



Board of Education

Minutes of Regular School Board Meeting
The Board of Education

A Regular School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held August 24, 2020, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg. B, 3205 Jenny Lind Road, and virtually per COVID-19 CDC guidelines.

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

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Mr. Andrew McMinn spoke in support of the renaming of Albert Pike Elementary. Mr. McMinn has two children in the school district. Ms. Val Oliver spoke to the board asking that the name of Albert Pike Elementary not be changed. Ms. Oliver attended Fort Smith Public Schools.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Brubaker reported that the upcoming board meeting dates are scheduled for a Work Session on September 14 and the Board of Education Regular Meeting on September 28.

Dr. Brubaker reported that the Arkansas Department of Education, Secretary of Education, Johnny Key, was at the Chamber of Commerce First Friday Breakfast on August 21 to discuss reopening of schools. Mr. Key gave a shoutout to Spradling, Ballman and Northside for being PLC Model Schools. Dr. Brubaker noted that Darby is also included as a pilot for this model.

Dr. Bruabaker reported that Michael Beaumont, Director of Athletics and Student Activities prepared a video that explained how the football game between Northside and Southside on August 27 would be available for viewing with both ticket purchases as well as livestreamed.

Dr. Brubaker reported that the administration is working on new ways to report COVID cases as State standards continue to evolve.

Dr. Brubaker reported that administrators in new positions would be recognized at the September board meeting.

Dr. Brubaker reported that virtual school is at 26% and class sizing plans will be delayed for a few weeks.

Dr. Bruabaker reported that the Healthy School Guide has been published and is a good resource as well as a series of learning management system tutorials for parents to utilize.

Dr. Brubaker shared that Cox has offered free internet service for two months.

Dr. Brubaker reported that kindergarten registration is down by approximately 200 students.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included: August Professional Staff Recommendations, minutes of the July 27 Board Meeting and the August 10 Called Board Meeting, July 2020 Financial Report, August Student Services Report, approval of 2020-2021 FSPS District Support Plan.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilkey, to remove Item #5 for discussion to consider the approval of the 2020/2021 District Support Plan. The vote passed 7/0.

Mr. Person asked for further discussion of Action #2 Unfinished Learning from Prior Year. Mr. Person stated concern for the FSPS District as well as all district in meeting referenced standards that were to be introduced in the 4th quarter and how the District plans to address these going forward. Mr. Mahan stated that Dr. Minton and her team of K-12 coordinators by core content worked to identify those standards that were missed and also worked with teachers to plot where they will introduce them in the next grade level so they can emphasize that missed learning. Mr. Mahan will also look into how to address this through the curriculums being used for virtual school.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilkey to approve the remaining agenda items as presented. The vote passed 7/0.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilkey, to approve Item #5 Approval of the 2020-2021 District Support Plan. The vote passed 7/0.

UPDATE: DISTRICT COMMITTEES

Dr. Brubaker reported that as part of Fort Smith Public Schools' continuous improvement and communication efforts, the District is served by a number of committees. Their purpose is to provide input and feedback about different subjects from the perspective of students, parents, teachers, support staff, and members of the community. Dr. Brubaker provide a list of committees and members of some of the teams that have worked on topics such as reopening schools, diversity, career and technology, capital improvement projects, and mental health. He added that some people who have attended some committee meetings have not been

members and that the opinions of individual committee members do not necessarily reflect the views of the entire committee or the district. To promote transparency, weekly board updates, staff newsletters, social media, board meetings, and the website include information about committee meetings and topics discussed.

Mr. Gilkey asked how the Equity Committee members were chosen. Dr. Brubaker stated that this committee was formed through the Vision 2023 Planning Process. The Equity Committee was one of the seven Strategy Action Committees formed. Community members and FSPS staff were able to select which committee they were interested in serving on.

Mr. Person asked Dr. Brubaker to expound on the Minority Recruiting Committee and its role.

Dr. Brubaker added that it is a state requirement that the District also have a Minority Recruiting Committee. Dr. Chris Davis, Supervisor of Human Resources and Campus Support, explained that the Human Resources staff is required to submit a report to the Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education that reflects the effort that the District has made to recruit minorities.

This was an information item.

CONSIDER ADOPTING LICENSED AND CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL POLICIES RELATED TO STATE EMERGENCY COVID-19 LEAVE

Dr. Brubaker reported that the Governor's team through the Arkansas CARES Act Steering Committee recently approved a request for \$20 million to establish a COVID-19 Emergency Leave Fund for school employees. To qualify for this funding, school boards are required to adopt a policy governing its eligibility and administration. The Arkansas School Boards Association has developed the presented model policy for this purpose.

- Under Executive Order 21-014 and the COVID-19 Emergency Resolution adopted by the Board on June 22, the proposed emergency policy can be implemented during the current fiscal year.
- Consultation with the Certified Personnel Policy Committee (PPC) is also not required during the emergency; however, Administration has requested input from both the Certified and Classified PPCs. Board Policy BG states, "Policies of the Board of Education shall be adopted only after approval by the majority of the Board at two regular Board meetings." The Resolution for Suspension of District Policy to Align with Emergency COVID-19 Legislation and Statutory/Rule Waivers adopted by the Board on June 22 also permits the Board to waive this requirement.
- Counsel recommends consideration of a separate motion to waive Board Policy BG prior to consideration of a motion to adopt the Licensed and Classified Personnel Policies related to State Emergency COVID-19 Leave.

Dr. Brubaker stated that the administration's recommendation is to have two motions and votes:

1. Waive Board Policy BG
2. Adopt the state Emergency Covid-19 Leave Policies for Licensed and Classified personnel that will expire on December 31, 2020.

Ms. Richardson asked if the State extended this past December 31, would the District need to go through this process again. Dr. Brubaker and Mr. Ney indicated that their belief was that this policy and resolution would only be effective through December 31, 2020.

Mr. Warren explained the options available to employees through the state and federal leave. He stated that it was advantageous to the District if employees used State leave instead of Federal since the District would receive reimbursement from the State as long as funding was still available. The District does not receive reimbursement from the Federal leave. Employees can use 10 days at full pay from both State and Federal without it affecting their District leave.

Ms. McFerran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to waive Board Policy BG. The vote passed 7/0.

Ms. McFerran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to adopt the licensed and classified personnel policies related to state emergency COVID19 leave. The vote passed 7/0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF 2020-2021 CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

Mr. Mahan and Dr. Sarah Biggs presented the Special Nutrition Programs (SNP) that provide reimbursement for well-balanced, nutritious meals served to individuals enrolled in the CACFP. In Arkansas, CACFP is administered by the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Special Nutrition Programs. The Fort Smith School District will be reimbursed for required snacks provided to preschool children. Mr. Mahan added that this is a reoccurring program each year.

Mr. Mahan stated that the administration's recommendation is that the board approve to operate CACFP for the 2020-2021 school year.

Ms. McFerran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the Child and Adult Care Food Program as presented. The vote passed 7/0.

CONSIDER RESOLUTION REGARDING RENAMING ALBERT PIKE SCHOOL

Dr. Brubaker reported that the consideration to rename Albert Pike was discussed at the August 10 Board Meeting. He reported that the resolution presented would indicate the intent of the board to rename Albert Pike Elementary and direct the administration to form a committee charged with developing a renaming 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 stated that the administration's recommendation is to adopt the resolution.

Ms. McFerran stated that after learning the background of Albert Pike, her belief was that the board had no choice but to rename the elementary school. She stated that she was pleased with the diversity of the Equity and Minority Recruiting committees.

Mr. Gilkey stated that the vast majority of people he has spoken to believe that to rename the school is the right thing to do. He stated that his only issue is that it is being addressed while dealing with COVID19 and his opinion was that it was a distraction while dealing teachers, students, and parents are dealing with learning how to get students back in school during a pandemic.

Mr. Person asked what steps would be required to enact this change, and what type of strains would it put on the administration to enact this change. Dr. Brubaker stated that the administration would want to hear from stakeholders and the timeline for completing the process is the 2021-2022 school year. Dr. Brubaker stated that the administration could bring a proposal back to the board for a process to select a new name for the school.

Ms. Blackwell applauded the administration for dealing with a global pandemic, while supporting teachers and students, managing district business and board business as usual.

Ms. Keaton-Martin stated that she agreed with the forming of a committee and didn't feel the need to wait months for the renaming of the school.

Ms. Richardson referenced that the packet stated that the goal was to have a new name in place for the 2021-2022 school year. Her opinion is that the board has worked well together on this and although board members do not always agree, they do respect each other and the District administrators, and teachers. Ms. Richardson commended the District administrators in following the Vision 2023 Plan in regards to how the Equity Committee was formed.

Mr. Person added that it should be noted that the minutes of these Equity Committee and Minority Recruitment meetings are not necessarily the opinion of the District or Board of Education. He expressed appreciation for community members who volunteer their time.

Mr. Hanesworth stated that he agrees that board members all value community input and perhaps the process just needs more structure.

The administration's recommendation was that the Board adopt the resolution regarding renaming Albert Pike Elementary School.

Ms. McFerran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Keaton-Martin, to adopt the resolution to rename Albert Pike Elementary School. The vote passed 7/0.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

Ms. McFerran stated that the enthusiasm of the first day of school was great!

Mr. Gilkey asked if the administration could consider offering seniors open lunch and consideration of seniors taking electives off campus due to COVID19 and construction restrictions.

Mr. Mahan stated that administration is looking into allowing seniors that are lacking just a few hours to take these courses virtually or blended so that they don't have to be on campus all day. Mr. Mahan, high school principals, and senior students have been having open discussion about the virtual and blended options for students lacking only a few hours not being on campus all day.

Ms. Keaton-Martin also suggested that community members get involved in District committees.

Ms. Blackwell asked that the committee formed to rename Albert Pike give the name a lot of thought.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Bill Hanesworth, President

Dee Blackwell, Secretary