



LITTLEFIELD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #9
GOVERNING BOARD WORK SESSION

Administrative Services Site
3490 East Rio Virgin Road
Thursday, October 12, 2023
3:00 P.M.
(Doors Open at 2:45 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 Graham called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. There were two (2) members of the public in attendance. Board Secretary Reyes was late to the meeting.

2. **ROLL CALL:**

Sonny Graham, Board President
John Reyes, Board Secretary
Susan Burch, Board Member
Sean Hogan, Board Member
Patricia Schoppmann, Board Member

Troy Heaton, Superintendent/Secondary Principal
Jeremy Clark, Elementary Principal
Kevin Boyer, Business Manager
Sheree Goessman, District Secretary

DISCUSSION

3. Discussion regarding Elementary School Playground upgrades.

Troy Heaton said its part of a big package that we have been talking about. He expressed his opinion that we need an override and the playground needs to be a part of that override. He said in addition we need a new District Office, weight room at the High School, and a new bus barn area.

Mrs. Goessman requested that items #3 and #4 be discussed together. President Graham agreed.

Board Member Burch asked questioned how much that will cost. Mr. Heaton said staff does not have a dollar figure yet. He said he looked at the previous quote the district received for the District Office and said he feels he can get the district a better quote. Mr. Boyer said the quote for the district office was around \$2 million to \$5 million. Mr. Heaton said he's talking to Seabury Fritz Architects regarding a



quote and feels we can do this cheaper than the prior bid. Mr. Heaton said he has a friend in Bullhead City that is an architect and he is trying to get him down here to take a look. Mr. Boyer noted the previous quote was so high because it's a public building and you have to pay Davis Bacon wages.

Mr. Heaton said he talked to Mrs. Brown who is going to work on Perkins Grant next year and we would need to get 3 teachers CTE Certified as part of that grant. He also noted Mrs. Brown is looking at applying for the next round of Aide for Arizona. Mr. Heaton said he doesn't see why we wouldn't qualify for a bus barn. Board Member Burch asked how much Mrs. Brown charges to get the grants. Mr. Heaton said she puts her fees into the grant. He said it is beneficial because you do not have to use an employee for the grant. He noted Mrs. Brown is really good and has gotten over hundreds of millions of dollars for other districts. Mr. Boyer noted the grants that Mrs. Brown is working on are competitive grants.

Board Secretary Reyes arrived at 3:09 p.m.

Mr. Heaton said it's also important to get someone that knows how to do the grants. He said Mrs. Brown was able to get some regular diesel buses from Aide for Arizona. Board Member Burch said that's still two years away to get grants. She said she wants to know what we are going to do now with fixing the hole on building and getting microphones for the Board Room. Mr. Boyer said the repairs have not been done pending further direction from the Governing Board. He noted it would cost several hundreds of thousands of dollars to fix the hole in the building.

Board Member Hogan said he saw the hole in the building for the first time when he was looking at the garden area. Board Member Burch said she feels having a hole in the building reflects how you take care of things and wants people to know they take care of things. Mr. Heaton said if the Board wants us to fix it up we can fix it up. Board Member Burch asked that they fix the eyesores. Mr. Heaton said we are looking at an override because there are some things we definitely need in the district.

Mike Fagnan said when they did the budget workshop in the past they spoke about this and asked if they tried to budget some of these small things based on money we had. He said he recalled there were items they agreed on to spend money on out of the budget. Board President Graham said they allocated \$400,000 for the small projects. Mr. Boyer said those items were put on hold to decide whether the Governing Board wanted to build a new board room or not. Mike Fagnan asked if the District could take care of some of the smaller stuff. Mr. Boyer said it depends on what type of repair the Governing Board is wanting. Board Member Graham said he can't see the hole from the front of the building and asked if the room behind the hole is okay. Mr. Heaton said the stucco is coming off the original building, but there is still a board under it.

Board Member Hogan said he could probably get the hole fixed and donated. He said it is a simple repair. He then showed a microphone system he purchased and noted it hooks up to a speaker and computer for zoom meetings.

Board Member Hogan expressed his opinion that the buses are a very important thing, not just the safety of the children but to get the kids back and forth to school.

Board Member Burch asked about the playground upgrades. Board President Graham asked if they allocated \$190,000 for the playground upgrades. Mr. Boyer said it has not all been done yet. He said when they move forward with the playground they can allocate the funds. Board Member Burch asked if the playground is being used by kids right now. Mr. Clarke said portions of it are and noted some areas have been blocked off. Board Member Hogan asked if they have made a selection for the new playground equipment. Mr. Clarke said yes. Mr. Boyer showed pictures of the playground equipment that was selected. Board Member Burch asked if the bigger playgrounds would fit at the current location. Mr. Boyer said yes they will fit within the current location. Board Secretary Reyes said due to



the excessive heat that they may want to consider a shade structure. Board Member Hogan said he understands some of these structures have shade structures incorporated into them. Mr. Boyer said the playground options that were sent to us do not have the incorporated shade structures. Board Member Hogan noted without a cover over the playground equipment it would be unusable because of the heat. He said we may need to ask which equipment is compatible with the shade structures. Mr. Boyer said he will check on that.

Board Member Burch asked if the playground equipment needs to be back on the agenda for the Governing Board to approve again. Mr. Boyer noted it was not approved previously as it was just a discussion item.

Board Secretary Reyes asked if the playground surface has been discussed. Mr. Clarke said they need to make it ADA accessible. Mr. Boyer said he doesn't think it needs to have the rubber ground. Board Secretary Reyes asked the additional cost to clean the rubber and rocks that get dragged into the building. He said if they are going to do this then they need to do it right.

Board Member Burch said she thought they voted against streaming Board Meetings. Board President Graham said he thought that was said as well.

Board President Graham asked if they need to put an override on an agenda. Board Secretary Reyes said they should have an exact amount for the override. Mr. Boyer said it's going to cost them some money for an architect to come up with a figure. Mr. Heaton said we need to know what items the Governing Board wants to include on the override so staff can begin researching and looking at a number. He said he was astounded that the last quote was so high and knows you can build a new building for a lot less than that. Mr. Heaton asked about the regulations for a steel building. He said he thinks they just need to make sure it has permits.

Board President Graham noted an override should include a playground, district building, weight room, board room, maintenance storage shed, and bus yard. He said they can hopefully get a grant for the bus yard. Board Member Hogan asked if they could incorporate office space and the board room added to the end of a bus barn. Mr. Heaton said there is one where the school district can increase a certain percent. Mr. Boyer said they could do a capital override in the amount of \$2 million, but they would need to be very specific with what will be done with that. He noted it also would need to go before the voters in the 2024 election. Board Member Hogan noted \$2M split amongst all of the people is not very much to support the kids. Mr. Heaton said we don't necessarily have a lot of control over that because a lot of those rates are in Kingman. Board President Graham asked how much we receive in property tax from Pilot. Mr. Boyer said you can go to the Mohave County Treasurer website and see how much is being paid on property taxes. Board Secretary Reyes noted the new TA gas station and the additional property tax. Mr. Boyer said if you look at Mohave County as a whole, you would not see as much change on our M & O budget and noted our revenues are still based on how many students we have. If we do a bond override that is different and you would get more money through the override.

Board Secretary Reyes said he thinks we've talking about this for a while. Board Member Burch said she knows how much people are struggling financially. She said she thinks the kids deserve it, but on the same token if people are just barely making it they will be hard pressed to get it passed. Board Secretary Reyes noted there are a number of homes where he lives that are second homes. He said if a person can afford a second home, then they have enough to pay the taxes. Board Member Burch said she is thinking about the local families. She noted she followed Food Services during the summer feed and noted how many families needed food. Board Secretary Reyes said you don't have city taxes or additional fees that other cities have. Board Member Burch said she's talking about the families that are just barely making ends meet right now. Board Member Hogan noted many of the families in the area with kids do not own homes. He said the property owners pay a higher tax on rental properties



that their personal properties.

Mr. Heaton asked if it would be difficult to determine how much the increase would be for a million dollar bond. Mr. Boyer said he can look into that. He noted the assessed value is around \$28 million dollars. Mr. Heaton said they could purchase the playground equipment with DAA Funds and consider the other projects (weight room, District Office, Board Room, and Bus Yard) as part of the override. Board President Graham asked how many buses we have right now. Mr. Boyer said we have 2 buses operable after the last inspection. There are some repairs needed on the other buses. We only have 3 buses that are newer buses. He would like to take 2 of those buses and replace them with a new one. Board President Graham said they discussed during the June meeting about purchasing RV shade structures as a partial bus barn. He then asked what type of bus barn they are looking for. Mr. Boyer said they are looking for covers for the buses. They said if it is covered then the electric buses will charge more efficiently. Board President Graham said they need to determine how many shade structures they will need. Mr. Boyer said it may be more cost effective to purchase a big one to cover all of them. Wayne Briggs said he has someone that can build a building at \$150 a square foot. He noted his friend built the buildings at Washington County Fairgrounds. Mr. Briggs said his friend told him if we have the land that he could do a 10,500 square foot building for \$1.5 million. Mr. Heaton said it's just the metal building and they would still need to complete the inside of the building. He said he doesn't think we will need to have the same restrictions since there will be no kids in it.

Board Secretary Reyes said he would be in favor of Mr. Heaton's suggestions. Board Member Burch said she's retired, but noted she has talked to families that are really struggling financially. Mr. Briggs said with voter approval you are able to increase the tax assessment based upon the occupancy. Mr. Heaton said he thought the School District could do a certain amount without going to a vote. Mr. Boyer said if anything is going to increase the taxes of a tax payer you have to get approval. He noted that Fredonia does a small school adjustment and with that you don't have to do a voter override. Board Member Hogan said he would agree to an override. He said if they don't invest in kid's futures, then shame on them. Board Member Schoppmann said she would agree with it. Board President Graham said he would agree to move forward with the override to see what happens.

Mr. Heaton said they will research the 3 buildings along with a projected cost. They will also estimate what it would cost the tax payer.

4. Discussion regarding District Facilities and Storage including Governing Board Room Upgrades and streaming of meetings.

Discussed with item #3.

5. Discussion regarding the history of Food Services in the District.
 - a. Discussion regarding historical food service debt.
 - b. Discussion regarding District's participation and guidelines in the National School Lunch Program and USDA.

Board President Graham said he requested this item because he wanted everyone to be on the same page with food service in this district. He noted the Food Service Department had a deficit of \$5,000 last year. He said he wanted to show that this has not always been the case. Board President Graham said when Mrs. Burch was the Food Service Director, the superintendent gave her direction.

Board Member Burch said she wasn't able to do anything as Food Service Director until she had her secure login approved. She said the Superintendent at the time, Riley Frei, had her determine how much was owed in the Department and she found they were \$117,412.53 in the hole in May 2006. She was asked to make a commitment that they would reduce the deficit each year by 8%. She noted the



Governing Board then agreed to pay \$50,000 of the deficit. Board Member Burch said there are so many different factors from when she was the director. She said a former board member asked why they couldn't keep employees. She said that was because they could only work 3.5 hours per day. She noted the Food Service Department cannot depend on donations. They need to watch their labor and the cost of food. Board Member Burch expressed her opinion that they are not feeding the kids as much as they were when she was here. She said she was told during training that they need to look at their department as a business and cannot be in the hole. Thinks it's great that we have had donations, but they can't count on that. Board Member Burch noted the Food Service Director is having some family things going on and she told her we need to discuss this. She noted that she had employees that needed to work 5 hours a day or threatened to quit.

Board President Graham said he brought this up because he wanted to ask Mrs. Burch. He said Dr. Robison changed the budget when he came on board. He asked if Food Service was ever in the hole from 2010-2020. Mr. Boyer said they needed to define the numbers. He said Food Service Department has never had a negative cash balance. He noted the negative balance was with the unpaid lunch balances from students. Board President Graham asked if we have ever been negative with lunch balances. Mr. Boyer said yes. Board Member Burch said there have been many changes and noted the last day of school they would walk room to room to collect the lunch balances. She said she doesn't remember ever having a negative balance. Mr. Boyer said the students have had negative balance and we relied on donations to pay those off. He said when Mrs. Burch was here there were times where she didn't give the students a meal, which you cannot do now. Board Member Burch asked how donations are applied to the accounts. Mr. Boyer said we have had contributions from the public to pay negative balances from students.

Board Member Hogan Sean said we have discussed families that are barely getting by financially. He suggested the free and reduced meal application be completed during registration each year. He said he thinks if a letter is written to the parents explaining the reason the school needs the application that it may help. He noted once someone is given something for free, you expect to keep receiving it for free. Mr. Boyer said between 2020-2022 every student received a free lunch. Then in 2022/2023 they were charged again. Board Member Burch noted she and Consuelo never let the lunch balances get very high. Board Secretary Reyes said this is not just our problem, but every district is facing this issue. Mr. Heaton said we have 10 kids that have not filled out the free and reduced form. He then asked Mr. Boyer the percentage of free meals. Mr. Boyer said between 75%-80% of our students receive free and reduced.

Board Member Hogan said some of the things he sees in the lunch room are terrifying. He said they might want to look at what is being served so the kids will want to eat the food. He said there have been times his kids haven't eaten their school lunch and came home starving. Board Member Burch said there were times where the students couldn't go out to play tetherball until they ate lunch. She noted the Food Services Department would call parents that hadn't completed the free and reduced meal application. Board Member Hogan said he turned in his paperwork yesterday.

Board President Graham said because we are a part of National School Lunch Program we do need to stay within guidelines. Board Member Burch said it is difficult to make a school lunch that complies with the guidelines.

Board Member Hogan said some of the students will take one bite of their sandwich and throw the rest away because they want to get out to play. He suggested having an assembly to teach the students about waste. Mr. Clarke said sometimes the students are sent back to the lunch room to finish their lunches. He noted the food being served has been good.

Mr. Heaton said if it's something they don't like, they will not eat lunch. If they serve pizza then the students want to eat lunch. Mr. Boyer noted they served 81 students for lunch today. Mr. Heaton



said they served pizza, but not Pizza Hut pizza. Board Member Burch said at one time they sent out a survey asking the kids what they like. Mr. Heaton said they had 40 kids eat breakfast today. Board Member Burch said if a student came in late and she hadn't put the food away she would feed them. She said she hated to see anyone hungry and would keep snacks. Board Member Burch noted you cannot wait until the end of the year to take care of past due balances. Board Member Hogan said with the donations from the public right now we should be ahead. Mr. Boyer replied stating that is correct. He noted our process right now is to send out phone messages once a week to collect on past due lunch balances. Mr. Heaton said the High School has 10 families that have yet to submit the free and reduced meal application. He said he will sick Beth on them. Mr. Heaton said they changed the way the students go into the cafeteria. He said some of the parents do not know that their child is eating breakfast at the school because they are also eating at home. He said kids eat when they serve cinnamon rolls, cinnamon sticks, and biscuits and gravy. Board Member Burch said the students sometimes forget their lunch. She noted the guidelines state that you cannot say anything to the student regarding a past due lunch balance.

Board Secretary Reyes noted the first year the high school opened was 2004-2005 (9th-11th grade). He said in 2005/2006 was the first year the cafeteria was operational. Board Member Burch said they had to walk down the hill for lunch. She said she spoke to Mr. Boyer a few years before she retired and said they need to close the high school kitchen. She said they would have needed a certain type of truck to transport the food between properties and said it was not worth it. Board Secretary Reyes said he worked a lot with Mrs. Burch in the kitchen. Mr. Boyer said since 2011 there has never been a negative cash flow.

6. Discussion regarding proposed chicken coop and proposed vegetable gardens at the Elementary and High School.

Mr. Heaton said we are trying to refurbish the greenhouse as part of CTE and get the nursery up and running. He noted we are looking at working with Mr. Sewick with the nursery. He said he is the gentleman that owns the farm on Old Pioneer Road. Mr. Heaton said we are looking at him to start the nursery and our students would be able to work it. A couple teachers have been looking at bringing FFA and agricultural science. If we go that route then we can get Perkins money. We will be utilizing that nursery and greenhouse. Right now Mr. Ron Briggs' ecology class is using that. Board Member Burch said the only concern she has is the strict guidelines with growing our own vegetables. Mr. Heaton asked whether Mr. Sewick has a license to sell. Board Member Burch said she read that he was selling the vegetables and didn't have the required permits. Mr. Heaton said that is the reason we are looking at leasing the greenhouse to him. He said if Mr. Sewick is not licensed then we may look at doing it ourselves. Board Member Burch said with National School Lunch there are requirements that wouldn't be met. Mr. Heaton said they could still sell things to the community. Board Member Burch said the guidelines state you cannot have it for the younger students. Board Member Hogan asked if they could send it home as part of the backpack buddies program. Board Member Burch said that would not be part of the National School Lunch Program. Mr. Heaton said they are looking at FFA at the High School and 4H at the Elementary School. Board Member Burch asked if they have everything for the nursery. She said she has a spray system for the vegetables for the greenhouse. Mr. Heaton said they don't know which directions they are going with the nursery at this time, but will reach out to her when they decide.

7. Discussion regarding enrollment of Arizona students.

Board Member Hogan said he did a lot of research on this. He said he knows of a lot of people that take their kids to Mesquite or St. George for school. He said people feel our schools are not good and said he feels our school are nothing short of amazing. He said he understands there are some issues with sports and different educational programs. Board Member Hogan noted between 2008-2015 there



was from 400 to over 500 kids in the school. From 2016-2024 there were a couple hundred less than that. Board Member Hogan suggested having a community meeting to meet the Superintendent and Principal. When you take away from your own community everyone helps. Board Secretary Reyes said this is not a new problem and has been an issue historically.

Board Member Hogan said he's not sure how they can educate the parents so they will see how great our schools are. Board Member Burch asked if there was a fine the parents have to pay to take their kids across state lines to other schools. Board Secretary Reyes said many of them turn over their parental rights to other family members to allow their kids to go to school in Mesquite. He said advocacy is a big thing. Board Member Burch suggested that they could educate them during the wellness fair. Board Member Hogan suggested they educate them at the Dixie Power dinner. Board Secretary Reyes said maybe they can take a couple of minutes to do a highlight with what's going on during the Dixie Power Membership Annual Meeting. Mr. Heaton said to give him the date and he will make sure he is there. Board President Graham asked Board Member Hogan if he sees people that should have kids in our school attend the Dixie Power Meeting. Board Member Hogan said he personally knows 5 families that take their kids to Mesquite to school. Board Member Hogan said they need to sell our schools and get the parents to trust the Board. Board Secretary Reyes said there have been times where the school board, based on their decisions and attitudes towards students pushed them to go to Mesquite schools. He noted in 2010 the school board and administration did not care about our students. He said they can learn from the past and make sure we don't do any damage. Board Member Burch said she knows families that have gone to Mesquite school and have come back to our schools. She said even if a parent takes their kids to Mesquite Schools, there is a year wait before they can play sports. Board Secretary Reyes said Virgin Valley High School had some state wrestling champions that live in Arizona. He said this is something he feels passionate about. Mr. Heaton referenced school choice and said nobody is going to police that. He said you do not want to force kids to come to our schools, you want to be the best so they will want to come here. He said he is aware of some kids that live in Mesquite and come to our schools. Board President Graham noted there is a school policy regarding collecting tuition for out of state students. Mr. Boyer noted if a student provides an address then they are eligible to come here. All of the students going here have proof of residency.

Mike Fagnan suggested the education standards need to be higher than they are now. He said when he played ball they went to Kmart to get cleats and a glove. He said the grades had to be good also in order to play sports. He expressed his opinion that this country is suffering because we are worried what sex they want to be rather than teaching reading and math. He said he has a friend that is a single father of 5 and they use his mom's address so the kids can go to school here.

Board Member Hogan said it is not going to be very hard to get that message out there and he thinks the Dixie Power meeting will be a great place to educate the public. He said he thinks every Board Member should be in attendance at the Dixie Power meeting. Board President Graham said he thinks showing up for games is community support too.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

Sonny Graham, Board President

Troy Heaton, Superintendent



Respectfully Submitted by:

Sheree Goessman, District Secretary

DRAFT