



Board of Education

Minutes of The Board of Education

A Work Session of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held Monday, January 11, 2021, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg B., 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901, and virtually per COVID19 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. Terry Morawski, Superintendent, Mr. Martin Mahan, Deputy Superintendent, 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.

Mr. Hanesworth called the meeting to order.

2019-2020 Regulatory Audit Report

Dr. Morawski recognized Mr. Warren, Fort Smith Public Schools Chief Financial Officer and Mr. Marc Lux, the lead auditor with Przybysz & Associates. Mr. Lux reviewed the 2019-2020 audit report for the District which was prepared on a regulatory basis. He reported that this was the third year that the District has used the regulatory audit. He noted that the state law changed to require regulatory audit the year after the District transition from a GASB audit to a regulatory audit.

Mr. Lux noted that Przybysz and Associates' opinion is an unmodified opinion. He stated that the financial statements of the District presented fairly, in all material respects as of June 30, 2020. Mr. Lux reviewed the Balance Sheet, Fund Balance Report, Fund Balance Reconciliation of General Fund, Special Revenue and other Aggregate.

Mr. Hanesworth noted that this item would be presented for acceptance at the January 25 Board Meeting.

VISION 2023 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Mr. Mahan recognized Mr. George Watts, CCM, LEED AP, BD+C, of HPM to present a Vision 2023 Capital Improvement Program Update. Mr. Watts provided a snapshot of the master

program schedule that included Southside High School, Northside High School, Ramsey Middle School, Darby Middle School, Peak Center, security walls and security vestibules. He provided a detailed look of projects underway.

GRADE RECONFIGURATION PHASE 1 - STAFFING

Mr. Mahan, Ms. Penix and Mr. Beaumont presented an update on grade reconfiguration and staffing at the middle schools and high schools. Chaffin, Darby, Kimmons and Ramsey will be converted to middle schools. The junior high schools will transition from 7th - 9th grade campuses to 6th – 8th grade campuses. Northside and Southside will be converted from 10th – 12th grade campuses to 9th – 12th grade campuses. These reconfigurations begin in August 2021. This realignment will help with space at the elementary schools. Teams of educators have collaborated and held planning sessions. He noted that the new grade configuration requires a shift in the current staffing model and removes 900+ six graders from elementary schools and adds 1,000+ students to the high school population. Mr. Mahan noted Phase 1 – begins of internal staff with postings on January 18 for the Freshman Center and February 15 for sixth grade positions in middle schools. Consideration for external candidate positions will be impacted by annual retirements and resignations after internal candidates. Summary and anticipated expenses were discussed for core classes and athletics.

Ms. Penix noted that staff had been provided this presentation to the board as the meeting happened, a meeting with the Personnel Policy Committee was also scheduled for January 12.

Mr. Person thanked the administration and staff for their commitment and time to this process.

Ms. Richardson requested that the administration communicate clearly with teachers in regards to reassignments to meet their wishes and needs.

Mr. Gilkey requested a fact sheet for parents. Ms. Penix stated that communication is being prepared for parents as well.

Mr. Mahan thanked principals and faculty for their time commitment to this process.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

Ms. McFerran congratulated Dr. Morawski on his first official board meeting as the new Superintendent for Fort Smith Public Schools.

Ms. McFerran requested that board members and administrators consider reading a section of the book *The One and Only Ivan* to Woods Elementary students.

Ms. Blackwell asked for an update on COVID testing at Northside High School. Mr. Layes provided an update on the two types of testing at Northside High School for staff and students.

Dr. Morawski reported that the transmission rate at the schools is still about 1%. Dr. Morawski added that the schools continue to be a safe environment. He added that one of the biggest

challenges is providing substitutes to cover classrooms due to quarantine of teachers. He noted that the District is prepared to pivot to online classes if needed. He reported that talks with state officials indicate scheduling vaccines for school personnel in February and talks with local pharmacies and hospitals are happening as well.

Mr. Person encouraged the District to continue to be creative and flexible in dealing with COVID situations.

Mr. Hanesworth thanked everyone for the efforts in dealing with the pandemic.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Bill Hanesworth, President

Dee Blackwell, Secretary