



## 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 Thursday, November 21, 2024, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg. B, Auditorium, 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Dalton Person, president, called the meeting to order noting seven board members were present. Other board members present were: Mr. Phil Whiteaker, Mr. Matt Blaylock, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Ms. Susan Krafft, Ms. Lynnett Lott, and Ms. Talicia Richardson. 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 of Curriculum and Instruction; Mr. Charles Warren, Chief Financial Officer; Dr. Michael Farrell, Executive Director of Student Services; Mr. Shawn Shaffer, Executive Director of Facility Operations; Mr. Vance Gregory, Director of Technology; Ms. Zena Featherston Marshall, Executive Director, Community & Business Partnerships; 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**

Mr. Mahan presented the following recognitions:

School board members Mr. Blaylock, Mr. Chitwood, Mr. Person, and Mr. Whiteaker were recognized for achieving their Outstanding Board Member certificate. This award is earned by completing at least 25 hours of in-service credit and is recognized by the Arkansas School Boards Association.

Ms. Marsha Hash from the Office of Innovation of Education recognized Darby Middle School, Southside High School, and Peak Innovation Center for earning the School of Innovation distinction.

### **CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION**

None.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Morawski informed the board of several key events: The Thanksgiving break for students and all staff is November 25-29, 2024; the December regular scheduled board meeting will be Monday, December 16, 2024; the Adult Education graduation will be December 17, 2024 at the Peak Innovation Center; the winter break for students will be December 23, 2024 through January 6, 2025; students and all staff will be dismissed for Martin Luther King, Jr day on January 20, 2025; and a regularly scheduled school board meeting will be held on January 27, 2025.

Dr. Morawski reported positive feedback has been received regarding the phone free pilot at Ramsey Middle School and Kimmons Middle School. Dr. Morawski stated that both schools have reported a drop in suspension percentages as compared to last year. The District will continue to monitor this process.

Dr. Morawski stated that the 2025 school board election will be held on May 13, 2025 with two At-Large positions on the ballot. Any interested candidates can begin collecting signatures on December 2, 2024. The candidate filing period begins February 24, 2025 at noon and closes March 3, 2025 at noon.

Dr. Morawski reported that Mr. Mahan, Dr. Minton, and he visited Luke Air Force Base in Phoenix, Arizona to learn about how their education community served the international and US Air Force families. This is in connection to the Foreign Military Sales Project coming to Fort Smith.

Dr. Morawski's Good Things Going on in the District included: Southside High School Red Shoe Club received the Youth Philanthropy Group Award from the Ronald McDonald House Charities; the JROTC Female Raider Team competed at the Raider Nationals in Fort Knox, Kentucky; Child nutrition managers Medina Amor, Pamela Cravens, Tiffany Griffin, and Maria Cardona earned their State Manager Certification; the Superintendent's Advisory Council packed 500 meals for the Community Services Clearinghouse and wrote Thanksgiving cards to residents of local nursing facilities through Project Compassion; the students in the Adult Education Center's Residential Construction Apprentice Program and the Peak Innovation Center's Construction Technology Program built a Santa house for the Fort Smith Ice Rink; a special thank you to custodians Bo Deaton, James Hillian, and Southside High School custodians Candy, Curtis, and Joseph for their work during the recent flooding at Orr Elementary; the new Fort Smith Public Schools website was launched on November 18, 2025.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda included the October Financial Report, October 28 Minutes, November Professional Staff Recommendations, October Student Services Report, Revision to Licensed Personnel Policies, and a Revision to Classified Personnel Policies.

Mr. Person requested that item number 8.6, Consider Revision to Classified Personnel Policies, be removed for individual consideration. Mr. Person has a family member that is a classified employee of the District.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteaker, to approve the consent agenda with the exception of Revision to Classified Personnel Policies. The vote passed 7-0.

Mr. Person recused himself from this agenda item at 5:48 PM.

Mr. Whiteaker, Vice President, entertained a motion to approve item number 8.6, Consider Revision to Classified Personnel Policies.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chitwood, to approve the consent agenda item 8.6, Consider Revision to Classified Personnel Policies. The vote passed 6-0.

Note: Mr. Person returned to the meeting at 5:49 PM.

#### **CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE SALE AND DISPOSAL OF COMMODITIES**

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. Chitwood, to authorize the sale or disposal of commodities as listed. The vote passed 7-0.

**CONSIDER APPROVING ATTENDANCE ZONE CHANGES TO BALLMAN, COOK, AND FAIRVIEW ELEMENTARY**

Mr. Mahan presented to the board three boundary adjustment proposals:

Proposal A would take the current southeast section of the Orr Elementary boundary, approximately 99 students, and move the students to Cook Elementary. The remaining students would attend Fairview Elementary. This proposal would put Fairview Elementary enrollment at approximately 702 students. Mr. Mahan stated more services like Office Administrative Assistants, art, music, and physical education support would be needed at Fairview Elementary with this proposal to service that amount of students.

Proposal B would increase Fairview Elementary population to approximately 614 students and Ballman Elementary would increase to 392 students. This proposal would adjust zones to right size elementary schools and increase building utilization percentages.

Proposal C recommends sending a portion of the Fairview Elementary students to Ballman Elementary. This proposal would put Ballman Elementary at 436 students or 84% capacity, which raises concerns with cafeteria and restrooms capacity.

Mr. Mahan informed the Board any of the three proposed elementary boundary adjustments will not impact the middle school or secondary zones.

Mr. Mahan stated Proposal B is the recommended proposal due to right sizing the classrooms to 600 students and reaching an 80% capacity at the buildings without being too over populated.

After discussion, Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Krafft, to approve the elementary boundary Proposal B as presented. The vote passed 4-3 with Mr. Blaylock, Mr. Person, and Mr. Blaylock opposing.

**PRESENTATION – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT – CONSIDER APPROVING THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Note: Ms. Richardson left the meeting at 6:33 PM.

Dr. Cohen Minton presented the school improvement plans. Each site has their own individual school plan that includes the same district goals.

Mr. Chitwood made a motion, seconded by Ms. Krafft, to approve the school improvement plans for the 2024-2025 school year. The vote passed 6-0.

**BOARD MEMBERS FORUM**

The next regular board meeting will be Monday, December 16, 2024.

Mr. Chitwood asked about a timeline on updates to the implementation of transportation plans in regards to the approval of attendance zones for Fairview Elementary and Ballman Elementary. Dr. Morawski answered it would be the early part of the next calendar year.

Mr. Blaylock requested reviewing the possibility of raising the price on adult tickets to athletic events. Mr. Blaylock also requested the amount of time per week that principals are away from their campuses

for administration meetings as well as how much time per week executive administrators spend on the campuses.

Mr. Person expressed his appreciation to a couple of long-standing administrators that are retiring in December.

**ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 6:42 PM.

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Dalton Person, President

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Davin Chitwood, Secretary