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## Board of Education

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Minutes of  
The Board of Education

A Regular School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held Monday, January 23, 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. Blackwell, president, called the meeting to order noting seven board members were present. Other board members present were: Ms. Talicia Richardson, Mr. Dalton Person, Mr. Matt Blaylock, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Ms. Sandy Dixon and Mr. Phil Whiteaker. 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; Ms. Shari Cooper, Director, Communications; and Ms. Leslie Phelps, Office Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

The mission statement was followed by a moment of silence and the pledge of allegiance.

### **RECOGNITIONS**

Ms. Cooper presented the following recognitions.

#### January Superintendent Star Awards

Kaitlin Abarca – Beard Elementary  
Peter Cung – Sunnymede Elementary  
Brinkley Edwards – Orr Elementary  
Harper Jackson – Barling Elementary  
Meladee Johnson – Carnall Elementary  
Eli McDowell – Cook Elementary  
Connor Pillar – Euper Lane Elementary  
Guadalupe Plata – Trusty Elementary  
Isley Spencer – Bonneville Elementary  
Libi Wilson – Woods Elementary

#### Grizzly Air Rifle Team

The Grizzly Air Rifle Team won the Arkansas Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) State Championship. Edith Aquino, Audrene Hays, Mikayla McCall, and Mekel Miller took home first place in the precision division, while Aurielo Alcalá, Francisca Bermudez Flores, Sanskruti Ghanti, and Ariana Mendoza took home first place in the sporter division. The Grizzly Air Rifle Team qualified to compete in the CMP Regional Match in Anniston, Alabama in April. This team is sponsored and instructed by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Johnson and Sergeant First Class Arron Lincoln.

### Southside eSports

The Southside High School eSports team consisting of Ridge Colquitt, Daniel Hernandez Donato, Andy Garcia, Jason Le, Thien Lee, and Travis Wen took home first place in the Arkansas AAA League of Legends State Championship. Their total record was 14-0 in regular season games and 8-0 in playoff games. The team is coached by John Lehman and Blake Matthews.

### Junior Palafox

During lunch, a student approached Gumaro “Junior” Palafox, custodian at Northside High School. The student looked frightened and confused but made no sound. Junior asked the student if he was okay and the student shook his head no. Junior immediately administered the Heimlich maneuver and cleared the blockage. His selfless act reflects great credit upon himself and Fort Smith Public Schools.

### Arkansas School Board Recognition Month

January is Arkansas School Board Member Recognition Month. To celebrate our board members community partners from Nothing Bundt Cakes donated bundt cakes for each of the board members and art students from Euper Lane, Fairview, and Tilles made banners to display at the January 27 meeting.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Morawski stated that the board training hours are reported in the consent agenda. He reminded new board members the requirement to obtain nine hours of training by the end of the year following their election and six hours each year after that. All board members are in good standing.

In a previous meeting, board members requested an update related to the District’s exit interview plan. Dr. Morawski reported an update on Human Resources would be presented at the February meeting, including recruitment and retention and a new process for digital exit interviews.

Dr. Morawski’s report on Good Things Going On in the District included: Southside High School art students had their art featured at the Fort Smith Regional Art Museum exhibit, Northside and Southside theatre departments put on a performance of *Oklahoma*, Students from Northside and Southside bands performed at the Martin Luther King, Jr parade on January 16, an atrium was dedicated at Southside in memory of former Southside teacher Karen Davis. Funds for the atrium were donated by the class of 2020. The Northside Grizzlies basketball team won the Coke Classic Tournament and Southside’s freshman girls won the Van Buren Classic basketball tournament.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda included December 12 Minutes, December Financial Report, January Professional Staff Recommendations and January Student Services Report.

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

Dr. Morawski noted that the staff recommendations report includes resignations however this does not require board approval. Therefore, resignations will be pulled out as an action item but this information will still be provided.

## **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT UPDATE**

Dr. Morawski provided an update to the Continuous Improvement Plan. This plan will focus on internal work on academic and student success. Initiatives that are already in place and will continue in this plan are Professional Learning Communities, High Reliability Schools, Capturing Kids Hearts, Career Focus at Peak Center, and the curriculum audit process.

The goals for the Continuous Improvement Plan will be:

1. Students will master grade level reading by the beginning of third grade. They will achieve reading targets at/or above grade level for their remaining school career.
2. Students will perform at/or above grade level in math.
3. Schools and administrative buildings will be safe, welcoming environments where authentic, productive relationships are valued.
4. Our system guarantees relevant classes for every secondary student and maximizes student choice without sacrificing opportunities for personal growth.

Upon approval of the Continuous Improvement Plan, district leadership will build a data dashboard to monitor the progress of the four goals.

Mr. Person stated that going out to campuses and the community to get feedback is valuable and recommended doing this on a yearly basis, possibly rotating the campuses. Mr. Person recommended changing the mission statement from citizen to productive members of society. He also favored shortening the fourth goal to make it simpler.

Mr. Blaylock agreed that going out to campuses and the community was valuable and encouraged the District to continue that process.

Ms. Richardson questioned how the goals would be measured. Specifically, how to measure a welcoming environment and authentic, productive relationships. She would also like to see mental health included as a goal.

Mr. Person proposed to amend the mission statement to read productive members of society and to shorten the fourth goal and remove the final clause that states, "without sacrificing opportunities for personal growth".

With no further discussion, Mr. Person made a motion to approve the Continuous Improvement Plan as presented with the following amendments: To amend the mission statement to read productive members of society and to shorten the fourth goal and remove the final clause that states, "without sacrificing opportunities for personal growth". Ms. Blackwell seconded the motion. A roll call vote was passed 6/0 with Mr. Blaylock abstaining.

#### **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE 2021-2022 AUDIT REPORT**

Mr. Mark Lux with Przybysz & Associates presented findings of the independent financial statements audit for June 30, 2022. The results of the audit includes an unmodified opinion from the auditor. The financial statements are fairly presented, in material respects, in accordance with the financial statement reporting provisions.

The administration recommends the board accept the audit report for the year ending June 30, 2022 as prepared by Przybysz & Associates, CPAs.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteaker to accept the audit report for the year ending June 30, 2022. The vote passed 7/0.

#### **COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING SITE APPROVAL FORM**

Dr. Bone reported one of the indicators in the ESSA school index scores that allowed the District to accumulate points was community service learning. This will also give students in ninth through twelfth grade an opportunity to earn 75 community service hours. Board approval is required to add additional sites for students to use. A community service learning site approval form was created to apply for new site approval.

Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the FSPS Community Service Learning Site approval form. The vote passed 7/0.

#### **PRESENTATION - AREA ATTENDANCE ZONES**

Mr. Mahan presented an update regarding area attendance zones. The presentation provided information regarding annual enrollment changes, ten year forecast by grade and campus level, and campus maximum capacity information. Forecast predict enrollment will remain flat over time. Mr. Mahan also provided information regarding the number of attendance area exceptions and board-to-board transfers.

Dr. Farrell detailed further information regarding attendance area zones and the board policies regarding this practice.

Mr. Person proposed to balance out the disparity of the number of students at the high schools is to make Southside the attendance zone for Barling. A second proposal is to set a cap on the number of attendance area exceptions at the secondary level.

Ms. Richardson stated she has some reservations regarding putting a cap on the area attendance exceptions due to each family situation is unique and there has to be some flexibility. Ms. Richardson stated she does not believe that sending all Barling students to Southside might not be the answer.

Dr. Morawski suggested getting input from the community and allow the community to provide feedback.

Mr. Blaylock expressed his biggest concern is overcorrection if Barling is moved to Southside zone. He encouraged looking at zoning every three years, as is required, to maintain a balance of school enrollment.

The board members agreed that they would like to see more information and receive community feedback before they proceed.

This was a presentation and no action was required at this time.

#### **LEGISLATIVE LIAISON UPDATE**

Ms. Richardson, the board's legislative liaison, encouraged that each board member read the legislative updates that are issued by ASBA.

Dr. Morawski highlighted the top legislative issues that could affect the District.

This was an informational item and no action is required.

**BOARD MEMBERS FORUM**

The next regularly scheduled board meeting is Monday, February 27, 2023.

Ms. Richardson requested feedback regarding student cell phone usage in the District. She recommended asking the Superintendent Advisory Council, teachers, and the personal policy committee for recommendations.

**ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM.

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Dee Blackwell, President

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Dalton Person, Secretary