren, Chief Financial Officer; Dr. Michael Farrell, Executive Director of Student Services, Mr. Vance Gregory, Director of Technology; Mr. Shawn Shaffer, Executive Director of Facility Operations; Ms. Zena Featherston Marshall, Executive Director, Community & Business Partnerships; Ms. Shari Cooper, Director, Communications; and Ms. Leslie Phelps, Office Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. Mr. Marshall Ney of Friday, Eldridge, and Clark, District Attorney was also in attendance via Zoom.

### RECOGNITIONS

Ms. Cooper presented the following recognitions:

#### September Superintendent Star Awards

ZyKhree Barber – Trusty Elementary  
Trinity Butler – Howard Elementary  
Ava Castro – Park Elementary  
LaShaunda Criswell – Tilles Elementary  
Mirian Gomez Arevalo – Sutton Elementary  
Nya Jabbour – Fairview Elementary  
Malachi Lee – Spradling Elementary  
Zoe Shook – Sunnymede Elementary  
Jason Smith – Morrison Elementary

Sutton Elementary was recognized for achieving Level I certification for High Reliability Schools.

The following employees earned the designation of having great attendance in all four quarters of the 2022-2023 school year:

Katie Becker  
Rebecca Blalock  
Izabelle Bullington  
Tiffany Bush  
Alina Choung  
Brad Duplantis  
Richard Ehlen  
David King  
Heather Kushner

Meredith McGary  
Michael Moss  
Sherry Riggins

### **ENERGY STAR AWARDS**

Mr. Shawn Shaffer recognized Fort Smith Public Schools buildings that earned the ENERGY STAR Certification. They include Barling, Beard, Bonneville, Carnall, Cavanaugh, Cook, Euper Lane, Fairview, Howard, Morrison, Orr, Park, Spradling, Sunnymede, Sutton, Tilles, Woods, Chaffin, Ramsey, Northside and Southside. To earn ENERGY STAR Certification, buildings must rate in the top 25 percent nationwide for energy efficiency.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Morawski updated the board on a couple of key events. The annual Chamber of Commerce meeting will be held on Thursday, October 12 at 11:30 at the Fort Smith Convention Center. The Peak Innovation Center dedication ceremony will also be on Thursday, October 12 at 2:00. The next regular scheduled meeting will be on Monday, October 25, 2023. The November regular board meeting will be on Monday, November 13, 2023. The Arkansas School Board Association Annual Conference will be held in Little Rock on December 6-8, 2023.

Dr. Morawski reported current student enrollment is down 207 students from the same time last year. If this number holds, a reduction in state funding would result in about \$1.5 million. Currently, the state supplements those losses for one year at one-half of the total amount.

There will be a demographic update at the October board meeting, which will look at the potential of zoning changes and enrollment numbers.

The first meeting of the long range facility committee was held on September 19, 2023. This group is composed of parents, business and community leaders, and district staff. The committee will be studying demographics, enrollment, zoning, and school utilization. The committee will make recommendations at the April board meeting.

The board of education participated in training held at the UAFS Center of Economic Development at The Bakery District. Future dates are being planned for additional training sessions.

Dr. Morawski reported that health insurance rates for employees went down.

Dr. Morawski's Good Things Going on in the District included: Northside and Southside yearbooks were inducted into the Gallery of Excellence by Woolsworth Yearbooks; Mr. Reed and the Fairview Elementary Choir sang at a Naturals game; Three Southside High School students were named National Merit semi-finalists; Southside cross country boys and girls teams placed first in the Fort Smith Invitational; Northside High School JROTC participated in the 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb at the University of Arkansas; Southside High School was ranked in the top 40% in the nation by the US News for best high schools; the school based health center held its first ever celebration for Community Connections event; Baptist Health and the Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for the new health science academy classrooms.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda included the August Financial Statement, July 17 and August 28 Minutes, September Professional Staff Recommendations, September Student Services Report, and the Superintendent as Ex-Officio Financial Secretary.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dixon, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The vote passed 7-0.

#### **PRESENTATION – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Dr. Bone discussed the purpose of state assessments for each grade. The assessments for kindergarten – second grade show where students are at in the beginning of the school year as well as where intervention may need to take place.

Dr. Bone shared the advanced placement scores from the 2022-2023 school year. Dr. Bone stated that the percentage of students enrolling in advanced placement exams have increased as well as the number of students enrolling in concurrent credit.

#### **THIRD PARTY REVIEW UPDATE**

Mr. Person gave an overview of the third party review process: in June the board decided to proceed with a request for qualification for a third party review into the Peak drainage failures. This request was posted on the district website, the local newspaper, and the Bonfire portal. Through these processes, no responses were received. Three potential parties were contacted directly about interest in this review. They are: Gilbane Assessment and Consulting, Envista Services, and FTN. Mr. Person informed the board of the scope, timeline, and cost of the review for each of the three companies.

Ms. Richardson asked where the money to pay for the review would come from. Dr. Morawski and Mr. Warren confirmed it would come from the capital projects fund.

After discussion, Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blaylock, to entertain conversation with Envista Services. In those conversations agree on a monetary amount for initial services, and Mr. Tecmire to aid in the coordinating process.

Mr. Chitwood questioned if a price range needed to be stated in the motion or to leave it open.

Mr. Person stated a temporary cap would not be exceeded in the next month. Mr. Person proposed a range of \$25,000 - \$50,000 for that cap but it could be decided at the next board meeting.

The vote passed 6-0-1 with Ms. Richardson abstaining.

Mr. Warren reiterated these expenditures would come from a funding source that would not include mileage or taxpayer related money. This source includes rebates, recoveries, and interest earnings.

#### **PRESENTATION - DISTRICT CONSTRUCTION UPDATE**

Mr. Velasquez invited each of the various team construction managers to present an update to their projects going on in the district.

Max Middleton with C.R. Crawford updated the board on projects they have been working on. Kimmons Middle School cafeteria included a 7,000 square foot expansion. The target substantial completion date is March 2024. Construction on the security upgrade on the main entrance has begun. The units at Kimmons for the indoor air quality project are set and functioning. The Ballman Elementary indoor air quality included a demolition and reinstall of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning as well as asbestos abatement. The target date for Ballman students to be back on site is mid to late October. The substantial completion date, including the auditorium, is early November.

Kelly Wilson with Beshears Construction reported on the work at the Morrison Elementary classroom addition as well as the Southside, Park, and Darby indoor air quality projects. The Morrison Elementary includes a 12,000 square foot addition, which includes 10 classrooms. It is scheduled to be substantially complete in the spring 2024. The Southside High School and Park Elementary air quality projects are installed and controls are functional. The Darby Middle School air quality project expects the units to arrive in October.

Robert Wiggins with Nabholz Construction reported on the indoor air quality projects at Fairview Elementary and Northside High School. At Fairview, 22 new rooftop units are installed and all systems are fully functional. Northside High School received an installation of a new variable refrigerant flow system to eliminate the boiler system. This project is complete and commissioned. Delivery of roof top units are forecast to arrive in November. The final design for the School Based Health Clinic has been completed and the total construction cost estimate is \$2.3 million. Nabolz is reviewing options to bring down this cost.

David McWilliams with Clark Contractors reported to the board that the Chaffin Middle School indoor air quality units are installed and operational. Ramsey Middle School indoor air quality projects included three rooftop units. Two of those units are functional; the third unit has a bad control board and will be replaced mid-October. These projects were completed on time and under budget. The Sutton Elementary and Euper Lane Elementary indoor air quality units are all installed and operational. The classrooms for the Health Science Academy at Baptist and Mercy were both completed on time and within budget. The child nutrition freezer upgrade is scheduled to start in mid-October and estimated duration is five and half months.

Nate Deason updated the board on the work MAHG Architecture is working on at Ramsey Middle School and PEAK Innovation Center. MAHG is working on the Ramsey rehabilitation. Replacement of flooring, ceilings, light fixtures, and doors in the orchestra room, band room, and choral room are being done. This work should be complete in November. MAHG is working on solutions at PEAK to replace roof drains and reworking the underground piping of those roof drains. The Peak Center art space should be complete by the end of November.

Kennan Young and Brandon Rakestraw gave an overview of the roofing work to Beard Elementary and Kimmons Middle School. The Beard Elementary project is complete and Kimmons Middle School is expected to begin in November 2023. The Kimmons project will be a night project to minimize any impact to the students.

Randy Ragsdale with Lewis Architects reported the theater curtains at Southside High School are installed and functioning. The house lights will be installed mid-November and stage lighting will be installed in December.

Mr. Velasquez informed the board that the School Based Health Clinic is currently over allocated funds. Originally, \$1.2 million dollars were allocated for this project but the new projected cost is \$2.3 million. Mr. Velasquez recommended to keep moving forward with this project to avoid any loss of ESSER funds. The board was in agreement to proceed with this project.

This was an information item and no recommendation is required.

**CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE SALE AND DISPOSAL OF FIXED ASSETS**

Mr. Warren presented the Board with a list of buses for authorization to sell or dispose of as surplus commodities.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteaker, to authorize the sale and disposal of commodities as listed.

The vote passed 7-0.

**BOARD MEMBERS FORUM**

The next regular school board meeting will be Monday, October 23, 2023.

Ms. Richardson thanked the students at Peak for cutting out plywood Christmas trees for the students of Fort Smith Public Schools to paint and place in Cisterna Park during the holidays.

Mr. Blaylock stated that he felt the board training conducted earlier this month was beneficial and looked forward to future trainings.

**ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 PM.

---

President, Board of Education

---

Secretary, Board of Education