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## Board of Education

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### Minutes

#### The Board of Education

A Called School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held Monday, February 7, 2022, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg. B, Auditorium, 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

Ms. McFerran, president, called the meeting to order. Other board members present were: Ms. Talicia Richardson, Mr. Dalton Person, Ms. Dee Blackwell, Mr. Matt Blaylock, Ms. Yvonne Keaton-Martin and Mr. Troy Eckelhoff. 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; 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, Office Manager to the Superintendent. Ms. Katie Campbell, of Friday, Eldridge and Clark, District Attorney was also in attendance.

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

Dr. Morawski reported that the next board of education meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2022. He stated that agenda items included an onboarding presentation by Dr. Davis, a presentation by Susanna Post, Teacher of the Year, the facility naming policy, Mr. Warren will provide a proposed budget publication for approval and Mr. Shaffer will present RFQs for consideration.

Dr. Morawski reported that other upcoming board meeting dates are March 14 for a regularly scheduled board meeting, April 11 Work Session and April 25 for a regularly scheduled board meeting.

Dr. Morawski reported that should the board have legal questions, Ms. Katie Campbell, legal advisor from Friday Eldridge and Clark, was attending by Zoom since Mr. Ney was not able to attend.

#### **CITIZENS PARTICIPATION**

Ms. McFerran recognized the following citizens to speak.

Ms. Lacy McCain spoke in regards to mask or face coverings and action by legislation, Governor Hutchinson and Mr. Johnny Key's recent statements regarding quarantining and contact tracing and allowing schools districts to make those decisions.

Ms. Amy Anderson spoke regarding which masks work and which masks do not. She asked that the board end the mask mandate.

#### **COVID UPDATE & RELATED PROCEDURES**

Dr. Morawski reported two major developments. COVID positive cases have declined from the highest number of the year on January 14 with 641 cases (520 students and 121 staff members) to 43 (27 students and 16 staff members) today on February 7. These numbers reflect a steep and steady decline

in the past three weeks. Additionally, the Governor stated at a recent press conference, school districts are no longer required to report contact tracing. Dr. Morawski's recommendation was to let the mask mandate expire based on these two developments.

Mr. Blaylock made a motion, seconded by Mr. Eckelhoff, to end the mask mandate effective immediately.

Ms. Richardson referenced the ACHI model that Mr. Person recommended in December and stated that had the Board adopted that in December, this would have given the Superintendent the ability to make those decisions when the numbers were at 49. She also commended the staff for their diligence in keeping kids safe through sanitary and safety measures. Ms. Richardson stated that these decisions to put the mask mandate in place were never easy to make.

Ms. Blackwell stated that the Governor's decision was good for the District. Ms. Blackwell asked if COVID leave and excused absences were still in place. Dr. Morawski stated that this practice was still in place and he expected it to continue.

Mr. Person stated that he also was pleased with the Governor's decision and that the decision to put the mask mandate in place kept the District schools open while other districts had to close.

There was no further discussion and the vote passed 7/0.

#### **BOARD MEMBERS FORUM**

Ms. McFerran stated that Ms. Keaton-Martin's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday was this week and all sang happy birthday.

#### **ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

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Susan McFerran, President

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Dee Blackwell, Secretary