

Board of Education

Minutes of The Board of Education

A Regular School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held Monday, December 18, 2023, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg. B, Auditorium, 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

Mr. Dalton Person, president, called the meeting to order noting six board members were present. Other board members present were: Mr. Phil Whiteaker, Mr. Matt Blaylock, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Ms. Sandy Dixon and Ms. Susan Krafft. Ms. Talicia Richardson was not in attendance. District administrators present included: Dr. Terry Morawski, Superintendent; Mr. Martin Mahan, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Chris Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Campus Support; 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. Zena Featherston Marshall, Executive Director, Community & Business Partnerships; 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 via Zoom.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Mahan presented the following recognitions:

December Superintendent Star Awards

Yazmin Block – Beard Elementary
Axel Gonzalez – Cook Elementary
Gabi Gregory – Orr Elementary
Lincoln McClain – Carnall Elementary
Hunter McKeen – Cavanaugh Elementary
Anna Nguyen – Barling Elementary
Brody Pate – Bonneville Elementary
Rex Steward – Euper Lane Elementary

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski reported that he and board member Mr. Phil Whiteaker attended the Arkansas School Board Association (ASBA) Conference that was held on December 6-8, 2023 in Little Rock. Mr. Whiteaker attended the ASBA Delegate meeting on behalf of the board of education.

The upcoming school board election will be held on March 5, 2024. It is likely the March school board meeting will take place before the election results will be certified. Therefore, the new board will be sworn in and seated by the April 22, 2024 meeting. There are two unopposed candidates for the positions of Zone II and Zone III.

Dr. Morawski stated that the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) announced the realignment of football conferences for the next school year. Due to a point system of private school teams, both Fort Smith Public Schools high schools were impacted. Northside High School will move to the 7A West Conference and Southside High School will move to the 6A West. This will only affect football and no other sports.

Minutes

December 18, 2023

Page 2

The winter break for students began on December 18, 2023 until January 2, 2024. Students will return to school on January 3, 2024.

The next regular school board meeting will be on January 22, 2024 at 5:30 PM.

Dr Morawski's Good Things Going on the District included: Northside varsity cheer team competed at the Heritage High School cheer competition winning highest score of the day. Individual members recognized were Dayton Tegan, second place, for tumbling and Steven Vargas, second place, for individual jumps; Southside varsity cheer team competed at Bentonville High School where they won Overall Grand Champs, Best Band Chant, and Best Fight Song; Northside High School hosted a canned food drive competition where Morrison Elementary collected over 2,700 cans to win a pep rally with Northside High School students; Peak Innovation Center hosted the Lego Robotics State Qualifier Tournament where twenty-five teams from Fort Smith Public Schools competed; Kimmons Middle School Gifted and Talented students and the basketball teams participated in the 14th annual Christmas Honors Program creating wreaths that will decorate veterans headstones at the National Cemetery; the Chaffin Middle School Quiz Bowl team finished in second place at competition; the Northside Grizzly Battalion Color Guard presented the colors at the University of Arkansas women's basketball game; students from Fairview Elementary performed as the gingerbread children at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith opera and musical theater performance of Hansel and Gretel; the Northside Lady Bears basketball team won the 2023 Tournament of Champions; Southside baseball team spent time with the residents at Methodist Village Senior Living; to promote healthy living the school based health center used an Arkansas Department of Education grant to purchase a kickball for every Darby Middle School and Tilles Elementary School student.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included the November Financial Statement, November 13 Minutes, December Professional Staff Recommendations, the Community Service Learning Partner Site Applications and the United Way Parents as Teachers Contract agreement.

Mr. Blaylock requested that the item number 8.4, Community Service Learning Partner Site Applications be removed for individual consideration.

Mr. Chitwood made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dixon, to approve the consent agenda with the exception of the Community Service Learning Partner Site Applications. The vote passed 6-0.

At 5:44 PM, Mr. Blaylock recused himself from this agenda item.

Ms. Dixon made a motion, seconded by Ms. Krafft, to approve Community Service Learning Partner Site Application. The vote passed 5-0.

Note: Mr. Blaylock returned to the meeting at 5:45 PM.

PRESENTATION – FACILITIES LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mr. Shaffer introduced Mr. Stovall, Committee Chairman, to present an update regarding the long term facility plans. Mr. Stovall stated the committee's goal is to rightsize Fort Smith Public Schools so it can use the District's assets to support student success. Meeting these goals will ensure safety and efficiency, will rightsize the elementary schools and target a utilization rate of +/- 80%.

Mr. Stovall also gave a breakdown of the district facilities. This information included over 3 million square feet of facilities, 33 campuses/sites, 119 buildings, and the average age of facilities is 63 years.

The committee will present an in-depth presentation to the school board at the April 2024 meeting.

This is an information item and no action is required.

PRESENTATION – FACILITIES PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. Velasquez invited each of the various team construction managers to present an update to their ongoing projects in the district.

Mr. Robert Wiggins with Nabolz Construction reported on the indoor air quality project at Northside High School. All rooftop units have been delivered and eighteen units were installed and commissioned over the Thanksgiving break. The remaining sixteen units is scheduled to be installed over Christmas break. The controls integration will continue into the spring semester with substantial completion planned for May 2024. Work on the school based health clinic is forecasted to begin in February 2024 with construction estimated to last ten months. The design of the Peak art program is complete with construction estimated to start in January 2024 with a four month duration.

Mr. Jimmy Smyth with C.R. Crawford Construction updated the board on the projects they have been working on. The Kimmons Middle School cafeteria addition has progressed significantly. The current projects to this addition include boring for utilities, setting the new HVAC unit, and continue masonry. The estimated date for completion is late March 2024. The Ballman Elementary indoor air quality project is substantially complete and all spaces are being utilized.

Ms. Kelly Wilson of Beshears Construction reported on the work of the Morrison Elementary classroom addition. The 12,000 square foot addition includes ten classrooms and is estimated to be complete in the Spring 2024. The Darby Middle School indoor air quality project includes four new HVAC units for the gym and new ductwork. This project will be complete in January 2024.

Mr. David McWilliams with Clark Contractors updated the board that the child nutrition freezer renovation began on November 27, 2023. The old freezer and cooler have been demolished. Pouring of the building pad for the pre-engineered metal building has begun. This project is scheduled for completion in April 2024. The construction documents for the Ramsey Middle School restoration has been submitted to the Department of Education and the city of Fort Smith for plan review. This project is expected to start in early February and complete in May 2024.

Mr. Brandon Rackstraw of Coryell Roofing stated the re-roof project at Kimmons Middle School will begin at the end of January 2024 and should take 45-60 days to complete. This work will be done at night to be less disruptive to the staff and students.

Mr. Travis Martin with Martin & Company reported that the theatrical lighting and controls have been delivered and installation has begun. The electrical work for the house lighting will begin in January and should be completed in February 2024.

Mr. Galen Hunter with Mahg Architecture updated the board on the Peak drainage project. Exploratory investigations of the existing roof drain system has been conducted. A mockup of a proposed solution to rework the drain has been sent to the design team review. Mr. Hunter also informed the board of the plans for demolition and graveling of the properties adjacent to Northside (2309 Rogers Avenue, 2321 Rogers Avenue, and 225 Belle Avenue).

This is a presentation item only and no action is required.

PRESENTATION - ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Dr. Starr presented an update of the assessment results from the administration of IStation for grades Kindergarten – Second grade. IStation is a statewide assessment that measures students in their development and progress in math and reading. Dr. Starr detailed each of the elementary schools and the percentages of students that scored proficient as well as the percentage of students in need of support in math and/or reading. The next assessment will take place in January 2024.

This was a presentation item only and no action is required.

PRESENTATION – SCHOOL SAFETY – WEAPONS DETECTION SYSTEM

Mr. Mahan presented information regarding the district’s school safety assessment and weapons detection systems research. He also introduced a proposed five year implementation plan. This plan is fluid and can be reassessed each year.

Mr. Mahan stated that the committee did agree that the most impressive system was the weapons detection camera system. This approach would equip all campuses with exterior cameras to detect weapons in the parking lots and sidewalks. This system would also be placed strategically inside of the buildings. A request for proposal will be issued for the cost of the equipment and recommendations for camera placement. That proposal will be brought to the board for approval. Mr. Mahan requested that at that time the board go into executive session to discuss more specific questions regarding the number of cameras that would be equipped. The estimated subscription cost of this system is \$300,000 - \$500,000 annually.

Mr. Chitwood asked where the funding source for these systems would come from. Mr. Warren answered that there are identified funds available to cover the software costs. The annual costs would then be part of the natural budget process fiscal year of 2025.

This is an information item and no recommendation is required.

PRESENTATION - ATTENDANCE ZONES (MORRISON AND HOWARD)

Mr. Mahan stated the process of closing Trusty Elementary began in 2018 with the Vision 2023 assessment of all of the facilities. Issues were found at Trusty Elementary, specifically only one classroom meets state requirements for the size, there are system problems, and the inability to offer Pre-K due to it not meeting Pre-K standards.

Mr. Mahan recapped the three proposals for the attendance boundary changes:

1. Adjust Howard Elementary and Morrison Elementary boundary lines to match the existing middle school boundary lines. The enrollment projections with this plan for next school year would move Howard Elementary to 274 students and Morrison Elementary with 528 students.
2. Extend Howard Elementary boundary line further North beyond the existing Middle School attendance boundary line. The enrollment projections with this plan for next school year would have Howard Elementary with 298 students and Morrison Elementary with 504 students.
3. Adjust Howard Elementary and Morrison Elementary boundary lines to match the existing middle school boundary lines. This plan would adjust the Tilles Elementary boundaries further Northwest to cover the neighborhood East of Midland Boulevard/11th Street. The enrollment

projections with this plan for next school year would have Howard Elementary with 225 students, Morrison Elementary with 528 students, and Tilles Elementary with 396 students.

Informational nights that were held at Morrison, Howard, and Trusty Elementary were very well attended.

Mr. Whiteaker asked what will be done with the vacant Trusty building. Mr. Mahan answered there will be a study as to what to do with that property and that will be brought back to the board.

Ms Dixon made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chitwood, to approve the boundary proposal plan 1 as presented. The vote passed 6-0.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

The next regular scheduled meeting will be Monday, January 22, 2024.

Mr. Chitwood recognized Dr. Tony Jones for his volunteerism and involvement in the community.

Mr. Person stated the Peak review is ongoing and one onsite inspection has occurred with a second one planned. The second inspection will focus on the roofing component. A report to the board is tentatively planned for February.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM.

President, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education