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, May 18, 2026, 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. Phil Whiteaker, president, called the meeting to order noting five board members present. Other board members present were: Ms. Susan Krafft, Mr. Matt Garner, Ms. Lynnett Lott, and Ms. Maria Martinez. Ms. Brittney Hall and Mr. Brad Harding were not present. District administrators present included: Mr. Marty Mahan, Superintendent; Dr. Tiffany Bone, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Chris Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Campus Support; Dr. Kellie Cohen Minton, 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; 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.

RECOGNITIONS
Dr. Tiffany Bone presented the following recognitions:

Southside High School Quiz Bowl team captured the Arkansas Governor's Quiz Bowl Association 7A State Championship. This is the eighth state title for Southside. Justin Han was named the 7A State MVP.

Southside High school AP Psychology teacher, Mr. Mark Minnick, received the 2026 American Psychology Association Teachers Charles T. Blair Broker Excellence in Teaching Award.

Ms. Jennifer Steele was named the 6A Athletic Administrator of the Year.

Police Chief Eric Huber recognized Ms. Jenny Jasna, Mr. Colby McGee, Colonel Jason Meharg, and School Resource Officer Anthony Cox, for their professionalism and commitment to student safety.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION
Mr. Wayne Haver spoke in support of naming the Fort Smith Public Schools administration building after former Superintendent Dr. Benny L. Gooden.

Ms. Christy Duty spoke on Meta glasses being worn by a teacher.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
Mr. Mahan provided an update on the Noise Mitigation Grant. He reported that the grant agreement will be amended to include a requirement that the district retain ownership of the buildings for a minimum of fifteen years. The revised agreement will be presented to the Board for approval at a future meeting.

Mr. Mahan shared the key trends identified during the spring District Listening Tours.

Mr. Mahan's Good Things Going on in the District include: Cavanaugh Elementary cut the ribbon for their new Little Free Library; Northside Red Shoe Society surpassed their goal and raised $20,000 in five years for the local Ronald McDonald House Charities; Northside High School teacher Courtney Hardcastle won the KNWA Golden Apple Award; Seniors returned to their elementary schools for their senior walk; Congratulations to the graduating classes at both Northside and Southside High School; The FSPS Foundation awarded approximately $87,000 in grants and scholarships; the Retirees & Rookies Banquet was held recently and celebrated the past and the future at FSPS; Congratulations to the following Superintendent's Stars: Ximena, Morrison Elementary; Elizabeth, Park Elementary; Raquel, Spradling Elementary; Esau, Sunnymede Elementary; and Keyden, Sutton Elementary.

CONSENT AGENDA
The consent agenda included the April Financial Report, April 27 Minutes, May Professional Staff Recommendations, Consider Adopting a Resolution Authorizing Initial Contracts, Consider Approval of the Arkansas Department of Education Federal Programs Statement of Assurances and GEPA Statement for Programs, Consider Approval of the 2026-2027 Title I Part C Migrant Education Grant Assurances, Consider an Edit to the Superintendent's 2025-2026 Performance Goals, and Consider Approving the 2026-2027 Staff Contract Renewals.

Ms. Krafft made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garner, to approve consent agenda. The vote passed 5-0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE 2026-2027 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING SCHEDULE
Mr. Mahan presented the proposed regular meeting and work session schedule for the 2026-2027 school year, noting the meeting dates are taking into consideration any conflicts with holidays.

Mr. Garner made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lott, to adopt the Boad of Education meeting schedule as presented. The vote passed 5-0.

PRESENTATION – UPDATE FROM THE TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT
Mr. Vance Gregory provided an overview of the cybersecurity updates implemented over the last two years as well as improvements planned for 2026-2027.

This is an information item only. No action is required.

CONSIDER APPROVING RESOLUTION TO ISSUE BONDS
Mr. Charles Warren presented information regarding the proposed bond issue to fund necessary renovations and improvements throughout the district. The proposed bond is in the amount of $15,000,000.

Ms. Krafft made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lott, to approve the resolution to issue $15 million in second lien bonds as presented. The vote passed 4-1 with Mr. Garner opposing.

CONSIDER APPROVING THE LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS
Dr. Tiffany Bone informed the Board that the Long-Range Facilities Planning Committee had met to consider plans for repurposing the Carnall and Spradling properties.

The committee recommends relocating the Parker Center staff to Carnall Elementary, move the Rogers Center staff to both Carnall Elementary and the Service Center, and Adult Education staff to Spradling Elementary.

Mr. Mahan stated that the Parker Center, Rogers Center, and the Peabody Building would be placed on the market for sale.

Ms. Krafft made a motion, seconded by Mr. Garner, to approve the committee's recommendations as presented. The vote passed 5-0.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT PRESENTATION – ATLAS ASSESSMENT DATA
Dr. Minton reviewed the results of the ATLAS assessments administered in April and May for students in grades 3-10. The presentation included data for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science.

This is an information item only. No action is required.

PRESENTATION – CHARTER SCHOOL UPDATE
Mr. Mahan provided a preview of the presentation regarding the Global Innovation Academy Charter School, which will be presented to the DESE Charter Authorizing Panel later this month.

The Global Innovation Academy will focus on Singapore Math, Mandarin language, and PITSCO Science, and is planned to open in Fall 2027.

This is an information item only. No action is required.

RENAMING OF THE FORT SMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS SERVICE CENTER
Dr. Bone recapped the process and steps completed in accordance with Board Policy 7.21 regarding the naming of facilities. She reported that community members had approached the Board requesting that the Service Center be renamed.

Ms. Krafft made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lott, to rename the Fort Smith Public Schools Service Center as the Dr. Benny L. Gooden Service Center contingent upon all associated costs being funded through private donations and to move forward when those funds are secured. The vote passed 4-1 with Mr. Garner opposing.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

The Adult Education graduation is Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at Northside Arena.

The annual superintendent evaluation will be on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, in the Auditorium.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 PM.

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Phillip Whiteaker, Board President

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Brittney Hall, Board Secretary