

**Highland School District #203
District Office
Monday, February 12, 2024**

Special Board Meeting-4:30 p.m.

The **February 12, 2024, Special Board Meeting** was convened by Vice Chair David Barnes at 4:32 p.m. Others present included Board members Lupita Flores, Carlos López and Cindy Reed, Superintendent Mark Anderson, Director of Business & Operations Francis Badu, Director of Student Success Mindy Schultz, and Recording Secretary Julie Notman. Director Nikki Keller joined the meeting at 5:03 p.m.

1. 2024-2025 Instructional Calendar: A draft for the 2024-2025 calendar was presented. Fall intersession in October was kept as it is important for catching up elementary students. All buildings felt the spring session was more important than the winter session so the winter intersession was changed to just one day for high school students credit retrieval that will be on the same day as a teacher PLD. Spring intersession was moved to May 5-9 as the school year will end earlier. It is set for the first three days of the week with the last two set as snow make-up days. If those are needed as make-up days then the three intersession days will be longer, if they are not, then intersession will go all week. Break at Thanksgiving was reverted to an early release day on Wednesday as attendance was very poor when Tuesday was a half-day and Wednesday was an additional day off. Last day of school will be on 6/18, the Juneteenth holiday on 6/19, and a final teacher PLD on 6/20/25. The proposed calendar will be shared with admin and the calendar committee, and we hope it will be ready for board approval at the March AM meeting. The board supports the 2024-2025 calendar as presented.

2. 2024-2025 Budget: Mark: Revisited the enrollment projections, which are trending downward. We could have a loss of 80 FTE by 2025-2026. So far there are only 32 kinders signed up for next year. Lower enrollment means fewer staff are needed.

Certificated staffing: We need to eliminate a position/program at HHS. Other teachers and classes can handle the subjects of that program, this change to be shared with staff in March or April. Reviewed the list of staff that will be non-renewed, and those slated for involuntary transfers. These will be shared with admin at next week's meeting and staff will be notified by the end of next week. We must eliminate extra pay that is outside of the CBA.

Classified staffing: We need to RIF one position with responsibilities shared between other positions. We are not filling the Transportation Lead position being vacated by a retirement and must reduce para positions by two. We will reduce sub costs by covering in-house. We must freeze non-essential spending throughout the district. Looking ahead to 2025-2026, there will be a reduction/savings in admin costs with Mindy moving into the superintendent position, reducing admin by one. Looking at reducing secretarial staff.

We have targeted some contracts/agreements with ESD 105 that we can eliminate and are looking at posting some positions such as PT and OT that we contract with them to see if we can hire our own for a noticeable savings.

Francis: Reviewed updated budget status report. Showed the history of the last three years' actuals, the current year's budget, and the first and second projected 2024-2025 budgets without and then with cuts. With the initial proposed cuts, we would have saved over a million dollars but the fund balance was still below where we want it to be. The third and final 2024-2025 projected budget has a net gain of \$346K due to the cuts Mark explained, bringing us to \$1.4M in cuts from where we were originally. Besides the loss of federal (stimulus) funding, (\$4.3M over three years) we anticipate a \$490K decrease in state allotment/apportionment due to declining enrollment. The final 2024-2025 budget recommendation with all of the cuts will leave the Fund Balance at 5.53%. The initial projected budget, before cuts, had it in the negative. We are closely watching Food Service to reduce the deficit there and break even. If we don't make the budget goals in 2024-2025, we will have to make more cuts, (Plan B).

Francis shared about investment tracking and state apportionment. State apportionment amounts change each month. Monthly we spend about \$1.5M and some months the apportionment covers that and there is extra to put in savings and other months it does not, and we must borrow from ourselves to cover expenses.

We generally catch up with the June and July apportionment payments. We will need to watch the fund balance at the end of August and work our spending accordingly. It could be two-four years before the budget issues resolve.

By the next AM board meeting, everyone will have been notified of the staffing changes. The unions seem to understand that cuts have to be made. The board supports the 2024-2025 proposed budget with the staffing cuts and reassignments, and other proposed cuts as presented.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the February 12, 2024, Special Board Meeting concluded at 5:29 p.m.

Chair

Secretary