



**LITTLEFIELD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #9
GOVERNING BOARD WORK SESSION
Administrative Services Site
3490 East Rio Virgin Road
Wednesday, February 26, 2025
4:00 P.M.
(Doors Open at 3:45 p.m.)**

Mission Statement

The Littlefield Unified School District is committed to excellence. Therefore, we are committed to providing opportunities for all students to learn and develop socially, emotionally, and academically. We are committed to providing resources to our students, parents and teachers in an ongoing effort to help students transition from childhood to adulthood.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Board President Fagnan called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. There were two (2) members of the public in attendance and Board President Hogan was absent from the meeting.

2. ROLL CALL:

Michael Fagnan, Board President
John Reyes, Board Secretary
Nichole Frisby, Board Member
Sonny Graham, Board Member
Sean Hogan, Board Member

Troy Heaton, Superintendent/Secondary Principal
Kevin Murray, Elementary Principal
Spencer Holmes, Business Manager
Sheree Goessman, Human Resources Director

DISCUSSION

3. Discussions regarding the current state of school meal services, identify areas for improvement, and explore potential changes or enhancements to better serve students.

Board Member Frisby said she spoke with Board Member Hogan regarding concerns about food waste at the elementary school, noting that a significant amount of food is being thrown away. She suggested exploring ways to support food services and shared insights from discussions with multiple vendors at the ASBA conference. Board Member Frisby also met with Mrs. Goessman about food services, who recommended speaking directly with the food service staff.

Mrs. Goessman advised a large majority of students qualify for free and reduced lunch, but there is little incentive for parents to pay for meals. Mr. Heaton clarified that while schools must provide meals, they can offer alternative options. Consuelo Avila, Food Services Director, stated that all



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students are required to be given the same meals. Board Member Graham estimated that around 40% of students were on free and reduced lunch. Board Member Nichole suggested including an informational pamphlet in the student enrollment packet explaining that homeless students automatically qualify for free meals. When asked if tax records are pulled to determine eligibility, Mrs. Avila confirmed that they are not. She noted that a 67% threshold is required for full free meal qualification. Board Member Graham added that families must self-report their eligibility. Board Secretary Reyes mentioned that, in the past, the district had reached nearly 90% free and reduced lunch enrollment.

Board Member Frisby said she had a discussion with Mrs. Goessman about the possibility of working with third-party vendors. Board Secretary Reyes asked if vendors currently serve this area, and Mr. Heaton explained that meeting the required meal count is a challenge. He mentioned that Chartwells, which employs its own staff, had been used at his last district and various service packages.

Board Member Frisby asked food service staff about challenges related to food waste and the feasibility of bulk meal preparation. Mrs. Avila noted that some students like certain foods while others do not. At the high school, she has introduced options like enchiladas, pizza, and a salad bar, which have been well received. However, she observed that while high school students enjoy enchiladas, elementary students do not. Plans are in place to introduce chicken quesadillas at the elementary school and continue offering a salad bar.

Annette Carlson, Food Service Lead, commented that she doesn't see the School Board of staff eating school lunch. Mr. Heaton noted the School Board is only invited to the Thanksgiving luncheon. He said they are welcome to visit the schools for means, but to notify him in advance. Mrs. Carlson share that 144 waffles comes to about 25 cents per waffle.

Board Secretary Reyes brought up legislative and regulatory developments, including Arizona House Bill HB 2164, which would ban ultra-processed foods in public schools. He noted that stricter federal regulations are also expected. While processed foods are more affordable, increased regulations will drive up costs and potentially reduce student satisfaction. Board Secretary Reyes said he plans to reach out to legislators to understand how they intend to fund these changes. Board Member Frisby expressed hope that the district will reach the 60% free and reduced lunch threshold, while Board Secretary Reyes believes they will meet the guidelines if all eligible families complete the necessary paperwork.

Mr. Heaton emphasized that school meal funding is federal. Kevin Murray suggested having the salad bar at the elementary on a daily basis. Board Member Frisby asked if that was the plan, and Mrs. Avila confirmed they are working toward it. Board Member Frisby encouraged brainstorming additional meal options. Mrs. Carlson pointed out that while commodities are available, their quality is often subpar, and serving meals students enjoy will increase costs. Board Member Frisby suggested tracking which meals are frequently discarded and adjusting menus accordingly. Mrs. Avila noted that food preferences vary widely among students. Mrs. Carlson added that some meals are unpopular, and she avoids serving items she personally finds unappealing.

Board Member Graham asked whether homemade meals could be prepared under current guidelines, and Mrs. Avila confirmed that they could. Board Member Frisby inquired about the



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feasibility of bulk meal preparation, but Board Secretary Reyes noted that staffing limitations make it difficult. Mr. Heaton suggested tracking food waste statistics to identify meals that should be replaced. The idea of forming a food committee was discussed, and Mr. Heaton suggested that principals should take a more active role in addressing food service concerns. Mrs. Carlson praised Mrs. Avila's enchiladas but acknowledged that she serves a large number of students. Board Member Frisby proposed conducting a student survey to gather feedback on meal preferences. Mrs. Avila mentioned that a high school survey was done previously and indicated a strong preference for tacos, which led to increased meal participation despite the additional workload. Board Secretary Reyes pointed out that new regulations will soon prohibit adding certain sauces and condiments to meals.

Mrs. Carlson stated that the district uses both Sysco and Nicholas as food vendors. While Sysco is more expensive, Nicholas offers discounts through the Washington County contract. Board Member Frisby suggested conducting a meal preference survey at the elementary school. Board Secretary Reyes questioned how potential vendor partnerships would affect the workforce. Mr. Heaton explained that if the district switched to Chartwells, food service employees would no longer have retirement or insurance benefits as they would no longer work for the district. Board Member Frisby noted that Chartwells representatives assured her they would retain existing staff rather than replace them. Board Secretary Reyes asked if a cost analysis had been conducted, and Mr. Heaton said staff would look into getting one done. He also mentioned that many of the complaints raised about current food service operations have already been addressed by Chartwells in other districts. Chartwells does provide a free service analysis for the district. Board President Fagnan asked whether the district has the storage capacity for two weeks' worth of prepackaged food. Board Secretary Reyes acknowledged the challenges faced by the food service department.

Board Member Frisby suggested exploring the possibility of involving students in a life skills class to assist with food services. Mrs. Carlson noted that sixth graders already help as much as possible. Mr. Heaton added that some special needs students previously helped clean tables at the high school, but they cannot work in the kitchen. Mrs. Carlson clarified that students are only permitted to assist with serving. Currently, seventh graders are responsible for cleaning up and taking out the trash at the high school. Board Secretary Reyes recalled that past cafeteria supervisors strictly enforced meal consumption, ensuring students ate their food. Mr. Heaton clarified that students cannot legally be forced to eat their meals. Board President Fagnan suggested stationing a monitor by the trash cans to record discarded food items. Board Member Frisby pointed out that there are already three to four aides in the cafeteria at the elementary school.

Board Member Frisby thanked the food service director and lead for their hard work. Board Secretary Reyes acknowledged the department's limited resources and restrictions, emphasizing the importance of making small improvements that do not add significant costs.

4. Discussion regarding long-term Capital Budget Strategy, focusing on the allocation of resources for future infrastructure, facilities, and major projects.

Board President Fagnan mentioned that he attempted to select his preferred capital projects but without knowing the budget it was impossible. He then asked about the reading program that was listed for \$100,000. Mr. Murray responded that the reading program that was selected is not



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an approved program and they will need an alternative option. Mrs. Goessman explained the spreadsheets that were distributed to the board, while Troy highlighted the current active projects with the School Facility Board.

Board Member Gram noted that the board receives a preventative maintenance summary from Mr. Cobian every year.

Board President Fagnan expressed concern about the AC units, particularly if only a partial approval is granted, requiring the district to cover the remaining cost, which could leave no funds for other student needs. Mr. Heaton reassured that the reading and math curriculum would be funded through a grant. Additionally, Mrs. Brown is working on a grant to fund a sensory room, which would provide \$30,000 for upgrades to the other side of the board room building. If necessary, the district office could be relocated to this building, and board meetings could be held at the high school. Board Secretary Reyes supported the sensory room grant, noting that several community members had expressed interest in such a space.

Mr. Heaton reviewed the budget line by line, noting that the State of Arizona has historically prohibited school districts from purchasing 15-passenger vans, though discussions are ongoing to allow the purchase of newer models. He expressed interest in adding a 15-passenger van to the district's fleet. Board Secretary Reyes suggested pursuing a grant for televising board meetings.

If the pending grants are approved, Mr. Heaton estimated the district would have approximately \$150,000–\$200,000 available for use. He recommended scheduling another meeting in the summer. Board Member Graham agreed, noting that the board typically holds a work session in June. Board Member Frisby asked what would happen if the AC units were not secured within the next few months. Mrs. Goessman said she would reach out to the School Facilities Board and would provide an update to the Board.

Mr. Heaton also addressed issues with the district's bus maintenance. At the beginning of the year, Mr. Boyer had a verbal agreement with a mechanic shop in Desert Springs for emergency repairs, as they were the only available option after Kaos went out of business. However, in the first three months, the district spent nearly as much on repairs as it had in the entire previous year. Concerned about excessive charges, the district sought alternative mechanics. Upon reviewing the bills, there was suspicion that the charges had been inflated.

Mr. Heaton said they met with Mr. Leavitt regarding these concerns and requested a meeting with the shop to negotiate the charges. However, the mechanic became irate when contacted by Mr. Felker. A meeting was held in the boardroom where the mechanic argued over every line item. The district made it clear that if the full bill were paid, they would no longer use the shop's services. After consulting with legal counsel, the district decided not to pay the full amount until the charges were revised. As a result, the district has now partnered with a company in Mesquite for bus repairs. For major fixes, the "Cox Boys" were identified as a more cost-effective option.

5. Discussion on Open Meeting Law Training provided by the Mohave County School Superintendent.

Board Secretary Reyes noted that the last board meeting coincided with a county-wide school



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board training on open meeting law. He reminded the board that report items are not discussion items and that agenda items need to be clearly specified. Mr. Heaton added that he does not believe anyone has been out of compliance with these guidelines.

Board Secretary Reyes emphasized the importance of maintaining a broad perspective, likening it to a "30,000-foot observation," and understanding the board's role. He clarified that while the board does not need to follow a specific parliamentary procedure, it should still adhere to basic order and structure. He also reiterated that the board's authority is granted by the state legislature.

Regarding voting, Board Secretary Reyes reminded members of the proper procedures for abstaining. He clarified that if a motion is being voted on; board members do not need to explain their vote. While making a motion and seconding it is not legally required, it remains a good practice. Additionally, he advised against informal "straw poll" votes. Mr. Heaton added that board members should also avoid such discussions in informal settings, such as while attending a basketball game together.

Board Secretary Reyes then addressed attendance at executive sessions, noting that while it may be customary for Mrs. Goessman to take minutes, her presence is not required. He also raised concerns regarding the accessibility of executive session minutes and who is authorized to review them. He emphasized the importance of properly recording motions to enter and exit executive sessions.

On the topic of emergency meetings, Board Secretary Reyes clarified that they can be held as soon as necessary, with the agenda posted as quickly as possible following the meeting along with the emergency details. Board President Fagnan brought up Mr. Felker's resignation as an example of what he considered an emergency. Board Secretary Reyes explained that an emergency is defined as a sudden interruption that requires immediate action.

Board Member Frisby commented that the training was very informative. Mr. Heaton noted that John Warren takes a much more hands-on approach compared to Mike File.

6. Discussion regarding current practice of including informational items on the agenda and whether to continue this approach or make adjustments.

Board Member Graham said he brought this up because informational items tend to extend the meeting. He asked whether the board wanted to remove them from the agenda and proceed directly to adjournment. Board President suggested keeping them on the agenda but not reviewing each one individually, and the Board agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

Board President Fagnan adjourned the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

Michael Fagnan, Board President



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Troy Heaton, Superintendent/Secondary Principal

Respectfully Submitted by:

Sheree Goessman
Human Resources Director