

**Highland School District #203**  
**District Office**  
**Monday, January 8, 2024**

**Regular Board Meeting-7:00 a.m.**

The **January 8, 2024, AM Regular Board Meeting** was called to order by Vice Chair David Barnes at 7:06 a.m. Others present included Board members David Barnes, Lupita Flores, and Cindy Reed, Superintendent Mark Anderson, Director of Business & Operations Francis Badu, Director of Student Success Mindy Schultz, HHS Leadership student Natalie Sausedo, and Recording Secretary Julie Notman. Board members Nikki Keller and Carlos López were absent.

For Board Appreciation Month, HEA President Vanessa Williams brought fresh fruit and home-baked scones and PSE President Melva St. George brought Starbuck's beverages. All enjoyed the treats immensely.

**1. Swearing-In of Re-elected Board Members:** Superintendent Mark Anderson administered the Oath of Office to returning board members Lupita Flores and Cindy Reed. Their terms run until December 2027.

**2.-3. 2024-2025 Budget Update/Budget Committee-Plans/Responsibilities:** Francis: The pending negative budget situation is the result of declining enrollment (as seen across the state), the end of Covid/pandemic/stimulus funding, and McCleary-forced (but not funded) increases to teacher salaries. Several financial information charts were shared and explained: Actual Enrollment History, Expenditure Breakdown-Payroll & Other, Fund Balances as a Percentage of Total Expenditures of the valley's school districts for 2019-20 to 2022-23, and an HSD Budget Status Report for 2019-20 through projected 2024-2025. Francis has been warning the Board of the pending budget shortfall. He shared that with having two-year contracts in place with both PSE and HEA (2023-24 and 2024-25) and biennial figures from OSPI, he has been able to create a realistic, estimated 2024-2025 budget that predicts a shortfall of \$2.1M for HSD. Nearly every district in the state is in a similar budget crisis as reported in several news articles that were shared with the Board. The rest of this month the budget projections will be fine-tuned by the budget committee, including department heads, and what we need to do will be set in motion, including a potential spending freeze for the remainder of this school year and RIFs of staff.

Nikki Keller joined the meeting at 7:27 a.m.

PK-12 Coordinator of Mathematical Innovations Sara Crowston joined the meeting at 7:52 a.m.

Natalie left the meeting at 8:44 a.m.

**6. PK-12 Coordinator of Mathematical Innovations Update:** Sara introduced herself with a brief history of how she came to Highland, detailed Highland's math scores over several years and explained how, by observation, training, and follow-through, she is assisting teachers to teach math in ways so students learn transferable skills such as cognitive flexibility, critical and creative thinking, how to struggle productively and complex problem-solving. The younger grade students, where scores tend to be highest, are learning these skills so they can be more successful in math at the higher grade levels, where the scores tend to drop off. The higher grade levels are learning these math skills to prepare them for post-high school education and employment. These are the skills that employers are looking for.

**4. Capital Projects:** Reminder that the Capital Projects Levy is a six-year levy but it is time to decide the timeline for starting the next project after the HMS/HHS HVAC updates set for this spring/summer. Improving the track and field are next in line and technology must always be under consideration, especially to keep our infrastructure up to date. Discussed the idea of consolidating the elementary school buildings by enlarging TES, and then selling the MWC

property, as it has been very costly to operate two elementary buildings. We will be eligible for state capital project funding in 2027.

**5. HMS Signage:** Monster Graphics gave a quote of \$22K to update and/or add signs at HMS, TES, the DO and others. Instead, we plan to purchase only what is absolutely necessary (HMS & TES signs) and maybe a small sign to direct folks to the DO. That will bring the price down to \$4-6K. Will pay for higher quality materials so the signs will last longer.

**7. Communication Check-In:** Reminder that our current website provider was bought out and we elected to go with the new owner. We picked the format most similar to our current one and it is scheduled to go live at the beginning of March.

**8. WSSDA Regional Meeting in April:** We have been asked to host the regional meeting and after some discussion the board agreed to do so.

**9. Substitute Teacher Discussion:** After a lengthy and involved discussion about hiring substitute teachers that live in our district but choose to send their own children out of district, the board reluctantly decided to allow it.

**10. 2024-2025 Instructional Calendar Discussion:** Talked about intersession options: four-day option with the final day an optional day for teachers or attach intersession to a week with a holiday. Keep the October week off, as Fall Break like we used to have or not. Are we seeing results from intersessions (yes) but OSPI pulled the funding so we have to reduce the number of days we offer. Suggested August 21 start, no fall break, end June 17 or 18 with intersession Feb. 19-21 after the teacher optional day and a second one May 27-30. Or return to previous [no intersession] schedule, discussed other school start and end dates. The budget will dictate a lot of it. Discussed the loss of 21<sup>st</sup> Century (funding was cancelled, we don't know why) starting in 2024-25. What options might the district have to offset that loss to help students and families. One option is having an independent day care/latch-key program come in to provide that service, there would be a cost to the family and no transportation by the district. Discussed the possibility of adjusting para schedules to provide an after-school option.

**11. Policy Review: Policies:** 6114 Gifts or Donations: discussed discrepancies between the policy, procedure, and form. Tabled until next meeting.

**12. Superintendent Transition:** Mark plans to retire June 2025. Mindy will become the assistant superintendent starting July 1, 2024, to shadow Mark for the 2024-2025 SY, while continuing some of her current responsibilities. Board left the decision about when to announce officially to union reps up to Mindy and Mark. The Board discussed Mark leaving the district and decided to amend his contract to move the 2025-2026 longevity pay of \$7,500.00 to be paid at the start of his 2024-2025 contract in July 2024.

Mindy left the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Julie left the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

**13. Board Goals/Responsibilities Follow up:** Discussed policies regarding board members also being paid staff.

**Adjournment:** There being no further items to discuss, Chair Nikki Keller adjourned the January 8, 2024 AM Board Meeting at 11:23 a.m.

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Chair

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Secretary