

**Highland School District #203**  
**District Office**  
**Monday, May 6, 2024**

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

The **May 6, 2024, AM Regular Board Meeting** convened at 7:02 a.m. Present included Board members David Barnes, Lupita Flores, Nikki Keller, Carlos López, and Cindy Reed, Superintendent Mark Anderson, Director of Student Success Mindy Schultz, and Recording Secretary Julie Notman.

**1. Communication Check-In:** Discussed the complaints and follow-up conversations about a play the HS students attended in Seattle to satisfy a requirement for their College in the High School classes. Students in National Honor Society also attended. Changes going forward: attend only local plays, have the play approved by the building principal, read the script ahead of time, and have a parent permission form with specific information.

**2. August Retreat Discussion:** Can be held at any time of the month, does not have to coincide with the AM board meeting [if any]. The board needs to discuss the next use of levy Capital Projects funds, could have a presentation at the retreat for options and cost of updating the track & field. FYI-We will have the 2024-2025 budget on the agenda for approval in June.

**3. Policy Discussion:** [Per Policy 1400] Starting in July we will be required to audio record all meetings. We are researching how best to accomplish this. Policy 1611-discussed timeline of implementing new rule about school board members and coaching.

**4. Athletic Code Update:** There are some word/phrase changes to bring the code up to date but no policy changes. Carlos moved with 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lupita to approve the Athletic Code updates as presented; motion carried.

**5. Capital Project Update:** With our enrollment numbers dropping it is going to be extremely difficult to operate and maintain three different properties. We need to look at short-term and long-term plans for when our levies and bond end to continue those at the same rate to provide funding for a [PK-5 building, a remodel at TES or other] solution. Discussed enrollment loss due to lower birth rates, families enrolling their children in private or online school or choosing to home-school.

Mark explained the challenges in the staffing changes that must occur in the Special Ed department to help balance/preserve the budget. Enrollment in Special Ed at MWC is 23 with two teachers but 40 with one teacher at the HS. The district gives early notice of changes to staff so they have time to look for other positions if they prefer.

Director of Business & Operations Francis Badu joined the meeting at 7:55 a.m. and left at 8:01.

**6. Employee of the Year Discussion:**

a. Business & Operations: Francis presented two nominations for the Business & Operations Employee of the Year: Marie Peters and Mike Sommerville, stating how each works hard, is always pleasant and willing to do whatever needs to be done.

b. HMS Principal Don Strother joined the meeting at 8:02 a.m. and left at 8:09 a.m. He presented the nominations for certificated, Kelly Fitzpatrick and classified Lourdes Díaz. He stated that Kelly has become a leader for staff and students alike and is a tremendous asset to the school. About Lourdes he said she is probably the most valued staff member at HMS by students, staff and parents alike, always cheerful and works very hard.

c. Director of Special Education Courtney Sund and Director of State and Federal Programs Kirsten Lenz joined the meeting at 8:10 and left at 8:13 a.m. Rhonda Boyle is the certificated nomination, presented by Courtney who shared about Rhonda's passion for the students. Monica Farias is the classified nomination and Kirsten shared about Monica's smooth transition to the different building and her warmth and smile for all.

d. MWC Principal Andrea Wickenhagen joined the meeting at 8:15 a.m. and left at 8:23 a.m. Eva Lamas is the MWC nominee for certificated. Her qualities include advocating for students, finding the best practice for each and how she is knowledgeable yet humble. Paulina Castellanos is the classified nominee. She carries herself as a professional, interacts with students with care and is uplifting to all those she works with.

e. HHS Principal Jeremy Gillespie joined the meeting at 8:28 a.m. and left at 8:31 a.m. Jeremy nominated John Straehle, a long-time member of the staff, for the certificated Employee of the Year sharing that the band and choir numbers are up, and the students have competed and done very well in both group and individual contests. HHS secretary Lizz Kramer is the classified nominee. She was nearly the only one with experience in the HHS office this school year (new athletic secretary and new principal) and kept up with everything, handling the ASB money and other things. She [has great school spirit] participates in Spirit week enthusiastically.

f. TES Principal Brandon Jensen joined the meeting at 8:41 a.m. and left at 8:49 a.m. Brandon shared that being new to TES this year he is still getting to know the staff. Besides his own ideas he got input from the staff for the nominations [as do the other admin]. Caitlyn Nation is the certificated nominee and while new to TES this year, she has been an amazing addition. She came with a lot of experience which she has shared with all of the staff and brought new life to the building. Diane McKeel is the classified nominee. She has been the most consistent in attendance and joined the PBIS and SIT teams midyear when there was a vacancy. She visits with the students, is loving, kind and empathetic.

Lengthy discussion followed to select the certificated, classified, and B & O Employees of the Year: John Straehle, Lizz Kramer, and Mike Sommerville, respectively, were chosen.

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

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Chair

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Secretary