



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, April 22, 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. Other board members present were: Mr. Phil Whiteaker, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Mr. Matt Blaylock, 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. Vance Gregory, Director of Technology; Mr. Shawn Shaffer, Executive Director of Facility Operations; 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 via Zoom.

Ms. Susan Krafft arrived at 5:36 PM.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Mahan presented the following recognitions:

Northside High School Junior Shyyla Gonzalez recently won the 2024 National Academy of Television & Sciences Mid-America Student Production Award.

Southside High School students Yulissa Ocampo, Marlene Hernandez, Ty Adair, and Ananya Taggarse placed first in their respective categories at the DECA State Career Development Conference.

The Grizzly Gear Gold team featuring Rider Baker and Ryan Coyle achieved gold-level certification for the 2023-2024 school year and will be recognized during DECA's International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, California.

Counselors Tiffany Mouda, Cavanaugh Elementary; Angela Jones, Cook Elementary; and Joan Kincannon, Euper Lane Elementary earned the RAMP (Recognized ASCA Model Program) designation.

Cherri Byford, Darby Middle School counselor, has been named Middle-Level Counselor of the Year by the Arkansas Counselors Association. Ms. Byford will now compete for the Arkansas Counselor of the Year title.

Northside High School AP psychology teacher, Martin Hyatt, received the 2024 American Psychology Association Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS) Charles T. Blair-Broeker Excellence in Teaching Award. Mr. Hyatt was one of only two teachers in the country to receive this award.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski informed the board of several key events. The Retirees & Rookies picnic will be held on May 9, 2024 at Northside High School Arena. Northside High School will host their graduation on May 16, 2024 and Southside High School's will be held on May 17, 2024. The next regular school board meeting will be on Monday, May 20, 2024. The campuses and district offices will be closed for Memorial Day, May 27, 2024. The last day of school for students will be May 31, 2024. June 3 and 4 will be make-up professional development days for staff. The June board meeting has been cancelled for this year.

Dr. Morawski reported there is a resolution in the consent agenda giving the superintendent authority to offer contracts to employees prior to board approval. This will give the District the ability to move quicker in the hiring process, especially over the summer months.

Dr. Morawski addressed a question from a board member from a previous meeting regarding the changes to the co-ops. Dr. Morawski stated that eight of the content specialist jobs have been reduced down to three. Additionally, the gifted and talented program is being reorganized from 15 partially funded positions to four or five regional positions throughout the state.

Dr. Morawski's Good Things Going on in the District included: the Southside Esports team secured the top spot in the inaugural PlayVS Super 25 rankings. Their performance earned them the #1 ranking against schools across the country; Tilles Elementary rallied together to celebrate a student, and former Superintendent Star, Beau Cantrell, before his courageous journey for brain surgery. The school community showed their support for Beau with a heartwarming parade. Staff and students across the district gathered outside their respective buildings to witness the solar eclipse; Southside teacher Kaley Evans organized a 5K fundraiser to support the family of a student who tragically lost their home to a fire. The fundraiser raised \$2,000 for the affected family. The Northside softball team exemplifies the spirit of service by volunteering with The Call; ELL Achieve celebrates the remarkable achievement of 21 Southside students who graduated from the Fort Smith Public Schools English Language Learner program; Southside Art students who participated in the 2024 River Valley Student Art competition claimed an impressive twelve ribbons; the Fort Smith Public Schools Police Department Officers Boyd, Jolivette, Tate, and White, greeted 3rd and 5th graders at Cavanaugh Elementary ahead of their testing day; Emmett and Elaina Cheeks, students at Park Elementary, have been recognized as the Military Kids of the Month by the Arkansas Council for Military Children; staff celebrated and honored FSPS military families at the Purple Up Event; Thirty-three students from Northside and thirty-one students from Southside earned the Arkansas Seal of Biliteracy. This recognition is given to Arkansas high schoolers who have attained proficiency in English and one or more other languages. Congratulations to this month's Superintendent Stars: Sean McDonald from Cook, Magnolia Wesley from Euper Lane, Christian Rodriguez from Woods, Abigail Fry from Orr, and Elise Rivera from Carnall.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included the March Financial Report, March 11 and March 26 Minutes, April Professional Staff Recommendations, the Community Service Learning Partner Site Applications, the Special Education 2024-2025 Tuition Agreement with Residential Facilities with the District, the School of Innovation Plan for Southside High School for 2024-2025, a resolution adopting the Sebastian County Hazard Mitigation Plan, the approval of Instructional Materials Adoption for 2024-2030, a Resolution

Authorizing Initial Contracts, Adopting Licensed Personnel Policy Updates and Adopting Classified Personnel Policy Updates.

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

PRESENTATION – CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. Velasquez invited each of the various team construction managers to present an update to their projects going on in the District.

Mr. Fred Frazier with C.R. Crawford reported the Kimmons Middle School cafeteria expansion is completed.

Mr. Brandon Rigs with Coryell Roofing updated the Board on the Kimmons Middle School re-roof project. The tear off of the roof will begin on April 29. There was a delay in starting the project due to waiting on approval for a new gas line system that is on the roof. The completion date is scheduled for June 7, 2024.

Ms. Kelly Wilson with Beshear Construction reported that Darby Middle School received new rooftop air condition and HVAC units for the gym. This work included new units, new duct work, new thermostats and it was completed over spring break. Ms. Wilson also reported the Morrison Middle School classroom addition is near completion.

Mr. David McWilliams and Mr. Hayden Cunningham with Clark Contractors updated the Board on the child nutrition freezer renovation and the Ramsey Middle School fire renovations. The freezer is fully operational while the dry storage area is currently going through the final clean up and punch list. This project completed approximately three weeks ahead of schedule. The fire renovations at Ramsey received the Notice to Proceed and anticipates completion to be before school starts for the 2024-25 school year.

Mr. Robert Wiggins of Nabholz Construction reported the indoor air quality project at Northside High School is complete and delivered under budget. These savings were used to replace additional units at the press box and weight room. The Peak Innovation Center Art Space includes an art history and studio room which should be completed ahead of the 2024-2025 school year. Onsite construction activities has begun on the school based health unit with completion forecast January 2025.

Mr. Randy Ragsdale of Lewis Architects informed the Board the re-roof of Chaffin Middle School would begin in the summer of 2024 and duration is scheduled for 120 days.

Mr. Galen Hunter with MAHG Architects gave an update to the re-roof projects at Southside High School and buildings at the Service Center, showing what methods would be used on the various buildings.

Mr. Larry Hall of Risley Architects reported the Orr Elementary re-roof project will start on July 1, 2024 and expected duration is 60 days.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE RECOMMENATIONS FROM THE LONG RANGE FACILITY COMMITTEE

Mr. Shaffer presented the Long Range Facility plan over the next ten years. Years 0-5 include looking at ways to improve the campuses with minimal cost and gain suitability. The 5-10 year timeframe is

strategizing ways to continue to increase suitability while increasing our districts opportunity of obtaining state funding.

Mr. Shaffer shared the committee’s guiding principles to rightsizing the elementary schools. Those key factors are a minimum of 625 building capacity with a target utilization rate of 80%, while looking at the depreciated building values. Mr. Shaffer stated there are currently six elementary schools that have the ability to reach the maximum capacity of minimum of 625 students.

Mr. Shaffer presented information comparing various Arkansas school’s enrollment, number of buildings, and number of elementary schools:

	District	Enrollment	#Buildings	Sq Footage	Elementary
1	Springdale SD	22,193	100	3,899,538	18
2	Little Rock SD	21,572	169	4,834,106	22
3	Bentonville SD	20,745	55	3,325,058	13
4	Rogers SD	15,815	69	2,874,495	16
5	Fort Smith SD	13,750	119	3,017,601	19
6	Pulaski County SD	11,484	110	3,070,354	17
7	Fayetteville SD	11,113	57	2,127,531	7
8	Cabot SD	10,422	70	1,944,647	9
9	Conway SD	10,001	63	1,872,137	9
10	Bryant SD	9,607	62	1,844,928	8

Mr. Shaffer also shared the expenditure cost per pupil for each of the elementary schools.

Mr. Shaffer explained that suitability is based on utilization, building value, and student enrollment. Currently, the District is eligible for 62% of construction costs for partnership money by the state once the District reaches suitability. To reach this partnership funding, the underutilized space in the District must be addressed.

Mr. Darrell Stovall, Chair, Long Range Facility Planning Committee; presented the committee’s 0-5 year recommendations. These recommendations include: Close the Belle Point building and rezone Orr Elementary while transferring all the ALE students to the Orr building. Close the Parker Center and Rogers Center building and relocate the administrative services that are currently housed there, close the Peabody Building and relocate Adult Education services, prioritize classrooms that meet state standards in all school buildings during renovations and new construction, study the feasibility to build a regulation track at Northside High School, and to continue to analyze opportunities to right-size elementary schools.

Mr. Stovall continued with the committee’s 5-10 year recommendations for right-sizing. These include: continue to look for opportunities to right-size other elementary schools as appropriate, assess the need for renovation and expansion of the middle school cafeterias, study the cost and feasibility of renovating

or building a performing arts facility at each high school, and address the need for expansion/renovation of athletic facilities at the middle schools.

Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, approved by Ms. Krafft, to approve the Long Range Facility Planning Committee's recommendations. The vote passed 7-0.

CONSIDER APPROVING THE 2024-2025 CLASSIFIED STAFF CONTRACT RENEWALS

At 7:01 PM Mr. Person recused himself from this action item. Mr. Person has a family member that is a classified employee of the District.

Ms. Krafft made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the 2024-2025 classified staff contracts. The vote passed 6-0.

Note: Mr. Person returned to the meeting at 7:03 PM.

PRESENTATION – SUMMER EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Ms. Cohen Minton gave an overview of the extended learning programs that will be offered this summer as well as the summer meals program. The programs include areas in literacy and math, computer science, ACT & PSAT prep, science, and career camps.

This is a presentation item and no action is required.

PRESENTATION – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Dr. Bone updated the Board on the District Continuous Improvement Scorecard. Dr. Bone compared the baseline goals set to the actual percentages achieved in reading and mathematics proficiency, safe learning environments, and student success plans. There were gains in many areas from the baseline percentages.

This is a presentation item. No action is required.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

The next regular board meeting will be Monday, May 20, 2024.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM.

Dalton Person, President

Davin Chitwood, Secretary