



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, April 24, 2023, 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

Ms. Richardson, vice president, called the meeting to order noting six board members were present. Other board members present were: Mr. Dalton Person, Mr. Matt Blaylock, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Ms. Sandy Dixon and Mr. Phil Whiteaker. Ms. Dee Blackwell was not in attendance. District administrators present included: Dr. Terry Morawski, Superintendent; Mr. Martin Mahan, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Chris Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Campus Support; 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.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Mahan presented the following recognitions.

April Superintendent Star Awards

Naomii Emmitt – Park Elementary
Bradlee Estep – Cavanaugh Elementary
Landon Haney – Carnall Elementary
Jesse Harrison – Bonneville Elementary
Autymn Laxton-Hale – Beard Elementary
Nathalie Martinez – Spradling Elementary
Sarah Ramirez – Ballman Elementary
Corbin Richmond – Cook Elementary
Kimmora Smith – Trusty Elementary

Three Southside High School students, Madeline Fischer, Gavin O’Hara, and Mi Dang, placed first at the Arkansas Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America State Competition. Northside High School also had two students that placed first at the competition: Laylah Johnson and Paige Klein. All five of these students will advance to the National FCCLA Competition this summer in Denver.

These Southside students earned top honors at the recent state Future Business Leaders of America conference: Chantha Phrasavath, Serina Huang, and Kathy Nguyen. These students qualified and will compete at the national FBLA competition in June.

Wyatt Gudermuth and Cade Nally, both from Southside High School, placed first in the state commercial drone competition. They received a full scholarship to the University of Arkansas Community College and are able to represent Arkansas at the SkillsUSA National Championship.

Mike Burkepile, Southside Orchestra instructor, accepted certificates for the Southside Orchestra and Maverick Philharmonic for earning a first division rating at the Arkansas School Band and Orchestra State Concert Assessment.

Southside High School seniors Myles Flanders, Lucas Jackson, Jackson Miller, Tu Nguyen, Zain Rana and David Rotaru have been named 2023 National Merit Scholarship Finalists by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

The inaugural class of winners in the Fort Smith Public Schools new employee recognition program was announced.

Ignite Award: Autumn Minnick, Woods Elementary
Daisy Acuff, Morrison Elementary

Kind Counts: Jessica Albert, Sutton Elementary
Melody Smith, Barling Elementary

Every Day Leader: Elizabeth Buegler, Barling Elementary
Sherry Shock, Bonneville Elementary

United Way President Shea Foldvary presented Dr. Morawski with the Excellence in Education Award for the district.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski updated the board on several key dates coming up: there will be a called board meeting on May 1; May 11 is the Retirement and Rookies picnic; May 18 will be Southside High School graduation; May 19 is Northside High School's graduation; the next regular school board meeting will be May 22; Adult Education graduation will be May 23; and June 1 will be the last student day of school.

Dr. Morawski reported there was significant damage from a recent hailstorm which impacted several of our campuses which had broken windows, roof, and HVAC damage.

The district held four LEARNS information meetings for staff to share information and listen to their questions regarding the LEARNS act. Approximately 200 staff members attended.

Dr. Morawski's report on Good Things Going on in the District included: Kimmons Middle School raised \$1,600 for the Make A Wish Foundation. Since 2015 Kimmons has raised \$13,000 for the foundation; Morrison Elementary teacher Amy Alexis is the recipient of the Casey's Cash for Classrooms grant; Adult Education student Sarah Good was recognized for her distinguished achievement on the GED; the Northside High School Red Shoe Club presented a check for \$2,500 to the Ronald McDonald House; the Purple Up Event was held to recognize the military families in the district; schools are getting ready for ACT testing; Dr. Morawski participated in the Fort Smith Chamber DC Fly-In.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included March Financial Report, February 27 and March 13 Minutes, April Professional Staff Recommendations, April Student Services Report, United Way Parents as Teachers Contract, 2023-24 Tuition Agreement with Residential Facilities, Approval of Special Education Statement of Intent, and an Ethics Disclosure Resolution.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteaker, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed 6-0.

CONSIDER ADOPTING THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Mr. Mahan presented the proposed 2023-24 school year calendar which includes 178 student face-to-face days as defined by the LEARNS act. Traditional snow days are now considered with a week dedicated to make up days after the end of the school year as well as the following week if more than five days need to be made up.

Ms. Dixon made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blaylock, to approve the 2023-2024 school year calendar. The motion passed 6-0.

PRESENTATION - SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

Mr. Warren shared the financial impact of the LEARNS act for fiscal year 2024. Starting in fiscal year 2024, a minimum certified base salary of \$50,000 is required as well as a base salary raise of \$2,000 if current salary base is \$48,000 or less. The state will provide \$2.9 million in funding for the certified mandated salary increases.

Additional steps of 23, 24, and 25 were also added for experienced teachers.

The proposed classified salary schedule will increase the base salary by approximately \$1,000 and a minimum starting pay of \$15/hr in operations and child nutrition.

Mr. Warren stated that with revenue growth and savings the District will employ another historical increase for teachers and staff.

This is an informational item and no recommendation is required.

PRESENTATION - SCHOOL SAFETY UPDATE

Chief Hollenbeck gave an update on the Fort Smith Public Schools Police Department. The department was established in July 2019. The department now has ten full time officers, two part time officers, a dispatcher, and a social worker.

The police department applied for and received a grant for \$596,000 for school safety improvements. These improvements will include controlled access to high traffic doors, locks on doors, increased fencing, and increased radio coverage for officers.

This is an informational item and no recommendation is required.

CONSIDER APPROVAL FOR THE PURCHASE OF PROPERTY 2309-2311 ROGERS AVENUE

At 7:30 PM, Mr. Person recused himself from this agenda item.

Mr. Shaffer presented information on the purchase of the property including the survey, appraisal, environmental studies, and purchase offer.

Mr. Shaffer will present recommendations of ways to use this space at a later date.

Mr. Chitwood made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blaylock, to purchase the property at 2309-2311 Rogers Avenue. The motion passed 5-0.

Note: Mr. Person returned to the meeting at 7:38 PM.

PRESENTATION - PEAK INCIDENT AND RESPONSE UPDATE

Mr. Shaffer gave an update to the board regarding the water intrusion incident that occurred at Peak Innovation Center in March 2023. He also informed the board of the steps that were taken for cleanup and steps to help determine the cause of the water intrusion.

This is an informational item and no recommendation is required.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PHASES FOR PEAK SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Velasquez presented to the board a status update to the Peak Innovation Center drainage and site improvements.

The plan to complete these improvements include three phases: Phase 1-North East Drainage and Parking, Phase 2 – West Parking, and Phase 3-Southeast Parking. The total cost to complete all three phases are estimated to be \$3,927,534. The original scope of adding additional parking and raising the east parking lot was estimated at \$1,400,000 total. The adjusted cost is mostly due to the drainage improvements.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteaker, to table the review of this item until the May 22, 2023 meeting. The motion passed 6-0.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be May 22. May 1, 2023 will be a called board meeting for the superintendent's evaluation.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and this meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.

Dee Blackwell, President

Dalton Person, Secretary