



Board of Education

Minutes

The Board of Education

A Regular School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held Monday, June 28, 2021, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Building B., 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

Ms. Richardson, vice president, called the meeting to order. Other board members present were: Mr. Dalton Person, Ms. Dee Blackwell, Mr. Matt Blaylock and Mr. Troy Eckelhoff. Ms. Yvonne Keaton-Martin and Ms. Susan McFerran were not in attendance. District administration staff present included: Dr. Terry Morawski, Superintendent; Mr. Martin Mahan, Deputy Superintendent; 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, Office Manager to the Superintendent.

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

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

There was no one present for Citizens Participation.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski reported that the July 12 meeting would most likely be a called board meeting and that the July 26 meeting will be cancelled due to a conflict with an administrators' conference. He noted that the Board will meet on August 9 for a work session and the regular board meeting is scheduled for August 23.

Dr. Morawski reported that beginning in August, the plan is to schedule some of the work sessions at school campuses. This would give board members an opportunity to see some of the renovation work that has been completed.

Dr. Morawski reported that August 19 was confirmed for the Board of Education Team Building with Mr. Marshall Ney and Mr. Phillip McClure.

Dr. Morawski stated that a study of the districtwide PLC initiative and the Board's role will be provided at a future training in September or October.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included May 24 Minutes and June 14 Minutes, May Financial Report, June Professional Staff Recommendations, and June Student Services Report.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, to approve the consent agenda items as presented. The vote passed 5/0.

PRESENTATION - VIRTUAL OPTION UPDATE

Mr. Mahan reported that Dr. Samantha Hall will provide a presentation to update the Board on the Virtual Option approval process for 2021/2022. He reported that in March the Board approved the submission of an application for a carryover option similar to this past school year.

Dr. Hall reported that the Digital Learning application for 2021-22 was submitted on April 1, 2021 to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). DESE requested a few revisions. The application was revised on April 20, 2021 and approved by DESE on April 27, 2021. The application was forwarded to the State Board for a hearing on May 27, 2021. The State Board of Education approved the application with revisions that included a request of no waiver of class sizes, to keep the student/teacher ratio within the regular class size ratios, and to incorporate the Pearson Science of Reading into the District K-6 Language Arts program. Dr. Hall provided projected enrollment numbers and next steps information sessions, enrollment and orientation dates. Dr. Hall stated that the projected enrollment is 200 or less for K-8 virtual option, approximately 25% of the current enrollment.

This was an informational item and did not require board approval.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE VIRTUAL OPTION CONVERSION CHARTER APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Mr. Mahan reported that the District brought an intent to apply for a charter school license to the board for submission previously. Dr. Hall reported that the District is applying for the virtual option conversion charter for 2022/2023 and beyond. This will incorporate the Fort Smith Virtual Academy.

The District must submit an application to continue toward an approved District Conversion Charter Virtual Option. The District's conversion charter focus is built upon the foundation of the FSPS mission statement. The conversion charter will provide K-8 students with flexible learning choices, accelerated learning opportunities, real-world experiences and support to overcome challenging circumstances. The charter school will have its own LEA within the FSPS district.

The conversion charter timeline is as follows:

Intent to Apply Forms Submitted on April 19, 2021
Mandatory Applicant Workshop – April 28, 2021
Public Hearing Held – June 8, 2021
Initial Application Due – July 1, 2021
Application Reviews with DESE – July 26-August 13, 2021
Application Revision Window – August 13 - September 10, 2021
Final Applications Due – September 10, 2021
Charter Authorizing Panel Hearings – October 19-20, 2021
State Board Meeting – Review of Charter Authorizing Panel Decisions – November 11, 2021
Conversion Charter Opens – August 2022 (If approved by State Board)

After discussion, Ms. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Person, to approve the resolution to submit the Virtual Option Conversion Charter School application to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The vote passed 4/1 with Mr. Blaylock opposing.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE SALE OF FORT SMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS' EBS SPECTRUM LICENSE

Dr. Morawski noted to the Board that the proposed sale of this spectrum license has been an ongoing discussion for the past year. He introduced Mr. Gregory to provide an EBS Frequency Spectrum Sale Proposal update – Educational Broadband Service. Mr. Gregory noted that on March 8 the Board authorized the District to partner with Select Spectrum to promote the sale of the District’s channels within the EBS frequency. With the Board’s approval, the District entered into a non-binding agreement with Select Spectrum to market the District’s EBS license to seek Fair Market Value (FMV) offers for the sale of this license. Select Spectrum has presented the district with final offers from two prospective buyers. Buyer proposals were received in May and June. Mr. Gregory provided a proposed sale sheet that included the \$57,000 marketing fees and net proceeds of \$1,118,000.00 to the District.

Mr. Gregory explained that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licensed school districts for the use of channels within a specific frequency spectrum. The FCC provided this Educational Broadband Service (EBS) spectrum to promote the delivery of educational content. FSPS is currently one of only two educational institutions in Arkansas with full ownership of its licensed channels. Mr. Gregory also explained that there is other technology available to the District that will provide this same service.

Mr. Person noted that the sale sheet included leasing and Mr. Gregory confirmed that the District’s wish is to sell the license.

With concern from Mr. Eckelhoff to sell the license and confirmation from Mr. Gregory that there was not an urgent deadline for the sale, Ms. Richardson suggested that the item could be tabled to give new board members an opportunity to receive more information. She noted that the other board members had received a detailed presentation from Mr. Gregory in March.

Ms. Richardson requested that funds be set aside from this sale to provide internet for staff that do not have internet access if the board votes in favor of this sale.

Ms. Richardson asked for a motion to either table the item to give Mr. Eckelhoff and Mr. Blaylock an opportunity to receive more information if they choose to or a motion to proceed with a vote. Mr. Eckelhoff made a motion to table the item, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, to table this item until the next board meeting. The vote passed 4/1 with Mr. Person opposing.

Ms. Richardson noted that the item will be brought back to the next board meeting.

PRESENTATION - VISION 2023 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Dr. Morawski introduced Mr. Scott Ditto, HPM, to provide an update. Dr. Morawski noted that Peak and Facilities and Security staff were available for questions as well.

Mr. Ditto provided renderings and photos of different areas of the Peak Center. Mr. Ditto provided a Peak Timeline Impact schedule with original design completion date and a revised design completion date. Mr. Ditto explained that program changes, permitting changes and highway expansion/utilities contributed some to completion date. Mr. Ditto reported that although he had previously stated the plan was to partially open Peak in the fall, after discussions with Administration, the plan is to open in

the spring semester of 2022 to keep students safe while construction will be ongoing. Mr. Ditto reviewed the funding sources with board members. Mr. Ditto also provided an overview of the phases of completion.

Mr. Blaylock noted the purple board installation and expressed concern for moisture control and asked if the cost incurred was in original spec. Mr. Ditto noted that it was not and the cost is incurred in the project. Mr. Ditto explained that five monitoring wells have been installed as well and readings indicate that water is at least 6.5 feet below the slab. Mr. Ditto explained that the purple board was installed also for protection against mold. Mr. Blaylock asked if Mr. Ditto is comfortable that there will not be any moisture control issues. Mr. Ditto stated that he is confident that there will not be any moisture control issues. Mr. Ditto stated that he hoped to have an update to cost and scope of the schedule at the next board meeting. Mr. Mahan added that the project is trending over at Peak due to unforeseen issues and in addition to some repairs to the roof over the part of the building that is not being renovated.

Ms. Richardson asked if COVID contributed to delays. Mr. Ditto stated that COVID definitely contributed to delays.

Ms. Richardson stated that it is good to keep student safety in mind, even if opening the Peak Center is delayed.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

Mr. Person stated that as projects are finished, board members will need to be prepared to consider whether to allocate funds to other projects or leave funds at schools that were originally allotted.

Mr. Blaylock shared new AAA rules affecting conference alignments with board members.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Talicia Richardson, Vice President

Dee Blackwell, Secretary