

Highland School District #203
Board Work Study Meeting
Highland District Office
September 11, 2017

The Board Work Study Meeting convened at 7:05 a.m. Present were Board Members Matt Barker, Lupita Flores, Chris Garent and Chair Nikki Keller; Superintendent Mark Anderson; Director of Business and Operations Francis Badu, and Recording Secretary Julie Notman. Board Member David Barnes was unable to attend.

Immediately upon the arrival of all Board members the group left to **Tour the New Portables** at HHS/HJH and MWC, returning at 7:32 a.m.

TIS Principal Kelly Thorson joined the meeting at 7:33 a.m.

Kelly noted that Highland hasn't applied for the **Highly Capable IGrant** (Hi Cap) for a couple of years as the grant amount wasn't worth the investment involved in applying. Now due to overall funding changes, the amount is sufficient enough to be a usable resource K-12 and worthy of the time and cost involved in the application process. Discussion ensued regarding what options are already in place for highly capable students at each of the buildings. These include leadership opportunities in each building, a specific Hi-Cap class at HJH, and the Cornerstone class offerings at HHS. Kelly noted the importance of identifying (and recording the method of identifying) Hi-Cap students regardless of family income to show that all students are considered but pointed out that overlooking a student due to family income isn't an issue in our district with our 80%+ families that qualify for Free/Reduced meals. He explained some testing options for identifying Hi-Cap students. He asked the Board to draft a document outlining goals for the district for a Hi-Cap program and offered assistance with including the necessary and appropriate language in those goals.

Kelly left the meeting at 7:44 a.m.

Francis gave the **CTE Update** noting that the project is moving along but is a bit behind due to a slow start and a couple of unexpected obstacles. The finish date is projected to be nearer the end of November than the beginning but that additional time will not add to the construction cost. The architect, however, has contacted Mark regarding a possible additional fee for the extension. There will be a walk-through of the CTE building at the next Work Study Session. Francis noted that it is good to be finished with the new portables and that the project went smoothly despite some delays. He reported that the district will need to consider updating the [MWC] fire alarm system as it dates from the 1950's and is increasingly difficult to find parts for it and maintain.

School Finance Update: Francis reported that the State passed a new salary schedule in June for funding school employees. It is a more complicated system, spelled out in a 121 page document with many areas that are open to interpretation and is to be implemented over three years. The district has much to do to prepare to fully implement this new plan. Francis presented a schedule/chart with columns that delineated the phasing in of the new plan. He explained how salary determination currently works using education and years of service in contrast to the new plan which will provide an average base from which the district will have to negotiate contracts. He noted that the State created the new allocation

starting with a base amount and that school districts with higher housing costs will receive the base amount plus another percentage to offset their higher cost of living. Most of the districts in our area, including Highland, will receive the base amount. The new allocation is a slight increase over the current salary schedule. The new schedule is supposed to eliminate 'deemed done' days but will be difficult to align to the current salary schedule and optional/deemed done days. Francis informed the Board that with the new funding, in most cases school districts will not be allowed to use Levy funds to supplement teacher salaries, and that levies will be restricted, both in how much can be collected and the manner in which the monies are used. There will also be new rules about class size and each district will need to adopt a policy prior to school year 2019-2020 with procedures for responding to local revenue audit findings that hold the Superintendent accountable for adverse findings. The new plan looks like it will make negotiating with the teacher's union more difficult. The final piece he noted is that health insurance will be taken over and managed by the state by 2020.

Director of Technology, Brian Johnson joined the meeting at 8:20 a.m.

New Website: Brian explained to the Board the process used for choosing the new district website provider, School Messenger, noting that we already contract with School Messenger for our auto-caller service and the two products should tie together nicely. Brian gave a tour of the new website utilizing the new wall screen and demonstrated several pages including those of the individual schools and main district page. He highlighted the SafeSchools reporting system and the new online payment option. He explained that after he has a training he'll be able to add calendars to the site that will be user friendly for parents in that they'll be able to select what schools and activities they want to view without having to visit each school's page/calendar and be able to eliminate extra info they don't want. The site uses GoogleTranslate which is the most common translation program used in public sites.

Brian left the meeting at 8:38 a.m.

Barbara Gilbert Preschool: There was some discussion about what the process might be for naming the new preschool after Barb. Mark will research it and, depending on the difficulty of that process, (is a resolution needed?) it will be on the agenda at next week's Regular Board meeting for approval. A dedication ceremony will be scheduled according to Barb's family's availability.

Mark reported on the **HEA Update** explaining that the most recently scheduled meeting couldn't take place as the district's negotiator was ill. He and Francis have visited with other district's business managers and superintendents to compare information on how negotiations, contracts and budgets are being handled with an eye to the new state funding plan. They shared a bit about what other districts are offering their staff and noted that Highland is fair and equitable for our district's size and location. We are in a healthy financial status which needs to be preserved.

Policy Committee: No one volunteered to join the Policy Committee so David and Nikki will continue serving there. The meetings will still be after the monthly Work Study Sessions and will resume in October.

Mark asked the Board if they want to have a **Board/Admin Retreat** some evening this month. It could be held at a local eatery and he asked that they notify him by Thursday of which evenings they are NOT available.

Meeting adjourned 8:55 a.m.

Chair

Secretary