



## 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, May 24, 2021, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg B., 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

Mr. Hanesworth, president, called the meeting to order. Other board members present were Ms. Susan McFerran, Ms. Talicia Richardson, Mr. Dalton Person, Ms. Yvonne Keaton-Martin, Ms. Dee Blackwell. Mr. Wade Gilkey was not in attendance. 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.

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

### **RECOGNITIONS**

#### Superintendent Star Awards

Superintendent Stars are selected for this recognition by their principals and teachers as students who are exceptional citizens and who consistently make good choices.

Jayda, Allen, Howard Elementary School  
Kashmir Criswell, Spradling Elementary School  
Cameron Humphries, Carnall Elementary School  
Brandon Martinez Gonzales, Tilles Elementary School  
Caleb Medlyn, Orr Elementary School  
Kyrin Phongsavath, Fairview Elementary School  
Allie Kate Thompson, Woods Elementary School  
Amanda Trantham, Pike Elementary School  
Jakobe Travis, Barling Elementary School  
Bryson Vaughn, Beard Elementary School

Fairview Elementary student Chloe Durham was surprised on Friday with the American Legion Auxiliary National and Local Hero & Good Deed Award Chloe received this award for her work in collecting over 300 blankets for the homeless.

Southside High School senior Marlon Briggs Jr. was awarded the 2021 Arkansas Boys & Girls Clubs Youth of the Year. Marlon first joined the Boys & Girls Club in elementary school and

continues to serve as a volunteer, helping out wherever he is needed. Marlon will represent Arkansas in the Southwest Regional Competition in June.

The Southside High School Maverick Quiz Bowl team won the 2021 7A Arkansas Governor's Quiz Bowl Association State Championship held on Saturday, April 24. The Mavericks defeated Bryant 325-285 in a close match. This is the 6th state title for the Maverick Quiz Bowl Team. Team members are Jonathan Hernandez, Zainab Bashir, Zain Rana, Alex Rahal, Christian Morales, Victor Nguyen, Haris Rana, Vivian Apple, Callie Shannon, Andrea Ortega, Emma Paulus and Captain Jack Minnick. Josh Adams is the Maverick Quiz Bowl coach.

Junior Alcala, Emmanuel Uribe and Slate Stanton became the first Northside High School esports team to win the 2021 Super Smash Bros Ultimate State Championship. April Coats is their sponsor.

Southside High School's Maverick Track and Field team won the Arkansas High School State Track and Field Championship in the 4x400 with a time of 3:25:89. Team members are Landry Grandstaff, John Greenfield, Xander Naegle and Matt Haddock. Their winning time was the fastest recorded throughout Arkansas for the 2020-2021 season. Their coaches are Aaron Kareus and Brad West.

Northside High School's Grizzly Track and Field team won the Arkansas High School State Track and Field Championship in the 4x100. The team completed this event with a time of 42:10. Team members are Dreyden Norwood, Tyheen Prosis, DaMari Smith and Avonte Tucker. Their coaches are Jeff Lewis and Felix Curry.

Jacob Weaver and Theavan Saitang, both from Southside High School became national winners over the weekend, earning the title of Best Newscast: Radio or Television from the National Federation of Press Women, Inc. Marissa Goodwin also earned national recognition, winning first place in Sports Photography. Congratulations to the Mav Media students!

Belle Point PE teacher Grant Needham was named the 2020-2021 Society and Health of Physical Educators Arkansas (SHAPE) High School Teacher of the Year. Mr. Needham is a graduate of Northside High School and has been the PE teacher at Belle Point for four years.

Dr. Lisa Miller, principal of Southside High School, was named the Arkansas Scholastic Press Association Administrator of the Year. Maverick Media staff members nominated Dr. Miller for this award because of her tireless support of Mav Media and her confidence in scholastic journalism to contribute to a positive environment that motivates students and provides an avenue for learning and creativity.

#### **CITIZENS PARTICIPATION**

There was no one present for Citizens Participation.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Morawski reported that prior to the board meeting this evening, board members, and FSPS administrators had attended the ABB announcement of the \$1Million donation for the Peak Center.

Dr. Morawski reported that a food distribution event was held at Sunnymede Elementary School with many families attending.

Dr. Morawski reported that the District held the two graduation ceremonies last week despite some rain.

Dr. Morawski reported that 2020 and 2021 employees that retired or are retiring, and employees with years of service were recognized at a picnic event last week.

Dr. Morawski recognized Mr. Bill Hanesworth on his last night as a board member for the District. Mr. Hanesworth served six years and this past year as president. Mr. Hanesworth served during the development of the strategic planning and the passing of the millage increase. On behalf of the District staff, Dr. Morawski thanked him for his service.

Mr. Hanesworth stated that it had been a great experience personally. He reflected back on the past six years, encouraging board members and staff that when looking at the “road ahead” to pay attention to what other districts are doing and speak often with legislatures. Mr. Hanesworth said when asked what accomplishments he was most proud of, he answered 1) security upgrades in the schools, 2) that during a COVID pandemic, the District had schools open when many did not, and 3) #Ontrack, getting students grades up to passing when they became disengaged and were failing.

Board members thanked Mr. Hanesworth for his service, leadership and commitment.

Dr. Morawski presented Mr. Hanesworth with a plaque for his service.

Vice President Richardson presided over the meeting at this point as Mr. Hanesworth departed.

### **ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF THE CERTIFICATION OF THE 2021 SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION FOR THE SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF FORT SMITH**

Dr. Morawski reported that results of the 2021 School Board Election for the Special School District of Fort Smith were certified on May 24 by the Sebastian County Board of Election Commissioners. The certification was provided for the board’s review.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, to acknowledge receipt of the election results as presented. The vote passed 5/0.

### **SWEARING IN OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Dr. Morawski introduced former board member and Judge Greg Magness to swear in new board members, Mr. Troy Eckelhoff and Mr. Matt Blaylock, and reelected board member Ms. Yvonne Keaton-Martin.

Judge Magness swore in board members for the next school year and Mr. Eckelhoff and Mr. Blaylock joined the meeting.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Dr. Morawski reported that the election of officers for the upcoming year coincides with the annual school board election each year. He invited board members to submit a slate or individual nominations.

Ms. Richardson asked for nominations from board members.

Ms. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Keaton-Martin, to nominate Ms. McFerran for president.

Mr. Person asked Ms. McFerran if she was willing to serve as president. Ms. McFerran stated that she would be happy to serve for one year having served three years during her years as a board member. Mr. Person asked Ms. Richardson as the current vice-president, if she was interested in serving as president. Ms. Richardson stated that she was not interested in serving at this time. She added the presidency is a position that needs a lot of attention and time. As Ms. McFerran stated, she has served previously and is familiar with the responsibilities associated with that role.

With no further discussion, the vote passed 7/0.

At this point, Ms. McFerran presided over the meeting. Ms. McFerran asked for a motion for nomination for vice president.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Keaton-Martin, to nominate Ms. Richardson as vice-president. There was no further discussion. The vote passed 7/0.

Ms. McFerran asked for a motion for nomination for secretary.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Eckelhoff, to nominate Ms. Blackwell for secretary. There was no further discussion. The vote passed 7/0.

### **DESIGNATION OF BOARD DISBURSING OFFICERS**

Dr. Morawski reported at the first regular meeting following the annual school election, the Board of Education of each school district must designate one of its members who shall serve as the primary board disbursing officer of the District. The Board may designate one or more of its members as an alternate board disbursing officer in the absence of the designated primary

board officer. Dr. Morawski stated that the President and Vice-President have traditionally been designated as the primary and alternate board disbursing officers, respectively.

Ms. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Person, to nominate Ms. Susan McFerran as primary Board Disbursing Officer and Ms. Richardson as Alternate Board Disbursing Officer to serve until the next annual election. The vote passed 7/0.

The administration recommended that the Board adopt the resolution designating Ms. Susan McFerran as primary board disbursing officer and Ms. Talicia Richardson as alternate board disbursing officer to serve until the next annual election.

Ms. Keaton-Martin made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, to adopt the resolution designating Ms. McFerran as primary Board Disbursing Officer and Ms. Richardson as Alternate Board Disbursing Officer to serve until the next annual election. The vote passed 7/0.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda included April 26 Minutes, May 10 and May 12 Minutes, April Financial Report, May Professional Staff Recommendations, May Student Services Report, adoption of updates for student related policy changes for second reading, adoption of updates for licensed and classified personnel policies, approval of migrant grant application assurances, and approval of the 2021 2022 Board of Education meeting schedule.

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

#### **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CORE LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ADOPTION FOR 2021-2027**

Dr. Mary Ann Johns, Director of Elementary Education introduced Ms. Tracy Newhart to present K-5 Core Literacy instructional materials for 2021-2027 adoption. Also in attendance were four principals who co-chaired the committee, five teachers, and one of the students who was on the committee. Dr. Johns stated that never in the history of the District had a more intensive amount of time and number of people been involved in an adoption of instructional material. Materials were reviewed and piloted before selections were made. A K-5 committee was established, and in consideration of the instructional differences between the lower and upper grades, the committee was divided into two sub-committees representing the grade bands of K-2 and 3-5. Each sub-committee was composed of teachers, content coordinators, parents, students, community representatives, teacher college representatives, and educational administrators. Seventy-seven committee members met throughout the 2020-21 school year spending 150 hours to examine available and relevant instructional resources, and to review data collected through on-site piloting of the materials in district classrooms.

Ms. Newhart reported that the K-5 Core Literacy Program Selection Committee recommended the purchase and use of Benchmark Literacy as instructional resources for core literacy for the six-year adoption period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2027.

After discussion, Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, to approve Benchmark Literacy as core literacy instructional resources to be used in K-5 classrooms during the six-year adoption period. The vote passed 7/0.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF AP SCIENCE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ADOPTION FOR 2021-2022**

Mr. Mahan introduced Dr. Ginni McDonald to present AP Science instructional materials for adoption. Dr. McDonald recognized Ms. Jennifer Steele, Assistant Principal at Northside High School who chaired the AP Science Adoption Committee and Ms. Leslie Brody, K-12 District Science Coordinator in attendance. College Board requires that districts provide students with access to current college level science instructional materials. In response to the science standards and College Board guidelines, a committee that consisted of teachers, parents, students, community members, content coordinators and administrators convened multiple times to discuss the current standards, College Board guidelines, and the available resources. Students who reviewed the textbooks provided feedback stating that the specific textbook pertained to the information that will be included on the AP exam.

The committee recommended purchasing the following textbooks for Advanced Placement Science:

- Human Anatomy and Physiology – Pearson
- Campbell Biology in Focus – Pearson
- Exploring Environmental Science for AP – National Geographic/Cengage
- Chemistry: A Molecular Approach – Pearson
- College Physics: A Strategic Approach - Pearson

Ms. Talicia Richardson made a motion, seconded by Troy Eckelhoff, to approve the AP Science Instructional Materials Adoption for 2021-2022 as presented. The vote passed 7/0.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED LOW VOLTAGE ELECTRONIC SAFETY AND SECURITY & PREMISE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS**

Mr. Mahan introduced Mr. James Adams, HPM, to present the recommended low voltage electronic safety and security and premise distribution systems. Mr. Adams reviewed the process and timeline for request for qualifications (RFQ), submittals, candidate interviews, recommendation to District leadership and recommendations to the board. Mr. Adams reported there was only one contractor that submitted an RFQ. He noted that this work is very specialized, involving a lot of high tech access control with a very aggressive schedule. An interview and score sheet was completed even though only one candidate submitted an RFQ. The score sheet was provided for the Board to review.

A schedule of the Request for Qualifications process is listed below.

Date	Construction RFQ Event

May 6, 2021	RFQ Advertised on District Website
May 2, 2021	RFQ Advertised in Newspaper
May 17, 2021	RFQ Response Deadline
May 18, 2021	RFQ Response Scoring & Evaluation
May 24, 2021	<i>Board Considers Award of RFQ</i>

After discussion, Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Keaton-Martin, to award the Low Voltage Electronic Safety and Security & Premise Distribution System contract to Advantage Security. The vote passed 7/0.

### **CONSIDER ENDING MASK POLICY FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF**

Dr. Morawski stated that by affirmative vote on July 13, 2020, the Board approved a Mask Policy for Students and Staff that would continue until further action of the Board. Since adoption of the Mask Policy, the circumstances of COVID-19 have improved, the Governor has ended the State's mask mandate, and a new law has been enacted that soon will prohibit future mask mandates. The administration's recommendation is that the Mask Policy should be allowed to expire immediately after the conclusion of the current school year. Currently the last day of the school year is May 28, 2021.

Mr. Eckelhoff made a motion, seconded by Blaylock, to end the mask policy for students and staff effective at close of the school day on May 28, 2021. The vote passed 7/0.

Ms. Richardson noted that the Health Department stated that Sebastian County has less than the national and state average at 21 to 22% . Dr. Morawski stated that students and staff will be allowed to wear masks if they choose.

### **PRESENTATION - SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE**

Mr. Warren provided a review of the Revenue Report that was revealed to the board during the Four Factors of Funding presentation at the May 10 Work Session. Mr. Warren reported that there was not enough new information to recommend a salary raise to the base salary for 2021-2022. Mr. Warren reported on the reallocation of \$3 million in ESSER operating costs into the third allocation. Mr. Warren recognized staff members Angie Davis, Kelly Davis, Dawn Eacret, Bryan Hewitt, Leslie Phelps and Emily Williams for their efforts in the reallocation of these funds. Because of this, the administration will be able to recommend that the Board approve a nonrecurring salary payment of \$1,250 for each current, active full-time employee of the District (Certified staff, Classified Staff, Bus Drivers and Bus Aides). If hired after 12/31/2020 the payment is \$625. Mr. Warren reported that the District has an opportunity to be innovative in working toward a pathway to \$15 per hour plan to compete with in the marketplace. This targeted group of employees include secretarial/office staff, paraprofessionals, bus aides and child nutrition staff. Mr. Warren reported that the State of Arkansas has provided a one time declining enrollment fund program to districts because foundation funding rate is based upon your prior year enrollment. This allows Districts to get a portion of foundation funding rate per student to bridge through the 2022 school year due to the third quarter drop in enrollment. Mr.

Warren reported that the administration has identified funding sources (Operating, ESA and ESSER funds) to support the FY22 staffing needs of the District due to grade reconfiguration.

Board members thanked Mr. Warren and his team for their efforts toward funding of salaries for 2021-2022 and payments.

**CONSIDER APPROVING PROPOSED 2021-2022 SALARY SCHEDULES**

Ms. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Keaton-Martin, to approve the 2021-2022 salary schedules as presented. The vote passed 6/0. Mr. Person recused himself due to family member employed by the District.

**CONSIDER APPROVING A NONRECURRING SALARY PAYMENT IN FY21**

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Eckelhoff, to approve a nonrecurring salary payment to current, active full-time District employees for 2021 as presented. The vote passed 6/0. Mr. Person recused himself due to family member employed by the District.

**BOARD MEMBERS FORUM**

Mr. Person returned to the meeting.

Ms McFerran welcomed new board members Mr. Blaylock and Mr. Eckelhoff.

Ms. Richardson requested a team building session for board members.

Dr. Morawski stated that he would look into scheduling for summer.

Mr. Blaylock requested an update on the Peak Center and Morrison Elementary School.

**ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

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Susan McFerran, President

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Dee Blackwell, Secretary