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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, February 27, 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. Vance Gregory, Director of Technology; Mr. Shawn Shaffer, Executive Director of Facility Operations; 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.

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

### **RECOGNITIONS**

Ms. Cooper presented the following recognitions.

#### February Superintendent Star Awards

Jeremiah Thomas – Ballman Elementary  
Cy Allen – Fairview Elementary  
Elyshah Releford – Howard Elementary  
Hamena Rodriguez – Morrison Elementary  
Mayla Minero – Park Elementary  
Julius Inthavongsa – Spradling Elementary  
Leonardo Kiatoukaysy – Sunnymede Elementary  
Mark Uribay – Sutton Elementary  
DaMarian KeShaun Canady – Tilles Elementary  
Jeremiah Johnston – Trusty Elementary  
Aison Wallace – Cavanaugh Elementary

The following counselors were recognized for receiving the American School Counselor Association's national model program (RAMP) designation: Cherri Byford and Cassidy Hodge, Darby Middle School; Kandace Weisenfels, Barling Elementary; Ginetta Tipton, Fairview Elementary and Hannah Massey, Woods Elementary.

Laurie Baldrige, K-12 Science Coordinator received Outstanding State Volunteer of the Year Award at the state's First Lego League (FLL) Tournament.

Fort Smith Public Schools had several teams participate in the State Robotics competition, where 3 three teams and one coach received special recognition. Woods Elementary received the Robot Performance Award, Ballman Elementary received the Breakthrough Award, Cook Elementary received the Motivate Award, and Rhonda Moore, Sutton Elementary received the Coach/Mentor Award.

The Southside Maverick Theatre was recognized for their many accomplishments at the Annual Arkansas State Thespian Festival. The students will compete at the International Thespian Festival in June. Their sponsor is Amy Pumphrey.

The following Southside High School students earned All-State honors for orchestra. Andrea Ortega - 1st Violin, Felicity Clayton - Viola, Tru Reynolds - Viola, Myles Flanders - Cello alt, Phoenix Chandler - Bass, Adren Stahl - Bass. These students are led by Mike Burkpile.

Southside DECA Students, under sponsor Adina Boatright, earned National Qualifier spots at state competition. These students will be competing and representing the state of Arkansas at DECA's International Career Development Conference in Orlando in April.

Northside's Grizzly Gear achieved Outstanding School-Based Enterprise at the DECA State Career Development Conference. They will be recognized during DECA's International Career Development Conference in Orlando, FL. The DECA chapter advisors are Jenny Craig and Linda Holland.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Morawski reported that the next board meeting will be March 13, 2023. Spring break will be March 20-25, 2023.

Dr. Morawski addressed concerns and questions regarding the Fairview HVHC indoor air quality project and asbestos abatement. A meeting with staff was held and a parent meeting will be held on Thursday, March 2, 2023 to address those concerns.

Dr. Morawski's report of Good Things Going on in the District included: 24 students participated in the Sebastian County Spelling Bee. Woods Elementary Student, Zeeshan Anower, won first place and will attend the state spelling bee. Southside High School celebrated AIMS scholars for their achievement on advanced placement tests, Senator John Bozeman toured Peak Innovation Center, the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith hosted a Trends in Education Panel several Fort Smith Public Schools administrators were part of that panel, and Northside High School presented a black history month program sponsored by Students Taking Aim at Tomorrow.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda included January 23 Minutes, January Financial Report, February Professional Staff Recommendations, February Student Services Report, and an ethics disclosure resolution.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteaker, to approve the consent agenda items as presented. The vote passed 7/0.

#### **LEGISLATIVE LIAISON UPDATE**

Dr. Morawski and Ms. Richardson, the board's legislative liaison, provided updates to several legislative bills. Dr. Morawski summarized parts of the LEARNS plan and its impact on education and the district.

This was an informational item and no action is required.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PROPOSED BUDGET OF EXPENDITURES WITH TAX LEVY FOR FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2025**

Mr. Warren provided the proposed budget of expenditures and the corresponding tax levy. It is a requirement to publish the budget and tax levy prior to the May 2023 election. The proposed budget is an estimation of the expenditures for fiscal year 2025. This proposed budget is based on the current rate of 42.058 mills.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the proposed budget of expenditures for fiscal year July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025 to be published as required by law. The vote passed 7/0.

**CONSIDER ADOPTING THE 2023-2024 CALENDAR**

Dr. Morawski reported with the release of the LEARNS bill districts are required to have in person instruction at schools for 178 days or 1,068 minutes. The proposed calendar was based on the availability of having alternative methods of instruction (AMI) days. AMI days are not prohibited however, no credit will be received for those days. A revised calendar will be brought before the board at another date.

While revising the proposed calendar, a review of looking at instructional time counted as minutes versus days will also be considered.

This was an informational item. No action is required.

**PRESENTATION - HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE**

The human resources team gave a presentation of current practices and processes as well as key initiatives their department has implemented.

Dr. Davis and Dr. Manley gave updates on the Apprenticeship Program, the Grow Your Own Program, and the Aspiring Leaders Institute. Each of these programs enable the District to hire high quality applicants and to develop them into campus leaders.

Human Resources partners with a company called Upbeat to assist with exit surveys. Upbeat provides a uniform, anonymous survey that provides feedback showing the indicating factors of why an employee is separating employment and also what can be done as a district to get better.

Dr. Davis stated that one of the biggest challenges human resources face is the decline in educator prep programs and having to become more creative with alternative licensure plans especially with high need campuses and hard to fill positions.

This was an informational item. No action is required.

**PRESENTATION - BARLING ELEMENTARY AREA ATTENDANCE ZONE UPDATE**

Mr. Mahan presented a general update and provided additional information concerning the Barling area attendance zone discussion.

A look back over the last thirty-five years was provided to see the differences in enrollment and how population of each high school has changed over the years. Projections indicate overall enrollment will stay relatively flat over the next ten years. Mr. Mahan also provided enrollment projections if the current boundary remained or if the boundary shifted Barling area attendance zone to Southside High School. These projections showed in a ten year forecast if the boundary remained the same Northside High School would be approximately 150 students larger than Southside High School. If Barling area attendance zone moved to Southside High School the ten year projection predicts Southside High School would have about 78 students more than Northside High School.

Survey results showed out of 112 respondents 81% was in favor of moving Barling area attendance zone to Southside High School, with 26% opposed, 3% had no opinion and 2% free to choose. Of the respondents 71% lived in the Barling area attendance zone and 29% were from the community.

Mr. Person made a motion for the beginning of the 2024-25 fiscal year Barling area attendance zone be transferred to Southside High School beginning with the ninth grade in that year. This would not impact any current high school student as of that fiscal year and that a bus providing transportation to Northside High School for tenth-twelfth grade from Barling be provided while this is phased in.

Ms. Blackwell called for a second but there was not one. The motion did not proceed.

Ms. Blackwell asked how the board would like to proceed. She asked if more information was needed or if this item would be tabled for a future date such as October 2023 when enrollment numbers for the next school year are in.

Ms. Richardson recommended looking at the entire district in October after the enrollment snapshot is in and numbers have stabilized.

Mr. Whiteaker adopted the motion for the beginning of the 2024-25 fiscal year Barling area attendance zone be transferred to Southside High School beginning with the ninth grade in that year. This would not impact any current high school student as of that fiscal year and that a bus providing transportation to Northside High School for tenth-twelfth grade from Barling be provided while this is phased in. Mr. Person seconded the motion. The motion failed with a vote of 5/2 with Ms. Blackwell, Ms. Richardson, Ms. Dixon, Mr. Chitwood, and Mr. Blaylock opposing.

Ms. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to table the Barling Elementary area attendance zone and discuss again in mid-October after snapshot day and possibly discuss zoning of the district at large. The motion passed 5/2 with Mr. Person and Mr. Whiteaker opposing.

#### **PRESENTATION - DISTRICT CONSTRUCTION UPDATE**

Mr. Velasquez presented an update on the child nutrition freezer upgrade and remodeling the child nutrition location at the service center. These updates would include an addition of 1,200 square feet to the south end of Building C. This will provide 4,600 square feet of freezer/cooler space and 1,400 square feet of dry storage space. The cost of this remodel \$1,460,000. Approximately 62% of that will be funded through ESSER funds. Facilities is working to see if the remaining portion can be funded by ESSER as well.

Mr. Velasquez also provided a status of ongoing projects in the District and each stage they are in.

This was an informational item. No action is required.

Mr. Velasquez answered several board members questions regarding the Fairview Elementary asbestos abatement schedule. Work on this project is scheduled to start the week of spring break (March 20-24, 2023) and will take four and half months to complete.

Mr. Shaffer will discuss with the construction manager the possibility of pushing the start date to June 1.

**BOARD MEMBERS FORUM**

The next regular scheduled board meeting is Monday, March 13, 2023.

Ms. Dixon asked the board to consider having a work session. Ms. Blackwell reminded everyone of the ways to call a meeting outside of the regularly scheduled meetings.

Ms. Richardson thanked Dr. Morawski for speaking to members of the NAACP and presenting a legislative update to this group.

**ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 PM.

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Dee Blackwell, President

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Dalton Person, Secretary