



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, August 26, 2024, 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

Mr. Dalton Person, president, called the meeting to order noting seven board members were present. Other board members present were: Mr. Phil Whiteaker, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Mr. Matt Blaylock, Ms. Susan Krafft, Ms. Lynnett Lott, and Ms. Talicia Richardson. 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. Shawn Shaffer, Executive Director of Facility Operations; Mr. Vance Gregory, Director of Technology; Ms. Zena Featherston Marshall, Executive Director, Community & Business 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.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Mahan presented the following recognitions:

Bonneville Elementary was recognized for reaching High Reality Schools Level 2 Certification.

Orr Elementary achieved High Reliability Schools Level 4 Certification.

The following Orr Elementary teachers reached High Reliability Teacher Level 2 certification: Nicole Franklin, Kristel Knubley, and Kim Gillman.

Annalee York, Katie Rauch, LaDonna Devine, Holly Pixley, and Elizabeth Buerghler, all teachers at Orr Elementary, earned High Reliability Teachers, Level 1 Course 1 Certification.

CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION

None.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski informed the board of several key events. The Battle of Rogers Avenue football game will be on Friday, August 30, 2024 at Mayo Thompson Stadium; the District will be closed on Monday, September 2, 2024 to observe Labor Day; the School Based Health Center Community Health Fair will be held at Darby Middle School on Saturday, September 14, 2024; and the next regular board meeting is Monday, September 23, 2024.

Dr. Morawski informed the board that enrollment numbers for the start of school increased by approximately 90 students.

Dr. Morawski reported that the number of students that were class sized this year was 178. Dr. Morawski stated that continued efforts are being made to right size the elementary buildings so that this number will continue to decrease.

Dr. Morawski reported that Beard Elementary experienced a sewer line backup that closed the school for a day. Dr. Morawski thanked the Fort Smith Public Schools Facility staff, Fort Smith Utilities Crew and City Administrator Carl Geffken for their quick response in getting the school back operational.

Dr. Morawski's Good Things Going on in the District included: Fort Smith Public Schools staff attended the annual Launch for Learning event; students were welcomed back to school on August 19; the Peak Emerging Art and Design classroom is complete and fully operational; the Welcome Center at Fairview Elementary ran from July 29 to August 16, 2024 and was successful with a large turnout utilizing the enrollment center.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included the June Financial Report, July 22 Minutes, August Professional Staff Recommendations, the Community Service Learning Partner Site Applications, Approving the Participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in 2024-2025, and Authorizing the Sale and Disposal of Commodities.

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

PRESENTATION – CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. Joseph Valesquez, Construction Project Manager, invited each of the various construction managers to present an update to their projects going on in the District.

Mr. Brandon Rakestraw and Mr. Adam Meave with Coryell Roofing updated the Board on the Kimmons Middle School reroof project. This project was approximately 120,000 square feet of roof tear off and code upgrades as well as gas line replacements. This work took place over the summer and is substantially complete and turned over to the District.

Mr. Chuck Smith with Mid-Western Commercial Roofers reported the reroof project at Chaffin Middle School began on August 10, 2024 and work is ahead of schedule.

Ms. Kelly Wilson with Beshear Construction informed the Board the expansion of Morrison Elementary is complete. This expansion included ten new classrooms and bathrooms.

Mr. David McWilliams with Clark Contractors gave an update on the Ramsey Middle School fire renovations. This project came in under budget at \$1,360,000. The substantial completion was issued on August 15, 2024 and staff and students were able to have their first day of class in the fine arts department. The acoustical wall panels will be installed the first week of September 2024.

Mr. Robert Wiggins of Nabholz Construction reported the Peak Innovation Center Emerging Art and Design classroom is complete and classes have begun this academic school year. The permanent doors to the classroom and donor signage will be complete by the end of September 2024. The School Based Health Clinic foundation is complete and framing is underway. The project completion date is late January 2025. The permits are obtained from the City of Fort Smith for the property demolition of the

Belle Avenue and B Street properties near Northside High School. The utilities have been disconnected and asbestos abatement completed. The demolition of the B Street properties will begin once the Arkansas Department of Transportation lane closure of Rogers Avenue permits are complete.

Mr. Velesquez stated the properties planned for demolition near Northside High School were used by the Fort Smith Fire Department for training.

Mr. Clayton Vaden with Lewis Architects Engineers updated the Board on the Barling Elementary and Cook Elementary School reroof projects. Mr. Vaden stated both of these projects are approximately 75,000 square feet each and a straight overlay.

Mr. Galen Hunter with MAHG Architecture updated the Board on the projects that MAHG Architecture is working on. The Southside High School reroof project includes various buildings with various methods such as a metal roof panel retrofit, tear off, and a recover of the existing roof. This project is funded by insurance funds and partnership funds. The Service Center reroof project will include a metal roof retrofit and a tear off on various buildings. This project is under review by the Arkansas Department of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation, once approved bids will start. The next project is the repaving of the transportation department at the Service Center. The current pavement will be replaced and poor drainage areas will be improved. Phase 1 of the Peak Innovation Center drainage project is underway and on track to be completed by the end of the calendar year. Phase 2 has experienced a delayed start but are coordinating with Arkansas Department of Transportation to insure an interface with the current highway project. In Phase 3 an additional overflow drainage for roof drains will be addressed and will include four additional drains along the warehouse and fourteen additional drains along the front of the main building.

Mr. Larry Hall of Risley Architects reported the Orr Elementary reroof project is a metal roof removal and replacement of approximately 3,800 square feet. There will also be ten mechanical units replaced during this project. The expected duration for construction is 60-75 days.

This is a presentation item. No action is required.

PRESENTATION – DONATION FOR NORTHSIDE ARENA AND BILLBOARD UPDATE

Mr. Chris Carter, Northside High School Principal, updated the Board on a couple of generous donations from alumni groups to Northside High School. Mr. Mark Kincannon organized fundraising efforts to install two ten feet by ten feet bear heads on the front of the Northside High School Arena. Mr. Mike Hart, a Northside alumni, also donated an upgrade to the billboard at the Grizzly Gear store. This billboard features Northside alumni.

This is a presentation item. No action is required.

PRESENTATION – INFORMATION REGARDING AREA COMPETITIVE TRACKS

Mr. Michael Beaumont, Director, Athletics and Activities, presented the Board with comparison information of other area Districts regarding middle school and high school tracks. The information included if District tracks were competition or practice tracks. It also included how many lanes at each track, if there were lights, restrooms, locker rooms, and an area for field events such as pole vault, shot, discus, high jump and long jump.

Mr. Beaumont explained that the practice schedule for the track at Southside High School begins with the high school track teams and the middle schools have to coordinate with coaches and staff when the track is available for them to practice.

Mr. Chitwood asked if there are opportunities at Northside High School to make a practice long jump and high jump facilities. Mr. Beaumont responded he would need to look further into the possibility of that fitting in the current space.

Ms. Krafft inquired if track access was made available to North Fort Smith which middle school would be the best option and have the most space to hold a track. Mr. Beaumont stated Darby Middle School is in closest proximity to Northside High School and there is space available for a practice track, however; Kimmons Middle School has more space available for a practice track.

Dr. Morawski stated administration would gather more information on the work to improve the middle school tracks and would present that at a later board meeting.

Ms. Krafft stated if the middle school tracks will also benefit the City of Fort Smith there may be grant opportunities available.

This is a presentation item. No action is required.

APPROVING THE TIMELINE FOR CLOSING ORR ELEMENTARY

Dr. Bone reported the survey results from parents, students, staff, and community members regarding closing Orr Elementary at the end of the school year 2024-2025.

There were 145 total responses with 82.1% of those responses stating they preferred the 2024-2025 school year to be the last school year before rezoning.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blaylock, to approve the closing of Orr Elementary at the conclusion of the 2024-2025 school year.

Mr. Blaylock inquired where the Orr Elementary staff and students will go next year. Dr. Morawski stated the process of looking at that information will begin this fall with the demographer's report. The parents and community will be provided options what the new zones will look like and announcing the new schools by January 2025.

The vote passed 7-0.

PRESENTATION – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Dr. Bone presented information from the Continuous Improvement Scorecard related to relevant classes for every secondary student and maximizing student choice.

The student's success plan is built in the eighth grade with parents, counselors, and the student. Every student's success plan was reviewed and 68% of students earned all of their credits in courses laid out in their success plan. The percentage included 71% of Southside High School students and 64% of Northside High School students earning all their credits. The students who are not meeting their success plan can revise that plan to identify courses to be taken until all required courses are completed.

This is a presentation item. No action is required.

CONSIDER ADOPTING THE 2024-2025 DISTRICT BUDGET

Mr. Warren discussed the four factors of funding: student count, state foundation, assessed value, and millage rate. All of these factors are utilized in creating the budget. Mr. Warren began by reviewing the summary of actual numbers from the 2023-2024 school year and presented a financial budget for the fiscal year 2024-2025.

Mr. Warren presented a detailed look at the budget summary for the operating fund, capital projects fund, federal funds, and the child nutrition fund budgets. This included revenue and expenses.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chitwood, to adopt the 2024-2025 financial budget as presented, authorizing the Administration to make adjustments needed for DESE submission.

The vote passed 7-0.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:35 p.m. Mr. Person announced that the Board members would go into executive session to discuss pre-litigation and real property.

At 7:35 p.m. Mr. Blaylock recused from this agenda item.

The Board returned to open session at 8:50 p.m.

Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to authorize the administration to engage Pearson Legal to advise the District on its potential claims related to construction defects at Peak Innovation Center.

The vote passed 6-0.

Mr. Blaylock returned to the meeting at 8:51 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

The next regular board meeting will be Monday, September 23, 2024.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Dalton Person, President

Davin Chitwood, Secretary