



## Board of Education

Minutes of Called School Board Meeting  
The Board of Education

A Called School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held August 10, 2020, beginning at 5:30 PM virtually and in the Service Center, Bldg. B, 3205 Jenny Lind Road, per COVID-19 CDC guidelines.

Bill Hanesworth, president, called the meeting to order. Other board members present were Ms. Talicia Richardson, Mr. Dalton Person, Ms. Yvonne Keaton-Martin, Ms. Dee Blackwell, Mr. Wade Gilkey, and Ms. Susan McFerran. Dr. Doug Brubaker, Superintendent; Dr. Terry Morawski, Deputy Superintendent; Mr. Martin Mahan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; 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.

A moment of silence was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda included: the August 10 Professional Staff Recommendations and August 10 Student Services Report.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilkey, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The vote passed 7/0.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Brubaker reported that upcoming board meeting dates are set for August 24 and September 14.

Dr. Brubaker provided a COVID-19 update for the Board.

The District had 75 COVID related potential cases tracked in the last month. Nurse Tracy Mathis, District Point of Contact, has worked with Arkansas Department of Health and the District had 48 staff and students quarantined during this time.

22% of students are enrolled in virtual learning at this date. Kindergarten registration is down by about 100 students from last year at this time.

Northside High School Student and Cadet Tina Tran has received a \$10,000 scholarship and laptop from the National Veteran Business Development Council's Annual Scholarship Program. She is the only recipient in the State.

High School principals are working on creating block scheduling to reduce transitioning during the school day.

Class sizing will be pushed out a couple weeks because of movement of students between the virtual and onsite options available.

Mr. Bandy and Mr. Shaffer have worked hard to get Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ordered and delivered.

The new phone system is being installed at district locations and will allow employees to use their work phone number through cell phones.

The hot spots are ordered and due in.

FSPS Police Officers have recently been in training to get additional experience in cultural diversity, suicide awareness, technology, and active shooter situations.

Dr. Brubaker reported that the following is information related to current bids and proposals.

1. Video Scoreboards for Northside and Southside Competition Gyms

Requested by: Michael Beaumont, Director of Athletics and Activities

Selection Method: Purchasing Cooperative (quotes not required)

Funding Source: Operating Funds

Award: Ace Sports (Little Rock)

Bid Count: Three, two from Little Rock and one national

Additional Information: Stephens Inc. verified that scoreboards that solicit sponsors or ads may not be purchased with bond proceeds. Therefore, operating funds will be used.

The Athletic Department will develop a sponsorship/signage/video ad program to reimburse the District part/all of the cost of these scoreboards over time.

Ace Sports quote for scoreboards at both high school gyms is \$1,362,229.64. Ms. Richardson asked what the plan was for the District to be reimbursed for the scoreboards. Mr. Warren and Mr. Beaumont both expressed that they were confident that fundraising could help to pay for this cost not allowed from bond proceeds. Mr. Warren suggested that the District might use a process similar to the turf fundraising.

Ms. Richardson indicated that she had received phone calls from employees with questions about particular employees and possible COVID. She cautioned that board members do not discuss with community members any COVID related cases and questions due to HIPPA. All board members agreed.

Board members discussed the low numbers in kindergarten enrollment. Ms. McFerran stated that she was aware of some parents hiring teachers to teach children privately. Dr. Brubaker asked that all share with parents the virtual options that the District has available. Mr. Layes reminded that parents need to complete home school forms if children are not enrolled in a public school.

Mr. Person commended the administration on the time and effort spent on COVID situations and getting schools open for the school year. He stated that he planned to make a plea to legislators and the Arkansas Department of Education for a more viable plan for the District.

### **SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENT AS EX-OFFICIO FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

Dr. Brubaker reported that every fiscal year the Fort Smith Public Schools Board of Directors designates the Superintendent as Ex-Officio Financial Secretary. This designation authorizes the Superintendent to make application for any and all Federal or State of Arkansas funds and to serve as the District's authorized representative for federal and state programs. This is a required annual approval.

The Administration recommended that the Board of Education approve the annual authorization for the Superintendent of Schools to make application for any and all Federal/State funds, and to serve as the authorized representative for these programs. The Administration also recommends that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to enter into contracts for goods and services necessary to operate the District.

Mr. Gilkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the annual authorization for the Superintendent to serve as Ex-Officio Financial Secretary for Fort Smith Public Schools and to authorize the Superintendent to enter into contracts for goods and services necessary to operate the District. The vote passed 7/0.

### **CONSIDER ADOPTION OF THE 2021-2022 DISTRICT BUDGET**

Mr. Warren presented discussion points for further clarification of the 2021-2020 District Budget. These include local revenue-property tax, state revenue-foundation funding, state categorical-ESA fund balance, salary analysis, Fund 3-Five Funds, and Four Funds-Four Facts. The board was provided with the activity for the fiscal year of 2019-2020 and presented a financial budget for the fiscal year 2020-2021 (FY21).

The Administration's recommendation was that the Board consider adopting the 2020-2021 financial budget as presented and approve that the Administration be authorized to make adjustments as required by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) of Arkansas for final submission to DESE.

Mr. Gilkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to adopt the 2020-2021 financial budget as presented, authorizing the Administration to make adjustments required by DESE. The vote passed 7/0.

Note that Ms. Keaton-Martin lost her connection at 6:10 p.m. during the early part of the following agenda item.

**CONSIDER ADOPTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY COURSE FOR 2020-2021**

Dr. Ginni McDonald and Dr. Tony Jones, Committee Chair, presented An African American History course to be offered to students in grades 10-12 for 2020-21 and 9th-12th for 2021-22 and beyond. In response to the student, staff, and community interest, a committee was formed that consisted of committee members: Mr. Felix Curry, Northside Teacher/Coach, Dr. Tony Jones, Director of Belle Point Center; Dr. Ginni McDonald, Director of Secondary Education; Mayor George McGill, Community Representative; Dr. Jose V. Pimenta-Bey, Higher Education Representative; Mr. William Releford, Student; and Mr. Derrick Wise, Parent. These members are teachers, parents, students, community members, content coordinators, higher education and administrators who met to discuss the current standards and the available resources.

The committee has recommended purchasing Newsela. Newsela will build a custom curriculum that is accessible online. After lengthy discussion with board members that included Ms. Richardson expressing the importance and concern to include robust, accurate history and not overlap African American history that is covered in other courses currently taught by the District. Mr. Person requested that future adoptions include curriculum and not just the platform to develop the course. He also requested enrollment numbers for the course. Dr. McDonald stated that she will provide the numbers before the course is offered in January 2021. Mr. Hanesworth suggested that the course be considered for younger students as well as high school students in the future. This course will be offered as a half credit for high school students. Board members requested a review of the curriculum for this course at a later date. Ms. McFerran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to authorize the adoption the Newsela platform for the instructional material to build the curriculum for African American History. The vote passed 6/0.

Note that Ms. Keaton-Martin was able to join during the following agenda item.

**CONSIDER ADOPTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEVEL 2 MARKETING BUSINESS ENTERPRISE COURSE FOR 2020-2021**

Mr. Mahan reported that the Arkansas Department of Education Division of Career and Technical Education has added a new Level 2 Marketing Business Enterprise class for the 20-21 school year. In response to the new course, a committee that consisted of teachers, parents, students, community members, content coordinators, higher education and administrators met via Zoom to discuss the current standards and the available resources

Dr. Gary Udouj, Director, Career Education Center and District Innovation, Ms. Jenny Craig, and Ms. Linda Holland, Northside Business Teachers spoke on behalf of the committee. The Marketing Business Enterprise committee recommended purchasing BusinessU and EReadiness

software bundles for online instruction. Ms. Craig stated that Marketing Entrepreneurship, Management and Accounting are some areas that students would benefit from this course. BusinessU will build the curriculum for this course. Ms. Holland also spoke about the online curriculum and stated that it will match the Arkansas standards. Translation and special needs will be addressed for this course also. The committee recommended that the Board approve the 2020-2021 instructional materials adoption for Marketing Business Enterprise.

Ms. McFerran made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilkey, to authorize the adoption of the recommended instructional material for Marketing Business Enterprise. The vote passed 7/0.

### **CONSIDER RESOLUTION REGARDING RENAMING ALBERT PIKE SCHOOL**

Dr. Brubaker reported that in June 2020, Albert Pike Elementary School in Fort Smith appeared in an [Education Week article](#) as one of six Arkansas schools named for a confederate figure. Documented activities and statements of General Pike as described in the resolution do not reflect the commitment of the school and the district as a whole to “treat all people with dignity and respect” as articulated in the [Vision 2023 Strategic Plan](#).

The district’s Equity and Minority Recruitment Committees met jointly on July 23. The question about the name of Albert Pike Elementary School was discussed. The consensus of the group was to recommend to the Board that the campus be renamed. The resolution, if adopted, would indicate the intent of the Board to rename the school. If adopted, the resolution would also direct the Administration to form a committee charged with developing a renaming process and timetable to submit to the Board for its consideration. The goal would be to have a new name in place for the 2021-2022 school year.

Dr. Brubaker added that typically there is a work session before the regular monthly board meeting and the item can be discussed and then brought to the board for consideration and public comment at the board meeting later that month. Dr. Brubaker recommended that the board consider the Albert Pike item at the next board meeting on August 24. He stated that the resolution details some of the comments made by General Pike during his lifetime. Dr. Brubaker stated that when students enroll in a school, his hope is that they feel valued. Mr. Gilkey asked if any committee members were in attendance this evening. Dr. Brubaker stated that Ms. Featherston Marshall, Ms. Penix and Ms. Richardson were present at the two committees. Pike Principal Monica Austin was not a member of either team but was in attendance at the board meeting as well.

Ms. Featherston Marshall stated that she facilitated the joint meetings of these teams and that they had met twice; on July 23 and August 4. She referenced the documents that were provided to the board with highlighting representing what has been accomplished and the ideas that the teams are working toward in the future. At the first meeting the teams met and discussed the work going forward. At this first meeting, there were a lot of ideas discussed about how to address some of the issues faced by this country at this time. The second time the teams met, they discussed topics from the first meeting and the potential renaming of Albert Pike Elementary. The response to the topic was cautious and that they would like to

bring it to the board as a conversation that should happen. Mr. Gilkey asked if the comments in the minutes were made in relation to the COVID Pandemic. He asked for clarification from the August 4 meeting minutes that he referenced such as *do it now while the movement is still going on* and *the time to strike is now*. Ms. Marshall stated that her belief was that the committee agreed that this is a difficult time to begin a conversation like this. She also stated that some of the comments appeared harsher than were spoke during the meeting.

Mr. Hanesworth reminded board members that it is a difficult topic and asked that all be respectful.

Ms. Blackwell shared with board members that she had received a call from a concerned parent. He and his family had moved back to Fort Smith and had enrolled his child at Albert Pike Elementary. He had researched Albert Pike's name and expressed support for the renaming of the school to Ms. Blackwell. She added that she wanted children to feel secure at their school and looked forward to voting on this item.

Mr. Gilkey stated that he didn't believe General Pike to be a good man but that his concern was that committee members used this issue to further their political agenda.

Ms. Richardson stated that as a member of that group, the individuals on these committees represent teachers, principals, pastors, a school board member, a university professor and state that this group has a political agenda was taken out of context based on a summary of comments reviewed in a small amount of time. She added that Lori Griffin is someone the board has recognized at board meetings and applauded her. Ms. Richardson stated that there were four people of color on this committee. She stated that the people on this committee were referring to the momentum and not waiting another 100 years to make this recommendation to the board. She asked that these individuals be present in some form at the next meeting and be respectful.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to table the agenda item and bring it to the August 24 meeting. The vote passed 7/0.

#### **PRESENTATION - VISION 2023 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Mr. Warren reviewed sources and uses of the Vision 2023 Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Warren reviewed the budget amounts and actual amounts at FY ending on 6/30/2020. He noted the \$3,000,000 in interest earnings with a remaining balance of \$1,638,136.25 reserved for the District.

Mr. James Adams, HPM presented a spreadsheet detailing the health of the budget and how the budget was to be spent for each project. The review included funding sources, funding amount, current committed budgeted funds, non committed funds, owner's contingency, anticipated cost at final, and variance from funding amount. The Vision 2023 projects included the Peak Innovation Center, Northside High School, Southside High School, Darby Middle School, Ramsey Middle School, Morrison Secure Wall Project, Woods Secure Wall Project,

Barling Secure Wall Project, Cook Secure Wall Project, Cavanaugh Security, Fairview Security, Spradling Security, Sunnymede Security, Ramsey Security, Tilles Security, Orr Security, Bonneville Security, Ballman Security, Carnall Security, Howard Security, Pike Security, Beard Security, Euper Lane Security, and Trusty Security.

Mr. George Watts presented a review of timeline for contractors managing the low voltage integrators. These include security, alarms, projectors and are very specialized. He reported that four candidates were interviewed. Envision Technologies, Fort Smith, AR, ADT Commercial (formerly Alert Systems) Fort Smith Location, Dunk Fire and Security, Springdale, AR, JE Systems, Pocola, OK. He reported that all four contractors were proficient in specific areas as noted on the chart provided.

Mr. Watts presented the candidates for Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) for Access and Security Upgrades Phase 2 – Pkg. B (Ballman, Carnall, Howard and Pike Elementary Schools). Mr. Watts reviewed the timeline. He reported that three construction companies submitted request for qualifications. All three were interviewed. The cost of work is estimated to be \$300,000. Nabholz Construction Company is the recommendation with a composite score of 94.6. Nabholz is headquartered in Conway, AR and has an office in Fort Smith.

Mr. Watts presented a Master Program Schedule Snapshot of Southside High School, Northside High School, Ramsey Middle School, Darby Middle School, Peak, Security Walls, and Security Vestibules.

Mr. Watts noted key milestones ahead and construction updates for Northside High School, Southside High School, Ramsey Middle School, Darby Middle School, Preconstruction Update – Access and Security – Pkg A, Preconstruction Update – Peak Innovation Center.

Mr. Person thanked HPM for the category composites that he had requested.

Ms. Richardson asked about the contingency funds if not spent. Dr. Morawski stated that these would be brought back to board, and District administrators expect to have and are generating some ideas.

Ms. Richardson asked if the funds need to stay with the respective school. Dr. Morawski stated it is not a requirement and could be discussed later but there are some considerations for spending at the Freshman Center.

#### **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED CONTRACTORS FOR LOW VOLTAGE INTEGRATION SYSTEMS**

Ms. Keaton-Martin made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to award the Low Voltage Integration Systems contracts to the most qualified contractors and thereafter to proceed with the execution of contracts with the most qualified contractors in a form approved by our legal counsel. The vote passed 7/0.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AT RISK FOR ACCESS AND SECURITY UPGRADES PHASE 2 FOR BALLMAN, CARNALL, HOWARD AND PIKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

Mr. Gilkey made a motion, seconded by Ms. McFerran to award the Construction Manager at Risk for Access and Security Upgrades Phase 2 for Ballman, Carnall, Howard, and Pike Elementary School projects to the most qualified contractor, Nabholz Construction, and thereafter to proceed with the execution of a construction contract with the most qualified contractor in a form approved by our legal counsel. The vote passed 7/0.

**BOARD MEMBERS FORUM**

Ms. Richardson asked that Human Resources inform substitutes who do not meet qualifications to teach full-time, of the reason why they were not considered for full-time employment.

Ms. Richardson also asked Human Resources to prioritize these substitutes for assignments at Peak if they COVID related or health concerns.

Mr. Hanesworth asked for patience, understanding and respect as we move forward.

**ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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Bill Hanesworth, President

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Dee Blackwell, Secretary