

BLYTHEVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular School Board Meeting

Administration Building

Monday, March 30, 2020

The Blytheville Board of Education met at the Blytheville School District Administration Building at 405 West Park Street at 6:00 p.m. on March 30, 2020 via ZOOM with the following members present:

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| (1) Tobey Johnson, President | (2) Barbara Wells, Vice President |
| (3) Erin Carrington, Secretary | (4) Billy Fair |
| (5) Desmond Hammett | (6) Michelle Sims |
| (7) Tracey Ritchey | |

The following member was not present:

- (1) Henrietta Watt

Others present: Jonet Washington and Tommy Bennett.

1. CALL TO ORDER President Tobey Johnson called the regular meeting for the month of March 30, 2020 to order at 6:03 p.m.
2. ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM A quorum was established with six members present. Barbara Wells joined the meeting via ZOOM at 6:48 p.m.
3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MISSION STATEMENT:

Educate all learners to high levels of academic performance while fostering positive social and emotional growth to develop leaders for tomorrow.

Roberts Rules of Order specifies that board members must be recognized by the chair in order to speak. Using Zoom dictates that it is imperative that you be recognized to speak.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

On behalf of the Board, I want to recognize our Food Service Department for their dedication to our children. They have gone above and beyond our expectations.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Billy Fair made a motion to postpone election until next month.

There was no second.

A. President, Vice President and Secretary

Billy Fair made a motion to retain current officers, Tobey Johnson, President, Barbara Wells, Vice-President, and Erin Carrington, Secretary.

There was no second.

B. President

Desmond Hammett made a motion to elect Erin Carrington as President.

There was no second.

Desmond Hammett made a motion and seconded by Michelle Sims to elect Erin Carrington as President.

Motion passed 5:1 with Billy Fair casting the nay vote.

New President Erin Carrington agreed to let Past President Tobey Johnson continue meeting due to logistics.

C. Vice President

Billy Fair made a motion to elect Barbara Wells as Vice President.

The motion did not pass. Vote tied with Billy Fair, Tracey Ritchey and Tobey Johnson voting for Barbara Wells as Vice President and Desmond Hammett, Michelle Sims and Erin Carrington voting against Barbara Wells as Vice President at 6:19 p.m.

Erin Carrington made a motion to elect Desmond Hammett as Vice President.

The motion did not pass. Vote tied with Desmond Hammett, Michelle Sims and Erin Carrington voting for Desmond Hammett as Vice President and Billy Fair, Tobey Johnson and Tracey Ritchey voting against Desmond Hammett as Vice President at 6:22 p.m.

Tobey Johnson made a motion and was seconded by Billy Fair to postpone election of Vice President until next month and continue meeting.

The motion did not pass. Vote tied with Billy Fair, Tracey Ritchey and Tobey Johnson voting to postpone Vice President election and Erin Carrington, Desmond Hammett, and Michelle Sims voting against postponing Vice President election at 6:24 p.m.

D. Secretary

Billy Fair made a motion and seconded by Erin Carrington to elect Michelle Sims as Secretary.

Motion passed by unanimous vote at 6:26 p.m.

5. ASBA DELEGATE

Motion was made by Erin Carrington and seconded by Michelle Sims that Desmond Hammett serve as ASBA Delegate.

Motion passed by unanimous vote at 6:34 p.m.

6. ASBA ADVOCACY NETWORK MEMBER

Motion was made by Billy Fair and seconded by Tobey Johnson that Tracey Ritchey serve as ASBA Advocacy Network Member.

Motion passed by unanimous vote at 6:34 p.m.

7. PRIMARY BOARD DISBURSING OFFICER

Motion was made by Tobey Johnson and seconded by Billy Fair that Bobby Ashley serve as Primary Disbursing Officer.

Motion passed by unanimous vote at 6:43 p.m.

6. INFORMATION ITEMS
AND REPORTS

A. Superintendent's Report

1. Twenty-four RIF letters have been sent out, saving thirty-three positions and nine absorbed.
2. New Gym Construction in Progress Financial Report
3. Due to COVID-19, we are in the process of cleaning and

disinfecting. We have purchased foggers to disinfect. The units are \$700 each and we will seek reimbursement from FEMA. We are trying to make sure our buildings are clean and safe.

VICE PRESIDENT

A motion was made by Billy Fair and seconded by Tobey Johnson to elect Barbara Wells as Vice President.

Desmond Hammett withdrew name from earlier nomination.

Motion passed by unanimous vote at 7:26 p.m.

B. Instructional Report

Sally Cooke, Director of Curriculum

AMI (Alternative Methods of Instruction)

Teachers initially created 5 days of lessons. That was expanded to 10 before spring break. Now we are working to create lessons through April 17th and will prepare for more if the need arises. The instructional facilitators have been a tremendous support in the creation, copying, and distribution of the work to students.

AMI packets for K-2, 3-5, and 6-8 are printed and are available for pick up along with the lunches that are being served every day. Parents may get a week's worth of lessons at one time. Principals are also posting these lessons on their school website and on the school Facebook and Twitter pages to make sure people have access.

Middle School students all received an email with all lessons attached, but can also pick up a paper copy at the school if they need to.

9-12th grade students will be using the online Echo platform that they use every day during school to receive lessons and can access it on any device.

All teachers, principals, counselors are available by email or phone daily from 9:00-3:00 to answer questions for parents or students, but many are going above and beyond that. Some have created their own private group on Facebook to communicate and have posted videos of themselves reading, teaching, and demonstrating lessons. Some have even dropped off information at houses, made personal phone calls, or had a video chat with students and parents to check on their well-being.

Information for AMI is being emailed to everyone at admin who answers phones so if a parent calls with questions they can be directed to the correct place. Our goal is to keep students engaged with learning, but to be flexible in how we support that because there is a lot of diversity in the way students will access the work.

GRADES: We have been asked to remain flexible in how we assess what is being done as well because of the inequity in our homes. All schools will be communicating with parents whose children are at risk of failure and as we move ahead we will have updates on options those children have and how we will proceed. This situation is fluid and we have to be ready for a variety of situations.

We know that in some families multiple people are sharing one device to get online, some students are babysitting others, and many have a lot going on with the stress of parents out of work or working under very difficult conditions. Our counselors are doing a great job of reaching out to families to offer support for the anxiety many are feeling. Many of our teachers are trying to plan lessons and answer questions from their students, teach their own children, and babysit younger kids from home, SO we are following the advice from the state to keep things simple and be mindful of the fact that this is a very stressful time for parents and students.

Additional Extensions:

Some of you may have seen that the Division of Secondary and Elementary Education and Arkansas PBS have partnered to support teachers, families, and students by providing Arkansas AMI Learning Guides associated with PBS educational programming. Starting today, Arkansas PBS will alter its regular television programming to provide age-appropriate educational content to promote activities that students and families may use to practice existing skills, learn new topics, and interact with one another in a meaningful way. Because all of our students will not have access to this we will continue to use the packets that our teachers have prepared, but this is a great way for families to extend the learning if they wish to do so. It looks like a regular PBS show and is very engaging to kids of all ages although the time slots are 8:00-9:30 K-2, 9:30-11:00 for 3-5 and, 11:00-1:00 for 6-8.

High School Credit:

The BHS counselors will be communicating to parents and Seniors if there are any who are at risk of not graduating due to completion of coursework or grades. They are also doing the same with 9-11th graders who may be missing credits for courses. They will be providing information on what must be done in order to remedy that.

This is a stressful time for our seniors especially, and we want to assure them all that we will do our very best to plan special events that typically happen in April and possibly May for them as soon as it is safe to do so. We will continue to update them as often as possible regarding events and graduation requirements.

Don't use the information below this point. It is just for questions that may be asked if clarification is needed.

Grading and Assessment of Student Work

Recognizing that AMI days will not replicate the traditional schedules for every student, provisions have been waived to allow districts flexibility in assigning grades to students. Districts may continue to issue a numeric/letter grade or they may consider other alternatives, such as a pass/fail model or a demonstration of content mastery approach. Other waivers in this area:

- * Allow districts flexibility in assigning grades to students.
- * Allow districts flexibility in calculating GPA.
- * Remove the requirement that students take "the entire AP course" and AP exam, to receive weighted credit.
- * Allow districts flexibility in reporting progress/completion to parents/guardians by not requiring a "grade" for each class. Districts are still required to issue a report card for each student at the end of each grading period, at least four (4) times each school year.

We realize that these waivers are big changes for districts to consider and understand that you will be concerned about unintended consequences. The DESE APSCN team will work with schools to modify reporting options in eSchool and is ready to help you think through unique situations. Options to consider include:

Option A) Process grades as normally done. All setups are currently in place for this procedure. Semester grades will be processed as normal. Grades will be submitted for the fourth 9 weeks as normal during a typical grading period. No eSchool changes necessary.

Option B) Schools may opt to carry the third 9 weeks grade to fourth 9 weeks and average the two 9 weeks grades to provide the semester grade. This process will require setup changes that your eSchool admin should seek assistance from APSCN Field Support Technicians.

Option C) Pass/Fail option. The district may issue a Pass/Fail type grade. The parameters of the pass/fail grade option will be defined by the district. This option will require setup changes in eSchool. This option will vary depending on the school district and will require assistance from eSchool Field Support Technicians. This option will require district personnel to enter a semester grade for each student. It is highly encouraged for this option to be well planned prior to implementation by your eSchool admin. and administration.

We strongly encourage you to examine your district's plan for the continuity of education (through AMI) for the next few weeks and make decisions, specifically those regarding grading, that are in the best interests of your students. Please have your eSchool admin. contact your education service coop APSCN Field Tech for assistance or guidance on making changes in grading processes in eSchool.

1. Calls to DESE for the last few days have centered around seniors. Graduation requirements will still be based on three quarters as previously announced. DESE will issue a Q and A document in the next couple of days to help answer questions.

An issue to consider related to seniors is concurrent credit. Districts are reminded to work with higher ed partners to make sure students complete requirements for concurrent credit..

2. Discussion is currently taking place between DESE and the College Board concerning AP college credit. There has been some talk about testing from home; however, DESE does not see this as a good option. Talks with the College Board will continue.

Note: As previously announced weighted credit will be awarded without testing. The discussion is concerning college credit.

3. Tomorrow guidance will be issued from DESE Learning Services on AMI grading flexibility. Districts must decide whether to grade based on their own plan, a portfolio system, or some other type of system. Focus should be on core courses. (Personal Note: This could be a sticky issue in regard to class rank.)

4. DESE will operate an AMI Hotline for calls from parents and schools starting Wednesday or Thursday. It will be available in the evening.
5. The Department suggests that districts have people available to answer calls coming into the schools by call forwarding or by having some people on-site.
6. An informational video on the PBS, AMI option will be available tomorrow. It will discuss AMI guides, forms, and other information. PBS access will be sent out via a Google link and can be emailed to the Superintendents. Some DESE personnel are testing this with their children and say it is very good.
7. In regard to novice teachers: DESE is reviewing the availability of testing with higher ed. The goal is to alleviate the impact for those affected. Therefore extending provisional licenses is being considered on a case by case basis.

Jean Cole, Director of Support Services

Special Education follows the same guidelines for AMI. Teachers will send emails to parents, be available for three way calls for real evaluations.

Working on state assessment for the state. It has been two years; it's very involved.

They are considering lowering the rate for OSS from 4.0 to 3.0%. They keep monitoring what we are doing to lower our OSS rate.

C. Operations Report

Brandon Harper, Director of Operations/Security Facilities

1. Everyone has pitched in to help serve meals. We are averaging 1700 meals per day which have breakfast and lunch items.
2. CDC rules have changed from 50 or less was acceptable. Then, they were downsized to 10 or less. We are preparing all food in our lunchrooms. Today, we served 700 meals.
3. Rules are subject to change. If guidelines change to less than 10, we would not be able to prepare meals. We are handwashing, cleaning and scanning employees temperatures.
4. Maintenance is doing project work and work orders. They are also helping with food distribution.
5. Bid openings did happen prior to spring break.

6. Action Items

- A. February 25, 2020, Meeting
- B. February Financial Report
- C. 2020-2021 Highly Qualified Paraprofessional Salary Schedule
- D. 2020-2021 Licensed Salary Schedule
- E. 2021-2022 Licensed Salary Schedule
- F. 2022-2023 Licensed Salary Schedule
- G. Spray Service- Weed Control

Upon the recommendation of Superintendent Ashley, a motion was made by Barbara Wells and seconded by Tracey Ritchey to accept items A. – F. as listed.

Motion passed by unanimous vote at 7:34 p.m.

Motion was made by Desmond Hammett and was seconded by Michelle Sims to accept Prunty Weed Service \$45,000 bid for Spray Service- Weed Control.

Motion failed 3:4 with Tracey Ritchey and Tobey Johnson casting the nay votes and Billy Fair and Erin Carrington abstaining, therefor casting nay votes at 8:13 p.m.

Motion was made by Tracey Ritchey and seconded by Tracey Ritchey to accept the lowest bidder, Wierzba Lawn Care \$32,000 bid for Spray Service- Weed control.

Motion failed 2:5 with Michelle Sims, Desmond Hammett and Barbara Wells casting the nay votes and Billy Fair and Erin Carrington abstaining, therefore casting nay votes.

Motion was made by Desmond Hammett and seconded by Michelle Sims to accept Prunty Weed Service \$45,000 bid for Spray Service-Weed Control.

Motion failed 3:4 with Tracey Ritchey and Tobey Johnson casting the nay votes and Billy Fair and Erin Carrington abstaining, therefore casting nay votes at 8:24 p.m.

Motion was made by Tobey Johnson and seconded by Tracey Ritchey to accept Wierzba Lawn Care \$32,000 bid for Spray Service- Weed control.

Motion failed 2:5 with Desmond Hammett, Billy Fair, Michelle Sims, Barbara Wells casting nay votes and Erin Carrington abstaining, therefore casting a nay vote.

Motion was made by Desmond Hammett and seconded by Barbara Wells to accept Blair Lawn Care \$28,000 bid.

Motion failed 3:4 with Tracey Ritchey and Tobey Johnson casting the nay votes and Billy Fair and Erin Carrington abstaining, therefore casting nay votes at 8:29 p.m.

Motion was made by Billy Fair and seconded by Desmond Hammett to check references and that there was no foul play.

Motion passed by unanimous vote at 8:34 p.m.

7. PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Resignation of Certified Employee (End of 2019-2020)

Elizabeth Robinson	Librarian	BES
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B. Resignation of Certified Employee

Shondra Wright	Teacher	BHS-New Tech (2/28/20)
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C. Retirement of Classified Employee (End of 2019-2020)

Norma Valley	Counselor Secretary	BHS-New Tech
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D. Resignation of Classified Employees (End of 2019-2020)

Ivy Bruner	Food Service	BPS
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Upon the recommendation of Superintendent Ashley, a motion was made by Desmond Hammett and seconded by Barbara Wells to accept items A. – D. as listed.

Motion passed 6:1 vote with Erin Carrington abstaining, therefore casting the nay vote at 8:27 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Bobby Ashley
Ex-officio Financial Secretary