



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, January 27, 2025, 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 four board members were present in person and one board member was present via Zoom. Other board members present were: Mr. Phil Whiteaker, Mr. Matt Blaylock, and Ms. Talicia Richardson. Ms. Susan Krafft was in attendance via Zoom. Mr. Davin Chitwood was not present. 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; Mr. Allan Marshall, Chief Communications & Engagement Officer; 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. Marshall presented the following recognitions:

Carnall Elementary received High Reliability Schools Level 2 certification.

Mr. Phil Whiteaker earned the Arkansas School Board Association Master Board Member award. This award is earned by completing at least 50 hours of in-service credit.

In celebration of School Board Appreciation Month, the Northside and Southside High School choirs performed. A video was also shown.

CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION

Citizens that were recognized and spoke to the Board on behalf of Felix Curry were:

Mr. Joey McCutchen, Ms. Beverly Elam, Ms. Shea Norwood, Mr. Lee Prince, Mr. Todd Morris, Mr. Brandon Croom, Mr. Dan Williams, Mr. Lucious Arter, and Ms. Wendy Peer.

Note: Ms. Lynnett Lott joined the meeting at 6:12 PM.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

Mr. Blaylock requested information on the weekly average of hours building administrators are out of their building.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski informed the board of several key events: The Northside High School AP Assembly will be held on February 5, 2025 at 9:30 AM, the next regularly scheduled school board meeting will be on February 24, 2025, and the March regularly scheduled meeting will be held on March 31, 2025.

Dr. Morawski's Good Things Going on in the District included: Chick-fil-A partnered with Woods Elementary and awarded one Patriot of the Month with Chick-Fil-A swag and free Chick-Fil-A; congratulations to this month's Superintendent's Stars: Raylee Dotson, Park Elementary; Fraya Snow, Sunnymede Elementary; Nikolaus Hodges, Howard Elementary; Eileen Bonilla, Spradling Elementary; Michael Haney, Sutton Elementary; Daniel Rangel, Morrison Elementary; and Emoree Thomas, Fairview Elementary; Northside High School student Anthony Mendez was gifted a brand-new trumpet thanks to a generous donation from the Shane Bailey Memorial Music Society; and the Fort Smith Public Schools Police Department achieved 100% compliance on their recent Arkansas Law Enforcement Standards and Training Commission audit.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included the December Financial Report, December 16 Minutes, January 7 Minutes, January Professional Staff Recommendations, and the School Choice Staffing Capacity Resolution for 2025-2026.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lott, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The vote passed 6-0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE 2023-2024 AUDIT REPORT

Mr. Mark Lux with Przybysz & Associates, CPAs presented the findings of the independent financial audit for the year ended June 30, 2024. Mr. Lux's report included a balance sheet which represented the general fund, special revenue, aggregate capital projects, and the fiduciary. As well as the fund balance report and fund balance reconciliation. The results of the audit includes an unmodified opinion from the auditor based on the regulatory basis of accounting.

Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, seconded by Ms. Krafft, to accept the audit report for the year ending June 30, 2024 as prepared by Przybysz & Associates, CPAs. The vote passed 6-0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PROPOSED BUDGET OF EXPENDITURES WITH TA LEVY FOR FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2026 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2027

Mr. Warren provided the proposed budget of expenditures and the corresponding tax levy. It is a requirement to publish the budget and tax levy prior to the May 2025 board election. The proposed budget is an estimation for the period of July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 and is based on the current rate of 42.058 mills.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteaker, to approve the proposed budget of expenditures and tax levy for 2026-2027 to be published as required by law. The vote passed 6-0.

PRESENTATION – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT – MID-YEAR REVIEW OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Dr. Cohen-Minton, Director of Student Achievement and Accountability, provided a mid-year review of the school improvement plans and presented the revisions made to these plans by each of the campus teams. These revisions were based on the most recent student assessment data. The school improvement plans were originally presented to the board on November 21, 2024.

This is a presentation item only. No action is required.

PRESENTATION – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT – SAMR MODEL SCHOOL PILOT

Dr. Starr, Director of Elementary Education, shared with the board the development of a model pilot school at Tilles Elementary to establish best practices for technology use in the classroom. The Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition (SAMR) Model was selected to train and support our teachers in the use of technology integration into instruction. This program will be replicated on many campuses through the district.

This is a presentation item only. No action is required.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – PRE-LITIGATION AND PERSONNEL DISCUSSION

At 7:20 PM the Board and Dr. Morawski went into executive session to discuss pre-litigation and personnel.

Board members and Dr. Morawski returned to open session at 9:26 PM.

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH UPDATE

Mr. Person communicated that Dr. Morawski’s resignation was received on January 17, 2025 to be effective June 30, 2025. Mr. Person also reported that negotiations had begun with the search firm McPherson & Jacobson, LLC and a contract will be sent to legal counsel for review.

FINAL COMMENTS

Ms. Richardson resigned from the board effective immediately.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 PM.

Dalton Person, President

Davin Chitwood, Secretary