



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, October 26, 2020, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg B., 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901 and virtually per COVID-19 CDC guidelines.

Mr. Bill Hanesworth, president, called the meeting to order. Other board members present were Ms. Susan McFerran, Ms. Talicia Richardson, Mr. Dalton Person, Ms. Yvonne Keaton-Martin. And Ms. Dee Blackwell. Mr. Wade Gilkey was absent. Dr. Doug Brubaker, Superintendent, Dr. Terry Morawski, Deputy Superintendent, Mr. Martin Mahan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Ms. Sherri Penix, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Campus Support, 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, Secretary to the Superintendent were also present.

A moment of silence was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

RECOGNITIONS

Ms. Featherston Marshall presented October awards.

October Superintendent Stars

Madeline Alt, Cavanaugh Elementary School
Ky'Rell Black, Bonneville Elementary School
Trevor Brown, Euper Lane Elementary School
Izel Guzman-Aroche, Sutton Elementary School
Valery Henriquez, Trusty Elementary School
Brandon Mendez, Morrison Elementary School
Milena Solis, Orr Elementary School
Lizette Villalba Lopez, Sunnymede Elementary School
Brinkley Wilson, Ballman Elementary School

Other Recognitions

Tadareo Thomas, Northside High School Senior, winner of the U.S. Marshal's Museum Voting PSA Competition.

Southside High School was selected for the 2020 Great Schools College Success Award by GreatSchools.org for the third consecutive year in a row.

The National Inventors Hall of Fame provided STEM Maker Lab for approximately 1,100 students across the district. The lab includes curriculum and materials needed for 30 creative, hands-on activities that guide students through realistic STEM experiences and energize the inventor within.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) is a national organization dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. The Arkansas Chapter of AFSP presented the 2020 LifeSaver School Award to the Fort Smith School District for the work that has been done by FSPS counselors to make sure the school environment is a safer place for students.

Fort Smith Public Schools social workers received a grant for \$1,344.00 for their Friday Closet Initiative from the Foundation Board of First United Methodist Church in Fort Smith. The Friday Closet initiative helps to meet emergency needs of students and families on the weekends.

Susanna Post, a math and business technology teacher at Belle Point Alternative Learning Center was named as the 2021 Arkansas Teacher of the Year. Susanna, who has been a teacher for five years, uses her previous business world experience to build relationships with her students, connect them with the outside community, and give them real-world, relatable problems to solve. She strongly believes that positive relationships result in improved student learning and a strong school culture. Her multi-dimensional approach to reaching each student is what earned her the title of Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

There was no one present for Citizens Participation.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Brubaker reported that the Ready for Learning Committee met and reviewed current instructional and procedural plans. He reported that the District would go forward with opening playground and PE equipment to students after careful consideration and plans to sanitize liberally and often.

Dr. Brubaker reported that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has chosen Northside High School to be begin COVID19 testing. Nurses have attended webinars in preparation for this testing. There will be more information provided as this develops.

Dr. Brubaker reported that Mr. Mahan, Ms. Penix and staff have collaborated with UA Fort Smith to put together a program that provides interns' payment with a teaching experience similar to what they will eventually receive when employed fulltime.

Dr. Brubaker reported that Ms. Penix and team are reviewing substitute pay and qualifications to meet the need to provide classroom coverage during the pandemic.

Dr. Brubaker reported that Hatching Results would feature FSPS in a webinar that will be released soon.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included: September 28 and October 12 Minutes, September Financial Report, October Professional Staff Recommendations, and October Student Services Report.

Ms. Keaton-Martin made a motion, seconded by Ms. McFerran, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The vote passed 6/0.

SELECTION OF VOTING REPRESENTATIVE FOR ASBA DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

Dr. Brubaker reported that the Arkansas School Boards Association Delegate Assembly, the policy making body of ASBA, would meet at 5:00 PM, Wednesday, December 9, 2020 in conjunction with the ASBA Annual Conference. Due to COVID-19, the Delegate Assembly will be virtual. All ASBA-member school boards are allotted one voting representative at that meeting.

ASBA requested that the Board choose the name of one board member who will serve as its delegate at this meeting. The representative should be a current board member who plans to attend the conference and not a member of the ASBA Board of Directors (these persons automatically serve as delegates.)

The administration recommended that the Board select one of its members who will attend the conference virtually on December 9 to serve as its voting delegate.

Ms. McFerran made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to designate Mr. Hanesworth as the voting represent virtually at the ASBA Annual Conference. The vote passed 6/0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION REQUIRED BY ACT 1120 OF 2013

Mr. Person recused himself from this item. Dr. Brubaker reported that Act 1120 of 2013 (A.C.A. 6-13-635) states that a school district board of directors shall review and approve by a written resolution an increase in salary of five percent (5%) or more for a school district employee. This resolution is presented to the auditor as part of the annual audit review. Many of the affected employees were in part-time positions and moved to full-time. Others assumed extra duties which carry a stipend. Some advanced on the salary schedule based on education and experience while others got new jobs within the district with greater responsibility and higher pay. Additional changes to the step increases for the certified and classified salary schedules and the state bonus is now included in the salary for National Board Certified teachers. Departing employees receive a pay out of unused sick leave, personal business leave or vacation leave as provided by policy that may fall into the 5% category. The wording of the law raises some questions as to who should be included on this list, but the HR staff has always taken the approach to list everyone whose compensation increased by 5% or more regardless of the circumstance.

Ms. Richardson asked about variance of pay range. Ms. Penix stated that employees in schools with higher poverty received the higher range of pay.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Blackwell, to approve the resolution required by Act 1120 of 2013. The vote passed 5/0 with Mr. Person's recusal.

PRESENTATION – VIRTUAL OPTION UPDATE

Mr. Mahan introduced staff members Dr. Udouj, Dr. Mc Donald, Dr. Hall, Dr. Miller and Dr. Rathbun and noted that representatives from Pearson Education were available by Zoom as well. Mr. Mahan reported that District staff started in June spending 10 to 12 weeks getting a virtual program available for students. This is typically is a 10 to 12 month process. Mr. Mahan shared a video of parents and students testimonials. He discussed the challenges and issues, enrollment trends, the longer registration available for Fall noting that Spring registration will be December 1-15. He reported that Pearson spent a lot of time repairing broken links and other issues. He discussed the process of parents as learning coaches.

The Blended Option is for grades 10-12, a program that students can pick classes in which they come to campus or learn from home. He noted the challenges, things that are not working for students and families, the need to bring students face to face as the Blended Model is not working for some students, the District's plan to get students back to a classroom to keep them from failing, stating that some blended students could do the virtual option in the spring, phasing out the Blended Option.

Ms. Richardson asked about considering an option for parents that don't have a traditional schedule. The comparison of districts in region, state and nation engagement and the percentage of good experience vs not good experience.

Mr. Person stated that he does believed the best option is to eliminate the blended model in the high schools.

Ms. Blackwell stated that the virtual and blended options are rigorous and not for every student.

PRESENTATION - VISION 2023 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Dr. Morawski and Mr. Watts provided board members with a master program schedule snapshot and reviewed construction projects underway. Mr. Watts provided construction updates for Northside High School, Southside High School, Ramsey Middle School, Darby Middle School, Cook Elementary, Bonneville Elementary, Orr Elementary, Sutton Elementary, Tilles Elementary, and the Peak Innovation Center,

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

Ms. McFerran, Mr. Person and Ms. Blackwell attended the Teacher of the Year announcement and expressed how impressed they were with Susanna Post and the presentation for Susanna her as Arkansas Teacher of Year.

Mr. Person asked about status of concurrent credit with UAFS. Dr. Brubaker stated that there would be concurrent credit. That commitment and partnership remain strong.

Ms. Keaton-Martin expressed appreciation for the hard work that staff is doing.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and Mr. Haneworth adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Bill Hanesworth, President

Dee Blackwell, Secretary