



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, June 19, 2023, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg. B, Auditorium, 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

Ms. Richardson, vice president, called the meeting to order noting five board members were present. Other board members present were: Mr. Dalton Person, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Ms. Sandy Dixon and Mr. Phil Whiteaker. Ms. Dee Blackwell was not in attendance. District administrators present included: Dr. Terry Morawski, Superintendent; Mr. Martin Mahan, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Chris Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Campus Support; 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. After the meeting was called to order, Mr. Matt Blaylock arrived at 5:31.

RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Mahan presented the following recognitions:

Superintendent Star Awards

Emily Mayorga Galdamez – Morrison Elementary

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Ms. Meredith Rae spoke regarding the gifted and talented program.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Morawski updated the board on several key dates: a called board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21, 2023, district offices will be closed on July 4 in observance of Independence Day, and the next regular scheduled school board meeting will be Monday, July 17, 2023.

Dr. Morawski reported the certification of the millage election held on May 9, 2023 could be found on the superintendent's report in the agenda. This is a required annual vote to be held on the existing mileage. If the vote failed, it would revert back to the current mileage rate. There are legislators who are interested in looking closer at this requirement due to concerns of the time and expense of an election that has no real impact depending on the results.

Dr. Morawski communicated that a letter of resignation was received from President Dee Blackwell due to family health issues. A video from Ms. Blackwell was shared. Ms. Blackwell's resignation is effective June 19, 2023.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included May Financial Report, May 22 Minutes, June Professional Staff Recommendations, and the June Student Services Report.

Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dixon, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion passed 6-0.

ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS

Dr. Morawski stated that officer elections can be nominated as a slate or individually.

Ms. Richardson asked for nominations for the offices of President, Vice President, and Secretary.

Mr. Whiteaker nominated a slate of officers consisting of Mr. Person, President; Ms. Richardson, Vice-President; and Mr. Whiteaker, Secretary. Mr. Chitwood seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

At this point, Mr. Person presided over the meeting.

DESIGNATION OF DISBURSING OFFICER

Mr. Warren explained the disbursement officer is the school board member that is designated as a signator on such items as accounts payable and payroll related items. It is typically the role of the president.

Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson to nominate Mr. Person as primary disbursing officer and Ms. Richardson as alternate disbursing officer to serve until the next election. The motion passed 6-0.

The administration recommended that the Board adopt the resolution designating Mr. Person as primary board disbursing officer and Ms. Richardson as alternate board disbursing officer to serve until the next annual election.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dixon, to adopt the resolution designating Mr. Person as primary board disbursing officer and Ms. Richardson as alternate board disbursing officer to serve until the next annual election. The motion passed 6-0.

BOARD VACANCY

Dr. Morawski discussed the process moving forward to fill the board vacancy seat. He explained that the board will have 30 days to fill that vacancy and the candidate must reside in Zone III. Dr. Morawski asked Mr. Ney to explain some common methods used to fill the vacancy.

Mr. Ney explained that the board vacancy is typically advertised, candidates apply for the position, then bring any candidates forward for an interview. Mr. Ney recommended a structured interview process to include a slate of questions, asking each candidate the same questions- including having the same board member ask the same questions-make it an even process and everyone participates the same way. Mr. Ney will confirm if the interview process can be done in executive session.

Mr. Chitwood asked other than living in Zone 3, are there any other requirements the board should be aware of. Mr. Ney responded that is the only requirement but stated the candidate, if interested, will have to run again at the next election and this appointment is only to serve out the remaining term.

After discussion, the Board agreed the process would include submitting a resume online through the Fort Smith Public School website, answer the question 'why do you want to serve on the school board', a link will be provided to review the Zone III map, and provide a list of Frequently Asked Questions. The application process will close on July 10, 2023.

This agenda item will be revisited at the called meeting on Wednesday, June 21, 2023.

DESIGNATION OF EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

New legislation requires that the district board of directors designate an individual to serve as a representative for the Board of Directors at the service cooperative. Traditionally, this role has been filled by the superintendent. The administration recommends that Dr. Morawski serve as the representative for the Board of Directors at the Guy Fenter Education Service Cooperative.

Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve Dr. Morawski as the representative for the Guy Fenter Education Service Co-op Board of Directors. The motion passed 6-0.

PRESENTATION - PEAK DRAINAGE ASSESSMENT

At 6:15 PM, Ms. Dixon removed herself from the agenda discussion but she remained in the audience while the Board heard the Peak drainage presentation.

Mr. Archer with HSA Engineering Consultants presented an update to the Peak drainage assessment. Mr. Archer's scope of the job was to check to see if the roof drainage system was adequate. After reviewing original release drawings, onsite inspections, and using a piping inspection camera system issues with the roof drainage system were found. Mr. Archer reported issues that were discovered were holes in the existing drainage system next to the building, existing drainage system was downsized from 10 inch to an 8 inch pipe, and connections from a 4 inch to a 12 inch are not standard or properly sealed.

Mr. Archer recommends abandoning existing below slab drainpipes, reroute roof drains between east and west buildings and rework the below grade roof drain piping system on the south side of the east wing. These improvements are estimated to cost around \$160,000.

Mr. Shaffer stated these recommendations are in addition to the east parking lot drainage upgrade system.

Ms. Richardson asked who will be accepting financial responsibility for the modification of the design. Dr. Morawski stated the process would need to be reviewed as well as the contractual obligations before determining this.

Mr. Person stated the Board recommends contacting a civil engineer to receive a bid to cover all recommendations from HAS Engineering.

This is an informational item only and no action is required.

At 7:13 PM, Ms. Dixon returned to the Board discussion.

CONSIDER ADOPTION OF BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS POLICY CHANGES

Mr. Mahan presented the policy updates concerning Board Governance and Operations. Modifications were made to policies 1.9, 1.14, 1.17, 1.21, 1.22, and 1.24. Mr. Mahan stated these changes are mostly

due to legislation changes and there would likely be more changes in the future as direction from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are received.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dixon, to table the adoption of the board governance policies until Wednesday, June 21, 2023. The motion passed 6-0.

CONSIDER ADOPTING UPDATES FOR LICENSED PERSONNEL POLICIES

Dr. Davis gave a summary of the updates to the licensed personnel policies. Modifications were made to policies 3.0, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.19, 3.25, 3.36, 3.40, 3.54, and 3.57. These policies were updated based on requirements of the LEARNS act or following ASBA model policy.

Mr. Person questioned the wording of the addition to policy 3.1, which reads “For the purposes of this Policy, an employee must work one-half of the number of their regularly assigned annual work days to qualify for a step increase.” Mr. Person asked if that would include military personnel. Dr. Davis explained this policy would pertain to individuals who were hired mid-contract year. These employees would remain on their current step since they did not work 50% of their contract and it would take the subsequent year to move up a step. Mr. Person suggested changing the term “work one-half of the number of their regularly assigned annual work days” to “be employed one-half of the number of their regularly assigned annual work days”.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dixon, to approve the policies as submitted for 2023-2024 with the said modification to policy 3.1. The motion passed 6-0.

CONSIDER ADOPTING UPDATES FOR CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL POLICIES

Dr. Davis presented revisions to the classified personnel policies 8.0, 8.1, 8.13, 8.19, 8.30, 8.31, 8.34, 8.44, and 8.47.

This presentation was for informational purposes only. A vote will be taken at the next called board meeting on June 21, 2023 or after in order for the Personnel Policy Committee to have the required time to review the policies.

CONSIDER ADOPTING STUDENT RELATED POLICY CHANGES

Dr. Farrell introduced the recommendations from ASBA for revisions to the student related board policies. There are a total of twenty-six policy changes. Twenty-three of the proposed policy changes come from Section 4; the Student Section and three proposed changes are in Section 6; Home, School, and Community Relations. These recommendations were reviewed by the Student Policy Review Committee.

In Section 4.40 – Homeless Students, Mr. Person questioned why the bullet point of ‘awaiting foster care placement’ was removed from the policy. Mr. Person requested that this remain in the policy.

Ms. Dixon made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the student related policy changes as presented. The motion passed 6-0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF STUDENT HANDBOOK CHANGES FOR 2023-24

Dr. Farrell reported that the changes to the student handbook are results from new legislation. These handbook changes also correspond to the ASBA policy changes. These recommendations were

reviewed by a District Handbook Review Committee. Dr. Farrell presented each of the changes to the 2023-2034 handbook.

Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Dixon, to approve the handbook changes for inclusion in the 2023-2024 District handbook as presented. The motion passed 6-0.

CONSIDER ADOPTING CURRICULUM RELATED POLICY CHANGES

Ms. Cohen-Minton presented the policy changes to Section 5 – Curriculum and Instruction of the Board policies and a revision to Section 4.55 – Student Promotion and Retention. Revisions to Section 5 were made to policies 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.11, 5.18, and 5.27. Most of these changes are a result of new legislation. A committee was formed to review the new curriculum policies.

Ms. Dixon made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chitwood, to approve the board policies as presented. The motion passed 6-0.

CONSIDER APPROVING THE CHANGES TO SECTIONS 7.3 AND 7.5 OF THE BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Mr. Warren reviewed the two policies of the Business and Financial Management Policies that had revisions. Section 7.3 adds specific language that is required for the district filing with the county clerk regarding the millage rate of tax. Section 7.5 added language for school districts to not engage in companies that are in certain industries. These two policies are directed from state statutes. Language was also updated on the state bid purchase threshold.

Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to approve the changes to section 7.3 and 7.5 of the Business and Financial Management policies as presented. The motion passed 6-0.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be Monday, July 17, 2023. A called board meeting is on June 21, 2023.

Ms. Richardson thanked the administrative staff for their work on the policies.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and this meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.

President, Board of Education

Secretary, Board of Education