



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, February 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.

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

SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION MONTH

To celebrate and recognize the work of our board members the Northside drum line and the Southside Choir preformed. A video was also shown.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Mahan presented the following recognitions:

February Superintendent Star Awards

Ivan Barrientos – Trusty Elementary
Deklan Bradley – Ballman Elementary
Denisse Chavez – Park Elementary
Rosa Cruz – Morrison Elementary
Gael Gonzalez – Spradling Elementary
Ayden Jones – Fairview Elementary
Ruby McRae – Tilles Elementary
Jennings Medlock – Woods Elementary
Jace Moses – Sunnymede Elementary
Damian Olivas Castorenas – Sutton Elementary
Jayden Rodus – Howard Elementary

Jayne Harvey, of the Northside Lady Bear bowling team, was named the overall female 2024 State Bowling Champion at the state tournament in Cabot. The Northside bowling team is coached by Ryan Solley.

Southside High School Boys bowling team placed first in the 6A State Championship. Freshman bowler, Carter Traywick, finished as the top bowler in the state. The Southside bowling team is coached by Tad Stewart.

Heidi Wollscheid from Northside High School and Elizabeth Loe from Southside High School were selected to the 2023-2024 All-State Cheer Team.

Southside High School Maverick cheer team won first place at the Universal Cheer Association's National High School Cheerleading Championship. The Maverick cheer team is coached by Heather Graham.

Charles Warren, Chief Financial Officer, was named the 2024 Truett Goatcher Arkansas School Business Administrator of the Year by the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators.

CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION

LaVona Traywick provided information on the Arkansas College of Health Education Research Institute Health and Wellness Center.

Tuesday Howard spoke on the access of high school bathrooms.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski updated the board on a few key events. The Be Pro Be Proud Draft Day is scheduled for March 5-6 at the Peak Innovation Center. March 5 is Election Day. The two open board positions are unopposed and following Arkansas law will not appear on the ballot. The next regular school board meeting will be Monday, March 11, 2024. March 18, 2024 will begin the spring break holiday. The April board meeting will be on Monday, April 24.

The state Board of Education approved the waiver request to convert the school calendar to a minutes based calendar.

Dr. Morawski and school board members, Mr. Person, Mr. Whiteaker, and Mr. Chitwood, attended the Consortium of State School Board Association (COSSBA) annual conference in Dallas, TX held on February 23-24, 2024.

Dr Morawski's Good Things Going on the District included: construction technology students at the Peak Innovation Center completed their module on wall framing systems. These students are working on building interior walls and will proceed to roof framing; students from the Health Science Academy at Darby Middle School toured the 188th base and focused on medical applications; Southside students showcased their medical research at the Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine Research Symposium; Southside students Elizabeth Loe, Kobe Gonzales, and Serina Huang all qualified for National Merit Finalists.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included the January Financial Statement, January 22 Minutes, January Professional Staff Recommendations, January Student Services Report, and the Community Service Learning Partner Site Applications.

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

CONSIDER APPROVING ETHICS DISCLOSURE RESOLUTION

At 6:19 P.M., Ms. Richardson recused herself from this agenda item.

Mr. Warren presented a resolution and a contract disclosure form due to an indirect financial interest Ms. Richardson has with Rich Creations. The district desires, on occasion, to do business with Rich Creations.

Ms. Dixon made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chitwood, to approve the ethics disclosure resolution. The vote passed 6-0.

Note: Ms. Richardson returned to the meeting at 6:20 P.M.

PRESENTATION – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Dr. Bone presented the snapshot data that was collected as a result of the audit with Curriculum Management Solutions Incorporated (CMSI), focusing on the areas of improving cognitive demand and alignment of student work and improving instructional delivery.

The data revealed that teachers are presenting instructional materials on grade level. However, an area to improve upon is how students articulate what they are learning. Other areas that were assessed included student engagement and a safe learning environment.

Dr. Bone stated that Kagen Training will begin at the secondary schools to focus on strategies to engage all students in learning.

This is a presentation item and no action is required.

PRESENTATION – SCHOOL COUNSELOR USE OF TIME ANALYSIS (SCUTA) REPORT

Dr. Rathbun informed the board of the new software, SCUTA, that is being used by counselors to document, track, and analyze their time. With SCUTA, counselors are able to maintain a log of their work and activities, maintain notes about their activities, and access statistical reports that analyze use of time data.

Dr. Rathbun stated there are a total of 40 counselors. There is a counselor at each of the elementary schools, two at each of the middle schools, Southside High School has five, and Northside High School has six counselors, and Belle Point has one counselor.

This is a presentation item and no action is required.

PRESENTATION – WEAPON DETECTION SYSTEM UPDATE

Mr. Mahan updated the Board on the use of weapon detection camera systems as well as a proposed five year safety plan. The detection camera systems provides a layer of mitigation of threat to our campuses, students and staff and uses artificial intelligence to detect possible weapons. This system would impact every campus in the district and focus on all existing exterior cameras that are deemed to be the most useful. In some of the larger facilities interior cameras would be equipped as well. The goal is to be fully functional by August.

Zeroeyes was selected as the weapon detection camera system partner at an annual cost of \$156,000. This price is guaranteed for six years.

Mr. Warren stated the district is looking at possible available grant funds that could be used for this purchase. If grants are not available, the purchase will come from the operating fund.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE 2022-2023 AUDIT REPORT

Mr. Mark Lux with Przybysx & Associates, CPAs presented findings of the independent financial audit statements for June 30, 2023. 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. Richardson, to accept the audit report for the year ending June 30, 2023 as prepared by Przybysz & Associates, CPAs. The vote passed 7-0.

PRESENTATION – SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

Mr. Warren provided the board with an update for the 2024-2025 school year. Mr. Warren pointed out two factors that are still unknowns concerning school funding: will the state honor the fiscal year 2024 salary and benefits funding for fiscal year 2025 and a new act (Act 1689) was presented during the last legislative session which would possibly present a new funding model for school districts.

Mr. Warren reported that due to the sustainable growth in assessments, new revenue for next school year should be \$2,650,000. However, a decline in enrollment and foundation funding, will result in a drop of state revenue funds by \$800,000. Other factors to consider are the use of funds for the 2024-2025 school year. These factors are the cost of long term existing staff moving a step increase on the salary schedule, cost of adding assistant principals at the elementary schools, and ESSER funds expiring. All of these factors will need to be considered when going forward to maintaining the current salary schedules.

Mr. Warren reminded the board of the aggressive work that has been done over the last couple of years where new step increases were added to the salary schedule and going above the state required minimums on salaries.

This is a presentation item and no action is required.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

The next regular scheduled meeting will be Monday, March 11, 2024.

Mr. Chitwood thanked the administration and staff for their ongoing hard work and stated he is proud to be a board member.

Mr. Whiteaker thanked the administration and staff for their work and the Communications department in the board appreciation month video.

Ms. Krafft stated she was excited for the students that are attending Be Pro Be Proud Draft Day.

Mr. Person informed the board that Envista would deliver the written report regarding the Peak third party review at either the March 11 board meeting or a called meeting would be scheduled for this purpose. Mr. Person expects the total cost, up to the written report, to be under \$25,000.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 PM.

President, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education