



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, July 18, 2022, 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 six board members were present and Ms. Richardson would be arriving late. Other board members present were: 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; Mr. Charles Warren, Chief Financial Officer; Dr. Michael Farrell, 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. Leslie Phelps, Office Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. Mr. Marshall Ney, of Friday, Eldridge, and Clark, District Attorney was also in attendance.

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

Ms. Richardson entered the meeting at 5:31 PM.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski addressed questions from the previous board meeting regarding exit survey processes. Dr. Davis and his team will continue to work to gather information and the best practices for the exit survey process. Their findings will be reported to the Board at a future meeting.

Dr. Morawski stated that updated information regarding potential causes and solutions to the Peak flooding incident will most likely be given at the next regular meeting.

Dr. Morawski stated the finalized capital projects budget will be presented at the next regular meeting. This will include an overall discussion regarding the budget for the upcoming school year.

Dr. Morawski reported on the continued processes that are in place to minimize the spread of COVID. These processes include each class being sanitized by a fogger at least once per day. Touchpoints are sanitized throughout the day. Hand sanitizer dispensers are in the classrooms and common areas. Spray bottle of hypochlorous acid is given to each staff member upon request. Other supplies, like gloves and wipes, can be made available to staff through their supervisor.

Dr. Morawski reported the following upcoming events: New teacher onboarding on August 2, an Active Shooter Drill at Woods Elementary August 6 and 7, Board Training and Team Building August 9, Launch for Learning August 16 at Northside High School arena. Regular scheduled board meeting August 22, which is also the first day of the 2022-23 school year.

Dr. Davis recognized the following employees in new positions in the District.

Ms. Dominique Alexander – Director of Special Education
Mr. Chris Carter – Principal, Northside High School
Ms. JamieAnn Hopton – Principal, Sutton Elementary School

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms Dixon stated she has no problem abstaining from any Turn Key projects and their involvement concerning the Peak Center. However, as a citizen if there is information that can be freedom of information act requested she will not have a problem answering those questions.

Ms. Blackwell remarked that there would be further discussion later in the meeting if she had something else to add.

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

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN DISTRICT AND CONTRACTOR REGARDING PEAK

At 5:42 pm, Ms. Dixon recused herself from this agenda item. Ms. Dixon is a principal of the contractor.

Ms. Blackwell noted that Mr. Ney, District Attorney, was present for any questions.

Ms. Blackwell stated due to a conflict of interest that can exist among an open project with the Peak Center, Turn Key Construction, and a board member being the owner of that company it is important to maintain the integrity of the board and the District. Ms. Blackwell recommends the Board direct staff and administration to limit communication regarding Peak Center to a designee of Turn Key that is not a board member.

Ms. Blackwell stated the designee would be left to Turn Key to choose that individual. The concern is to provide some direction to the staff and administration. The Board is being proactive and transparent and the Board will want to follow best practices.

Mr. Ney suggested language for the motion is to direct Turn Key to designate a point of contact for the management of the Turn Key contract with the District and direct that staff communicate exclusively with that point of contact or that point of contact's designee.

Mr. Person made a motion, as proposed by legal counsel, in the form proposed by legal counsel. Ms. Richardson seconded the motion. The vote passed 6-0.

Note: Ms. Dixon returned to the meeting at 5:59 PM.

CONSIDER APPROVING CHILD NUTRITION MEAL PRICES FOR 2022-2023

Mr. Warren stated the waiver that provided free breakfasts and lunches during the pandemic has expired. Fort Smith Public Schools will continue to pay for breakfasts under a program that was developed before the pandemic, continuing to make breakfasts free. It has been five years since meal prices have been looked at.

Mr. Chitwood asked if there was a possibility to postpone the increase until next school year. Mr. Warren stated that Fort Smith Public Schools would have the ability to forgo the increase in student meal prices for this school year.

Ms. Richardson requested that the staff look at creative ways to help children with food insecurities. Ms. Christian, Director, Child Nutrition explained if food is used for a meal or it is claimed for reimbursement there are restrictions of reusing or re-gifting that food. However, she will look at the possibility of using samples they are given or explore other avenues.

Mr. Warren asked that action be considered to approve the price of an extra milk for 2022-23 to \$0.50.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, to approve the child nutrition meal prices for 2022-23 solely with respect to the extra milk price increase.

After discussion, Ms. Richardson clarified the motion before the board, stating to accept only the increase of milk prices as presented. In addition, free student breakfast program for the 2022-23 school year will continue and no changes to the student or adult meal prices for 2022-23.

Mr. Person accepted the proposed motion. Mr. Whiteaker seconded the motion.

The vote passed 7-0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-2023

Dr. Morawski stated it is required by the state that school improvement plans be approved prior to August 1. This deadline is before test scores are received so some planning has to be amended afterwards.

Ms. Richardson requested each high school's plans be brought back and presented to the Board when actual numbers are available.

Mr. Chitwood made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blaylock, to approve the school improvement plan for the 2022-23 school year.

The voted passed 7-0.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be August 22, 2022, which is also the first day of school.

Mr. Blaylock stated this school Board does not have any say in Greenwood Public Schools building a school with a Fort Smith address. That decision is up to the Fort Smith City Directors.

Ms. Blackwell concurred that is not under the School Board's jurisdiction. That is the Fort Smith City Directors decision.

Mr. Chitwood asked how information regarding free and reduced lunch applications were being relayed to families. Mr. Warren stated the applications have been promoted on social media. The child nutrition team will be at different school events promoting the online renewal and the staff at schools will also be helping with applications.

Ms. Blackwell recapped several items for future feedback: creative ways to help with food insecurities, including an organized method of sharing information for free and reduced applications and the high schools to bring address the capital improvement plans once data is received.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 PM.

Dee Blackwell, President

Dalton Person, Secretary