

Bentonville Schools Classified PPC Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: January 14, 2026 **Time:** 11:01 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Location:** Boardroom

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:01 a.m.

- **Absent:** Dr. Jones.

II. New Business: Election of Secretary

- **Nominations:** Cassie Watkins was nominated for the position of PPC Secretary.
- **Election:** The committee voted in favor, and **Cassie Watkins was elected as Secretary.**
- **Responsibilities:** The Secretary will take bulleted notes and send them to the district website coordinator, Kara Hickman, for posting. Resources, including AI transcription tools, are available to assist with note-taking.

III. Periodic Market Review: Classified Salary Schedules

The committee reviewed current salary schedules for health services compared to the "Big Four" districts (Bentonville, Rogers, Springdale, Fayetteville).

- **Nurses:** Bentonville is top in steps 1 and 5 but falls to second or third in later steps (10, 25) compared to Springdale and Fayetteville.
 - *Discussion:* A question was raised regarding job sharing for nurses. The district currently uses part-time staff only as needed, primarily in OT/PT.
- **OT/PT:** Bentonville remains **top in salary for all steps** by a significant margin.
- **Social Workers:** Bentonville is top for those with 20–25 years of experience, though Fayetteville is slightly higher at the 20-year mark.
- **Athletic Trainers:** Review deferred to the next meeting due to the complexity of comparison across districts (e.g., indices vs. licensed schedules).

IV. Emergency Request: Maintenance Department Salaries

Dr. Schwanhouser presented a request to declare an **emergency salary change** for the current 2025-26 school year.

- **Rationale:** The district is well below the private market and the Rogers School District for trades (electricians, HVAC, etc.).
- **Staffing Crisis:**
 - The Master Electrician position has been vacant for **1.5 years** because the pay is approximately \$5/hour lower than Rogers.
 - The district has spent **\$223,847 on outsourced electric work** this year alone due to vacancies.

- **Proposal:** Increase pay for Facilities 1, 2, and 3 to be slightly above or comparable to Rogers (e.g., starting a Master Electrician at \$30.42/hour).
- **Fiscal Impact:** Implementing the change would cost the district **\$138,568 annually**, which is less than the current cost of outsourcing.
- **Action:** Due to policy requirements, a **10-day notice** is needed before a vote. The committee will vote on this change at the **February meeting, then it will go to the Board of Education**, with a proposed effective date of **March 15**.

V. Other Discussion Items

- **Paraprofessional Concerns:** Cassie Watkins raised issues regarding paraprofessionals losing pay during worker's comp claims and the application of the district's "assault by student" policy. There are currently **11 paraprofessional vacancies** in the district. Tanya will review the specifics and follow up with Watkins.
- **Retirement Benefits:** It was clarified that district retirees who belong to the Arkansas Teacher Retirement system receive a **Retirement Club athletic pass**.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Note: These minutes are based on the provided audio excerpts from the January 14, 2026, PPC meeting.