



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, February 23, 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. Dalton Person, president, called the meeting to order with four board members present. Other board members present were: Mr. Phil Whiteaker, Ms. Brittney Hall, and Mr. Brad Harding. District administrators present included: Mr. Marty Mahan, Superintendent; Dr. Tiffany Bone, Deputy Superintendent; 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; Ms. Kimberly Mundell, Executive Director of Communications and Engagement; and Ms. Leslie Phelps, Office Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. Mr. Marshall Ney, of Friday, Eldridge, and Clark, District Attorney, was also in attendance.

Ms. Susan Krafft, Ms. Lynnett Lott, and Ms. Maria Martinez entered the meeting at 5:31 PM.

RECOGNITIONS

Ms. Kimberly Mundell presented the following recognitions:

The Northside eSports team captured the state championship in Splatoon. Northside is the first team in Arkansas to earn the Arkansas Activities Association Splatoon state title.

Southside High School student Bella Thornberg competed at the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) state competition and placed first in the Community Giving Project category. Bella was also selected as the Arkansas State DECA President.

Ms. Tiffany Mouada, Counselor at Cavanaugh Elementary, was recognized for being named the Elementary Counselor of the Year by the Northwest Arkansas School Counselor Association.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Mr. Kyle Parker spoke in support of naming the Fort Smith Public Schools administration building after former Superintendent Dr. Benny L. Gooden.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Mahan called the Board's attention to the consent agenda, specifically the consideration of adopting student related policy updates.

Mr. Mahan introduced the new Athletic Director, Mr. Rusty Bush. Mr. Bush presented his 90-day plan to the Board.

Mr. Mahan's Good Things Going on in the District include: five Darby Middle School students went to the Capitol for Career and Technical Education Month; Woods Site Seekers robotics team earned a bid to compete in the WPI Open Invitational in Massachusetts; congratulations to Cody Goodson from Northside High School and Justin Han, Skyler Henehan, and Hieu Le from Southside High school for being named a National Merit Finalists; Northside Grizzly Gear and Southside's Southern Grounds have earned Gold-Level Recertification from DECA; congratulations to the following Superintendent's Stars: Jayden Darby, Cook; Zoey Taylor, Ballman; Blaze Wiles, Cavanaugh; Naomi Hansen, Carnall; Killian Kovach, Beard; Oliver Palmer, Fairview; Kwantavious Jackson, Euper Lane; Joaquin Mendez, Tilles; JaVon Burnell, Barling; Josue Arriaga, Howard; Joaquin Juarez, Bonneville; Tucker Wilson, Woods; Esmeralda Nolasco, Morrison; Jade Waner, Park; Ari Holden, Spradling; Samantha Vasquez Franco, Sutton; and Isabella Hood, Sunnymede.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included the January Financial Report, January 12 and February 2 Minutes, February Professional Staff Recommendations, and Adopting Student Related Policy Changes 4.4 and 4.47.

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

PRESENTATION – ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT – 3rd GRADE PROMOTION

Mr. Person requested the agenda item, Academic Achievement-3rd grade promotion, be moved to the next agenda item. This item was originally the last presentation on the board agenda, but he recommended moving it forward since the elementary principals were in attendance.

Ms. Krafft made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lott, to move the Academic Achievement-3rd grade presentation to the next agenda item. The vote passed 7-0.

Dr. Minton informed the Board that, as per the Arkansas LEARNS Act, third grade students who do not meet the minimum reading standard and do not meet the criteria for a good cause exemption are not eligible for promotion to fourth grade. Dr. Minton outlined the available exemptions as well as the number of students at each elementary campus that were at risk for retention. Dr. Minton also explained the student growth plan, outlining current strategies and next steps being implemented to help students at risk.

This was an information item. No action is required.

PRESENTATION – NOISE MITIGATION GRANT UPDATE

Mr. Teran Judd from The Roosevelt Group provided an update via Zoom on the progress of the noise mitigation grant awarded by the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation. The grant funds will be used to renovate and upgrade Orr Elementary and Carnall Elementary. It was reiterated, despite Carnall Elementary closing at the end of the school year, the grant will proceed if the building remains owned and used by the district.

This is a presentation only. No action is required.

PRESENTATION – DISTRICT CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Mr. Joseph Valesquez, Construction Project Manager, invited each of the various construction managers to provide an update on their projects within the District. The presentations covered both projects currently under construction and projects that are in the design phase.

This is an information item. No action is required.

CONSIDER APPROVING THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUTHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL TROPHY CASE

Mr. Jeff Prewitt, Principal, Southside High School, made a presentation to the board requesting funding for the reinstallation of the trophy display cases at Southside High School. The original display cases were removed due to renovations. The estimated cost is \$300,000 plus design fees.

Ms. Hall made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lott, to approve the Southside trophy case design and construction subject to it qualifying for capital fund expenditures. The vote passed 7-0.

PRESENTATION – NAMING SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY REVIEW

Mr. Marshall Ney explained the process outlined in District policy for naming school facilities. Per policy, the Board may delegate the determination of facility names meeting requirements of the policy to a committee appointed by the Board.

Ms. Hall made a motion, seconded by Ms. Krafft, to solicit nominations from the public of names for the renaming of the Service Center for a period of seven days. The vote passed 7-0.

The board appointed Dr. Tiffany Bone, Dr. Chris Davis, Mr. Charles Warren, and Brittney Hall to the committee.

Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lott, to approve the appointment of the committee as mentioned. The vote passed 7-0.

CONSIDER AMENDING THE 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

Ms. Judy Pennington, Director of Human Resources, presented an amended calendar for the 2025-2026 school year, proposing to add twelve (12) minutes of instructional time to each remaining student day beginning March 2, 2026. The current calendar includes three (3) inclement weather days built in; however, the District will need to make up two (2) additional days.

Ms. Pennington also shared the results of a stakeholder survey, which received over 3,500 responses. The survey showed 46.5% of respondents chose to add 12 minutes to the instructional day.

Mr. Whiteaker made a motion, seconded by Ms. Krafft, to approve the amended 2025-2026 school year calendar to include the addition of twelve (12) instructional minutes to the remaining student days beginning March 2, 2026. The vote passed 7-0.

PRESENTATION – FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Charles Warren provided a financial overview of the District’s four funding sources which include millage, assessment values, foundation funding, and student count. All four sources will see a decrease. Mr. Warren also introduced the projected impact of new funding sources for the 2026-2027 school year.

Mr. Warren presented the proposed salary schedules for both certified and classified employees. The schedules presented remain the same as last year.

This item will be brought to the Board for approval at the March regular meeting.

This is a presentation only. No action is required.

PRESENTATION – SUPERINTENDENT MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE GOALS UPDATE

Mr. Mahan brought a mid-year report to the Board highlighting the progress on his 2025-2026 performance goals.

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

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

A board work session will be held on March 9 at 5:30 PM at the Orr Learning Academy Media Center.

The next regular scheduled board meeting will be Monday, March 16, 2026.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Board President

Board Secretary