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## Board of Education

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### Minutes of The Board of Education

A Regular School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held Monday, March 31, 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 seven board members were present. Other board members present were: Mr. Phil Whiteaker, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Mr. Matt Blaylock, Ms. Susan Krafft, Ms. Lynnette Lott, and Mr. Gregory Carthon. District administrators present included: Dr. Terry Morawski, Superintendent; Mr. Marty 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.

#### **RECOGNITIONS**

Mr. Allan Marshall presented the following recognitions:

Darby Middle School students placed first at the state Health Occupations Students of America competition.

Southside High School senior, Kate Bunnell, was named Arkansas Journalist of the Year and will represent Arkansas at the national competition.

Southside High School members of the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) placed first at the state competition. These students include Alina Alam, Ananya Taggarse, Michael Nguyen, Jiya Shah, Ryan McCord, Evie Hernandez, and Marco Castro.

The Northside Lady Bears won the 6A Girls Basketball State Championship. This is their ninth championship under Coach Ricky Smith.

Chaffin Middle School counselors Amy Ottman and Ginetta Tipton earned Recognized ASCA Model Program certification.

### **ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC**

Mr. Marshall presented the 2023-2024 Annual Report to the Public, which included key topics such as graduation rates, enrollment trends, and financial data.

### **CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Maria Lazcano spoke on bullying concerns.

### **SUPERINTENDENT REPORT**

Dr. Morawski informed the board of several key events: Superintendent interviews will be held on April 1-3, 2025 at 5:30 PM at the Peak Innovation Center; the next regularly scheduled school board meeting will be April 28, 2025, Southside High School graduation will be Thursday, May 15 and Northside High School graduation will be Friday, May 16, the May regular school board meeting will be May 19, 2025.

Dr. Morawski's Good Things Going on in the District included: Howard Elementary celebrated 75 years in their building and 155 years as a school; Campuses across the District celebrated Read Across America week; a resolution was passed by state representative Zach Gramlich to honor the memory of Mrs. Stacy Bates, a Fort Smith Public School staff member and artist; Chaffin Students placed first, second, and third at the ACTM math contest held at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith, Northside Health Occupations Students of America hosted a "stuffed" animal hospital event for Morrison Elementary students; Southside High School student, Justin Han, earned MVP honors at the 7A-West Regional Quiz Bowl Tournament; Derek Shepard reached 1000 points in his Northside Grizzlies Boys Basketball career; Ballman Elementary students wrote notes of kindness to their friends; and Ms. Jennifer Steele earned her Athletic Administrators Certification from the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

The consent agenda included the February Financial Report, February 24 Minutes, March 19 Minutes, March Professional Staff Recommendations, Student Services Report and Consider Revisions to the Board Governance and Operations Policy.

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

### **CONSIDER AUTHORIZING THE SALE AND DISPOSAL OF COMMODITIES**

Mr. Warren presented to the Board a list of fire arms and expired body armor vests for authorization to sell or dispose of as surplus commodities.

Mr. Warren stated these commodities will be disposed of as per specific state and federal guidelines.

Ms. Krafft made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lott, to authorize the sale or disposal of commodities as listed.

### **CONSIDER APPROVING PROPOSED 2025-2026 CERTIFIED SALARY SCHEDULES**

Mr. Warren provided a financial overview of the four funding sources which includes the millage, assessment values, foundation funding, and student count. The millage and assessment values will lend a \$3,369,000 increase in available local revenue. Mr. Warren explained how the use of these funds will cover the cost of existing staff step increases and the cost of adding additional administrators to each of the elementaries in 2025-2026.

At this time, the foundation funding and student count remain unknown factors. Other unknown factors include ongoing right-sizing efforts of the district and if the state teacher minimum salary raise fund will continue to fund salary and benefits.

Mr. Warren presented the salary schedules for both certified and classified employees. The schedules presented remain the same as last year. But does offer a non-recurring payment to veteran full time employees and a non-recurring payment to full time employees if specific benchmarks are achieved.

After discussion, the Board agreed to table this agenda item until the April 28 board meeting.

### **CONSIDER APPROVING PROPOSED 2025-2026 CLASSIFIED SALARY SCHEDULES**

The Board agreed to table this agenda item until the April 28 board meeting.

### **PRESENTATION – GRADUATION 2025 UPDATE**

Dr. Tony Jones shared how the graduation speech application and selection process works. In case of inclement weather, the graduation ceremonies will be moved to the Fort Smith Convention Center. This location allows for 8-9 tickets per student. The cost to use the Convention Center is \$8,000 per day and that will be charged whether it is used or not. A livestream option will also be available.

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

### **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ADOPTION FOR 2025-2026**

Dr. Jones presented the process and selection of the curriculum and textbook adoption for math and foreign language materials. Administration recommended Imagine Illustrative Math for the math curriculum. And for the foreign language curriculum, materials that are already in use will be updated.

Ms. Krafft made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteaker, to approve the adoption of the recommended instructional resources for secondary schools. The vote passed 7-0.

### **ACADEMIC PRESENTATION – COMPUTER SCIENCE CYBERSECURITY ACADEMIES**

Dr. Gary Udouj presented a proposal to create a Computer Science Academy to be housed at Chaffin Middle School. The program will be rolled out over three years, starting with 6th grade in the 2026-2027 school year, followed by 7th grade in 2027-2028, and 8th grade in 2028-2029. Dr. Udouj's presentation included the projected costs, staffing and space considerations.

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

#### **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH UPDATE**

Mr. Person reported that interviews for the Superintendent position will occur on April 1 (Mr. Martin Mahan), April 2 (Ms. Anne Martfeld), and April 3, 2025 (Mr. Jason Black). The interviews will be conducted in executive session.

#### **BOARD MEMBERS FORUM**

The next regular scheduled meeting is Monday, April 28, 2025.

School board members reiterated the importance of following up with Ms. Maria Lazcano regarding her concerns expressed during citizen's participation.

#### **EMPLOYMENT HEARING**

At 7:07 PM an employment hearing was held regarding Mr. Robert Taylor. Board members present were: Mr. Dalton Person, Mr. Phil Whiteaker, Mr. Davin Chitwood, Mr. Matt Blaylock, Ms. Susan Krafft, Ms. Lynnette Lott, and Mr. Gregory Carthon. District administrators present included: Dr. Terry Morawski, Superintendent; Dr. Chris Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Campus Support; Ms. Judy Pennington, Director, Human Resources; 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. Mr. Taylor was present with his attorney, Mr. Joey McCutchen and Mr. Ben Shipley was present as the hearing officer.

At 9:03 PM the Board went into executive session to discuss the employment matter.

Board members returned to open session at 10:25 PM.

Mr. Carthon made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blaylock, to modify the recommendation of termination to a ninety day suspension without pay effective immediately. The vote passed 6-1 with Ms. Lott opposing.

#### **ADJOURN**

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 10:26 PM.

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Dalton Person, President

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Davin Chitwood, Secretary