

**Highland School District #203**  
**Board Work Study Session**  
**HJH Room 155**  
**June 6, 2022, 7:00 a.m.**

The June 6, 2022, Board Work Study Session convened at 7:00 am. Present were Board Chair Nikki Keller, Members David Barnes, Lupita Flores, Carlos López, and Cindy Reed, Superintendent Mark Anderson, and Director of Business and Operations Francis Badu, and Recording Secretary Julie Notman.

**1. Communication Check-In:** Discussed parent complaint about HHS testing schedule.

**2. District Office Summer Hours:** Mark proposed the district office be open to the public Tuesday through Thursday, 6a-4p, instead of the usual Monday-Thursday. The office staff will work the other 10 hours of the 40-hour week at home. After noting that there is no summer school this year, the board agreed to this for this year.

**3. State Competition Travels** Mark said that, per district policy, he approved overnight travel for the HHS Boys Soccer and qualifying Track & Field athletes to attend their state competitions.

Director of Student Success Mindy Schultz joined the meeting at 7:35.

**7. Highland Community Goal-Setting Discussion:** Mark explained a goal-setting procedure that he has used in place of a parent advisory at previous school districts that was quite successful. A 'Purpose' is identified, Goal Setting Areas chosen, and Subcommittees assigned. Goal Setting Areas may include 1-Administration, 2-Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, 3-Personnel, 4-Auxiliary and Support, 5-Parents and Community, 6-Business and Finance, 7-Facilities and Grounds, 8-Safety and Security, 9-Equipment and Supplies, 10-Transportation, and 11-Food Service. Subcommittee members are divided by area of interest, then meet and identify top priorities. Each subcommittee has an admin and board member on it. The board liked the idea and asked him to proceed. A notice and invitation will be in the newsletter.

**6. Parent Communication Debrief:** Mindy shared the conversation she had with a parent group regarding the block schedule and start times for the high school. The group would like there to be more communication from Mr. Jensen, the high school principal and sited Mr. Strother, the junior high principal as a great example to follow. It was noted that it is a joint responsibility for the district to distribute information and for parents to check their email and read the newsletter to stay informed. Mindy offered options to address some concerns: early release instead of late start on Thursdays or all buildings starting at the same hour with one bus run but these were not well received. The parent group suggested that for the Intersession weeks, the invitation letters sent to families be different for students needing intervention than for those interested in enrichment. It was reiterated that it will take time (3-5 years) to determine what impact the changes our district has implemented may have on student learning loss, test scores and overall success. Mindy told the board that the state changed some of the state tests so they won't be able to be compared with previous year's tests to reach a meaningful comparison. The district instead uses STAR scores and Acadience to measure how the students are doing and this year has seen remarkable growth.

Mindy left the meeting at 8:01 a.m.

HHS Math Teacher Greg Wagner joined the meeting at 8:01.

Athletic Director and Dean of Students Josh Borland joined the meeting at 8:02.

**8. Soccer Program Discussion:** Carlos and David shared that they have both been questioned by parents as to why the high school boys soccer games are played on the field below the district office and not in the stadium. Greg responded with details about the process of creating the field and the ownership and identity he and the boys in the soccer program have with the field. That back area once had an orchard and hay field that the agriculture students worked but those were removed in the mid-2000s. Job Corp students cleared the field as part of their coursework and Greg and team players spent time moving rocks and caring for the grass. Concerns regarding games played at that field include ADA compliance, safety, and game times. There isn't a solid surface for the disabled to get to the seating area nor are there ADA bathrooms available. The fan area is very close to the soccer referees and players. Without a barrier between the field and the fans, the potential for verbal disruption or greater problems (physical) is increased due to the passion many parents have for the sport and their student athlete. Josh acknowledged the team has had success on the field but noted that he also has heard complaints. He said it is a difficult area to supervise and Nikki shared that her junior high girls sometimes avoid their practice or games because the adjoining fans are too close and it is uncomfortable to be next to the yelling and poor language used by the fans. There are no lights on the field so games must be started earlier in the day resulting in a sometimes lack of referee availability. Mark suggested playing games on both fields next season, the lower field for some and the stadium for others. Josh will look into rules regarding field use.

Greg left the meeting at 8:48.

Further discussion with AD Josh.

Josh left the meeting at 8:56.

The board discussed the many aspects of playing games on the field and the stadium at length and ultimately decided to direct Josh and Greg to play the high school boys soccer games in the stadium in the future.

**4. State Testing Update:** Mark said he was given a written 'go-ahead' by State Superintendent Chris Reykdal to schedule state testing later into June due to our district's later end date. Our test dates were then scheduled into mid-June but recently we learned we could not extend them so we had to reschedule the dates resulting in not enough days left to have enough make-up test days before the official testing window closes. Make-up days are used for those students that are absent on the initial test date. Our testing percentage most likely will end up below the 95% required resulting in punitive measures but the state has conferred with Mark and Kirsten and will do what they can to ameliorate that. Mark asked the state testing authorities about next year as our schedule will be the same and they said due to federal windows, they cannot adjust it to accommodate our extended year. He noted that he has not received an apology nor any response from Mr. Reykdal about renegeing on the test date extension and the whole experience has been extremely frustrating. There are many agencies involved: a state testing group, an oversight group, and a federal group. It will take a change or relaxing of restrictions in the federal system for the dates to be adjusted.

**5. Surplus Sale:** Francis said this is usually an annual event. The surplussed items will remain in their current locations and buyers will be taken to them to view. The board will officially approve the sale at the June Regular Board meeting.

**9. School Safety Discussion:** Mark said the district has experienced some recent crises that we've not had before. The breezeway doors to the portables will be on a schedule for locking. Discussed pros and cons of having a resource officer on site and what other districts do. Some are getting away from it. Highland used to have a local deputy present at certain events such as dances and

football games. The board agreed to have Mark reach out to the Tieton police regarding having a presence at times at the schools. We will have defense training at our year-start all-staff day. Discussed fencing the back portables and CTE building area. Discussed the need for mental health assistance for students and staff, need more funding. New law (unfunded) requires a mental health group/employee assistance plan.

**10. 2022-2023 Budget Review:** Francis shared a final draft of the 2022-2023 General Fund budget that has a balance of 8.04%, below the board approved 9%. We received some stabilization funds which helped but we will still need to watch it closely. The second chart he shared, which will be submitted to the ESD, has the budget for all categories: GF, ASB, Debt Service, Capital Projects, and Transportation. We will have the public hearing and final board approval vote at the July board meeting. We will pay off the Debt Service this year, may have a bit left over in that fund. We will borrow against the recently passed Capital Levy so we can get started on projects. We may be able to buy another bus. There are 70 kinders signed up for next year already, may need another teacher. We will emphasize Preschool and Transitional Kinder to help increase enrollment. Discussed 2022-23 staffing considerations: preschool teacher, transitional K teacher, counseling positions, music/art/PE, HS science. We are exploring a single start time for all buildings with one bus run instead of two. Many options for streamlining the budget are being explored. Final chart showed GF balance from 2011 to 2022. It started at \$1.2m, up to \$2.4m in 2020 and down to \$1.4m in 2022.

**11. HEA Negotiations:** Mark shared results of recent negotiations meeting. It is going well but there are still items to work out.

**12. 2021-2022 Employee of the Year:** With all board members present today, the nominee list was reviewed, details shared. The Board chose Allie Ritchie for Certified, Denise Herman for Classified, and Robin Wynn for Business & Operations. These will be announced at the HHS graduation on June 17.

There being no further business, the June 6, 2022, Board Work Study Session adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

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Chair

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Secretary