



YOUNG SCHOOL DISTRICT#5

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Patrick O'Donnell, Superintendent

YOUNG PUBLIC SCHOOL

GOVERNING BOARD 4-Day School Public Hearing AGENDA

Monday, May 8, 2023, 6:00 pm - Young Public School FFA Room

(THE GOVERNING BOARD MAY CONSIDER ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IN ANY ORDER AND AT ANY TIME DURING THE MEETING)

Roll Call:

P
Sara Bunce, President

A
James Bruzzi, Member

P
Dean Bell, Member

P
Polly Hageman, Member

P
Linda Chapman, Member

AGENDA

- 1) Call to Order – S. Bunce called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm
- 2) Adoption of Agenda – P. Hageman moved to adopt the agenda, Seconded by L. Chapman; approved unanimously
- 3) Pledge of Allegiance – Lead by S. Bunce
- 4) Four Day Week Public Comments – No one made comments in favor or against the Four-Day School Week
- 5) Adjournment – P. Hageman moved to adjourn at 6:03 pm, Seconded by L. Chapman; approved unanimously

YOUNG PUBLIC SCHOOL

GOVERNING BOARD REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Monday, May 8, 2023, Immediately Following Hearing - Young Public School FFA Room

(THE GOVERNING BOARD MAY CONSIDER ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IN ANY ORDER AND AT ANY TIME DURING THE MEETING)

Roll Call:

P
Sara Bunce, President

A
James Bruzzi, Member

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Dean Bell, Member

P
Polly Hageman, Member

P
Linda Chapman, Member

AGENDA

- 1) Call to Order – S. Bunce called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm
- 2) Adoption of Agenda – S. Bunce moved to adopt the agenda, Seconded by L. Chapman; approved unanimously
- 3) Pledge of Allegiance – Lead by S. Bunce

- 4) Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting April 10, 2023 and Special Meeting May 1, 2023 – D. Bell moved to approve the minutes as presented, Seconded by P. Hageman; carried unanimously

5) Reports:

a) Administrator Report – Superintendent O'Donnell: Mr. O'Donnell distributed a letter received on April 20th by the Auditor's General Office (see attached letter). We received this letter because our audit was not scheduled in the correct time frame, because of the change-over in the audit team. This was explained to the Auditor's General Office and to the board. The Shakespeare Festival was a huge hit and the kids enjoyed participating, we plan to continue with more drama productions. FY 22 Annual Audit started on 4/24 -4/26. We will have our final report on June 1, 2023. Show and share will be on Wednesday, May 10th 4-6pm. We have continued our efforts on the first 90-day letter. Ms. Leopold is working on the budget revision. Ms. Leopold is being trained by Kathy Manning, and Ms. Manning said nothing but wonderful things about Ms. Leopold. It is staff appreciation week the PTO is bring treats all week. We have sent letters to families because we have selected to valedictorian and salutatorian for seniors and the valedictorian for the 8th grade class. All school awards are on Wednesday 17, 2023. Yearbook signing event will occur afterwards. Field day will be held on May 18, 2023. Graduation will be held on May 25 2023. Board is invited to attend. Historically, the Board President presents diplomas, but I'm sure if anyone has a special connection with any of the graduates, Ms. Bunce will allow you to present.

b) Teacher Report: Nancy Huffaker:

In secondary English:

Seniors are wrapping up our *Hamlet* unit by writing a sonnet for display at the YPS Show and Share on May 10th. We will finish up the year with *Tom Sawyer* and then *Huckleberry Finn*, which has often been called "the Great American Novel." While usually part of a lower-grade curriculum, these novels, which the seniors did not cover earlier, are nonetheless foundational to a study of American literature, as is Mark Twain's contribution as a humorist.

With *Romeo and Juliet* in their rear-view mirrors, freshmen and sophomores composed Book Spine poems for Show and Share. We will be ending the year with a unit on John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.

Middle school students are writing final drafts of their science fiction radio broadcasts before writing a Fractured Nursery Rhyme poem for Show and Share. We will then read *The Call of the Wild*, by Jack London.

In Life Skills - in addition to bi-weekly lessons in typing and cursive, students have been learning practical skills such as how to do laundry and ironing. We will finish the year by planning a luncheon for the office staff.

Yearbook students are overseeing the sales and distribution of this year's yearbook, as well as organizing our Yearbook signing party. They are also writing articles for the fourth-quarter issue of The Panther Press.

In Social Studies, seniors are working on a public policy concern regarding a disaster relief station for Young. The several power outages this winter convinced them that this would be a useful endeavor.

Middle school social studies students will have some of their work on display at the Show and Share.

In Ms. Dickerson's class, grades 3, 4, and 5 are so happy to have finished state testing! We are enjoying reading *A Wrinkle in Time* and are working to prepare for the Wax Museum and the Show and Share at school. Students continue to work on the Science Fair at home.

Preschool has Quality First assessment rescheduled to the 9th. Their order has been sent in and soon \$19,000 worth of educational supplies will arrive on campus!

Art classes with Miss Shanley are going well and students will have displays of their work at the show and share.

Second grade is working hard on completing their Science Fair experiments and compiling Science information to share on their trifold. They are also working on Show and Share stories, and are excited for the opportunity to share their work this week.

They are continuing to gain Math and Reading skills. All students have passed their Money and Fractions assessments. Now, they are working on two-and-three dimensional shapes. Multiplication is also starting to be woven into their daily experiences. In LA, they continue to learn about basic parts of speech and how to apply this knowledge to writing. They continue to work hard to master as many grades 2 skills as is possible given their very busy schedule.

Amazing progress has been made in LEXIA, which has been their main Reading program. Students have worked incredibly hard to catch up on 2nd grade skills and most have already met the 2nd grade benchmark in reading.

An exciting occurrence has begun in the grade 2 classroom! Their 1st grade friends are coming into the room during math class. They are able to have a snapshot of how it will be next year as they become a combined 2nd and 3rd grade class. Many thanks to Mrs. Fuller for building friendships and working relationships. It is fun to have this come full circle.

Lastly, the 2nd grade girls loved being fairies in the Shakespeare Festival. Students and parents alike really enjoyed the performances. They all love, and appreciate, being part of Young Public School.

c) PTO Board Member: Julee Recker- We are getting ready to wrap up the year. Wet and Wild field day is scheduled May 18th in the afternoon. The firetruck is going to come out and spray the kids. There will be a lot of games. Homeschoolers are welcome to join. We will be helping filling graduations requests with food and drinks. Graduation will be more of a western theme. May 12, 2023 PTO will be fixing the account names and removing old names and put new members on the account. There may be another skate night in June after summer school.

6) Call to Public – Public comments or concerns may be heard, but no Board Action may occur. Sara Bunce: Just for clarification, the one I have on top, Stephanie, is this a April Minutes? Is that what the designation is?

Stephanie Rider: *It is regarding minutes and requests from the last meeting.*

Sara Bunce: It say 4 dash?

Stephanie Rider: *Right that the number on the agenda is number 4.*

Sara Bunce: Oh, ok thank you.

Stephanie Rider: *I was trying to make it easier for me to have complete paperwork.*

Sara Bunce: Ok thanks so much, I really appreciate. And you brought a hard copy?

Stephanie Rider: *Yes, are you ready for me?*

Sara Bunce: Yes, I am, I am just also going to get this stuff. Thank you

Stephanie Rider: *OK, good evening.*

YPS Board,

I've given copies to the Board, as requested at the last meeting of complaints; submitted to the Board in November 14th's meeting that were never followed up with by the Board. The minutes of this meeting still aren't done, and even after all the discussion about it at the last meeting, I never received any request for the recording, at all. I also notice they are not on the agenda tonight to be approved, so we still don't have minutes for November 14, 2022. I'm also including additional copies of all of my call to publics that I have given a printed out copy of during the board meetings that have failed to be attached or fully included in the minutes as required by law and by our policy. So, each Board member has a copy of that and there has also been given to the Board secretary for the Board packet.

We have heard the phrase "above reproach" and "transparency" as commitments from the new Board President, which I'm all in support of.

Where does the action match the commitment?

I have a submitted call to public at every meeting since the special meeting in June where there were concerns about legality of payroll. Those concerns also included issues with my contract, a previous Board Members statement that he saw my contract signed in the March 14th 2022 meeting, and numerous concerns about conduct by the Superintendent. I have asked repeatedly that the district follow protocols they have in the past and bring in a third-party impartial investigator.

No investigation has been done for my concerns or anyone else's.

The Board has largely publicly ignored all concerns. And instead sat back and allowed retaliation to continue, including to my children with no accountability.

At the special meeting last Monday, the executive sessions were obnoxiously loud and easily overheard by the public. While we tried to make small talk, there were still several things we could hear. Among one of the early things, we heard was the Superintendent loudly refer to me as a "rebel rouser". What we did not hear was any Board Member telling him that it wasn't ok to use such unprofessional language. We heard Mr. O'Donnell say that it has been his strategy in working with the school attorney to ignore my complaints and concerns in the hope that I would "go away". This fits with how the Board has acted not only with my concerns but with all of the many concerns brought to the Board since last summer. Is this what the community can expect from the school board? That you will ignore concerns and complaints in the hope that people will just "go away"?

We heard in the next executive session that employees can be fined for violating the confidentiality of executive sessions. Does this apply to the Superintendent and Board Members too? Back in August, (these are included in the August minutes on the website) two former employees shared concerns about Mr. O'Donnell giving them specifics of executive sessions that did not pertain to them at all. A clear violation of the confidentiality agreement. There is also a Board Member who has a now former employee who is quick to share around town all the details of confidential board documents and information, including executive sessions that are shared with her what was her boss. Where's the above reproach in these situations?

It was also shared that employees can't be surveyed because they are being pressured to be negative.

And while I agree there is pressure, it is not coming from where the Board is being led to believe. Employees have shared numerous times that their jobs are threatened if they speak up. That what has been allowed to happen to me by the Superintendent has been used as the example for what he could do to them. They have also been rewarded for staying quiet with falsified paid time off that does not align with any district policy. The district has also lost a lot of employees who have stated they cannot work under such hostile conditions. And all of them have gone ignored.

I was recruited here by the Board and built a house and got involved in the community with the goal that this would be where I would raise my kids. I built my house. I had a job with the school that I was very successful at. My family and I have and continue to invest heavily in the community. It's why I can't just "go away". The school uses our tax dollars to fund it - it's a public school that belongs to our community. It's not an option to look the other way while illegal things happen. It's not an option to not stand up for our kids and staff and look for ways we can do better.

It was shared with me by two Board Members that they felt some guilt about what happened to a former superintendent and so they felt they needed to absolve that guilt by blindly supporting the current superintendent. While I can sympathize with the hard choices the Board has to make, that does not make it ok to ignore concerns or complaints and allow all of this to happen. It comes across as the Board not wanting to know what's going on and hiding behind perceived rules that don't actually follow our policy.

I've consistently asked for an impartial investigation every single month- which apparently makes me a rebel rouser. And it was referenced that I have a lot of conditions that I asked the district for so I will spell it out for you. I have 3. - I've asked for financial compensation, my job back, -and an apology. That's it. I don't think any of you have any idea of the financial impact this has had on me or my kids, or the medical impact of having my insurance canceled and backdated without proper COBRA notice to where I couldn't afford the physical therapy I needed, or the open attempts to damage my reputation by both the Superintendent and several Board Members, or the educational impact on my kids who have been labeled and treated differently by several staff members as a result of all of this. And this is all for what? Because we have a Superintendent who you didn't want to hold accountable? I was an employee that

every single one of you openly and consistently agreed that I did my job very well. I got the district financially healthy. I had success recruiting; I got the district several hundred thousand dollars in grants. I worked through 12 different audits without issue. My only issues were in trying to hold the Superintendent to the same standards as the rest of the staff. Somehow the punishment I've received doesn't seem to fit my actions. I'm looking forward to the Board taking action to right the wrongs that have occurred and are continuing to be allowed.

Thank you,

Stephanie Rider.

Sara Bunce: Ok, thank you. The hard copy really helps.

Stephanie Rider: *Well, I have given them at every single meeting. So, I appreciate that.*

Sara Bunce: Right. Ok, next I have Ms. Christi Rider regarding line item 4.

Dean Bell: Can I? May I ask a question first?

Sara Bunce: You can ask yeah?

Dean Bell: Well, I don't know any of the former board members. But Guy McGill was a former Board member?

Sara Bunce: We are not able to discuss it right now. This is just call to public.

Dean Bell: I want to clarify what I am saying and what this says in here.

Sara Bunce: Oh

Christi Rider: *He wants his statement on record.*

Sara Bunce: It as provided as part of the minutes that weren't included. I can only hear one person at a time. Mr. Bell what page are you on?

Dean Bell: I'm 4 back. This is a former board member? He signed a statement saying he saw you turn in your contract?

Stephanie Rider: *Yes.*

Dean Bell: Ok, I just wanted to make sure I was reading this right.

Sara Bunce: For context, I was appointed to fill the vacancy made by Mr. McGill when he resigned for personal reasons.

Dean Bell: so, you weren't here during

Sara Bunce: I was her when that meeting took place. Because he was a former board member, because I had to have, since I took after him.

Dean Bell: Ok so it sounds like I am the only one who was not here for this.

Sara Bunce: Correct. The difference at that time is that you were not on the board yet and I was.

Dean Bell: I was just seeing who was on the board at that time. I didn't know Guy McGill

Sara Bunce: Dave Megahey. He was on the Board at the time. Ok. Thank you for your patience.

Christi Rider: *First of all, the Special Meeting last week for a minute myself, um, with the way it was announced. Several people asking me why Stephanie's initials were put on it. S.R.? And they were on it. They were on the first posting and the second posting and anything to do with the first executive staff meeting. Never seen that before. There were two executive sessions and the second one didn't have any initials on it. So, I am kind of wondering why? Why? Why are we announcing to the community? And it didn't take much for anyone to figure out that that is what that meeting was about. Of course, Stephanie was not given the courtesy of being told that. But anyways we are starting with that.*

It was so unprofessionally done, if there was no doubt it was about Stephanie, because we could hear Mr. O'Donnell through the whole thing, as we sat out in the public. It was awkward; you could hear him with his comments about her. The 'rebel rouser' comments along with the other ones. It sounded like he was the one conducting the meeting. I better stick to my paper so it is the same as the minutes. If there was any doubt it was about Stephanie, because we could hear those were cleared up as soon as it started with Mr. O'Donnell running the meeting and speaking very loudly for all to hear. Why wasn't the Board running that meeting? Why, when we've heard through all the call to publics that the concerns and

complaints heavily involve him, and certainly all of Stephanie's complaints, was he allowed to run that meeting or even be in there at all? He was the voice you could hear throughout the whole meeting. Maybe a few other voice but not as much as him.

I want to applaud the Board for making him leave during the executive session about Heather Jackson, and we know it was about Heather because we could hear that too! Comments made by the Board in that meeting that were so easily overheard by the public. Including negative comments from a Board Member dating back several years about Heather. We could also hear what some of the different lawyers were saying and that was interesting. Why wasn't the same courtesy given to Stephanie to have Mr. O'Donnell leave during her executive session? And Have the Board act on their own, with everything in front of them. Why is his narrative the only narrative that keeps being said? On to another subject

Also, it has now been 9 months, this is what happens when we follow your process for request for information, 1 month since the last meeting where my two requests for information were submitted. Last month after being pinned down by the Board President, Mr. O'Donnell assured the Board President, he would email me that Thursday when my request was ready. This is a challenge that I have going. You tell us to follow your process. Every single month I stand up here to tell you guys how that is working out for us. Does anybody care? Is anybody listening? This is on you. You are the Board! Come on. Where is the accountability for the things you require us to do? Where is it? What is going on here? It is such a joke at this point that I have waited 9 months to get my request for information responded to and it STILL is not. In closing, I just ask you guys, is the Board ok with this? Does this really represent you? Because it has represented you for the last 9 months. Thanks.

Sara Bunce: Thank you. I appreciate the way you frame your thoughts

Christie Rider: *Oh, I bet you do.*

Sara Bunce: No, your process does make sense to me. I like it.

A recess was requested at 6:42 pm and the meeting resumed at 6:48 pm

7) Action Items:

- a) Discussion/Action - Board approval of the Monthly Financial Report – Approval of Monthly Financial Report moved by P. Hageman, Seconded by L. Chapman; carried unanimously
- b) Discussion/Action – Voucher Ratification: Payroll Vouchers 20 & 21, and Expense Vouchers 2314 & 2315 – Ratification moved by L. Chapman, Seconded by D. Bell; carried unanimously
- c) Discussion/Action – Board may move to Executive Session for discussion and possible action re: employment complaint from District employee. The Board may vote to discuss this matter in executive session pursuant to A.R.S. Sec. 38-431.03 (A1) and/or (A3) – S. Bunce moved that the Board move into Executive Session for A.R.S. 38-431.03 (A1) and/or A.R.S. 38-431.03 (A3) at 6:48 pm, seconded by D. Bell; carried unanimously
At 7:55 pm, the Board left Executive Session and took a brief recess. The Board took a brief recess. At 8:00 pm, L. Chapman moved that the Board move into Executive Session for A.R.S. 38-431.03 and/or (A3), seconded by P. Hageman; carried unanimously.
S. Bunce moved that the Board return to Open Session at 8:18 pm, Seconded by D. Bell; carried unanimously.
- d) Discussion/Action – Board Approval of Four-Day Week schedule for FY '24 – S. Bunce moved the approval of the Four-Day work week for FY '24, seconded by P. Hageman; carried unanimously.
- e) Discussion/Action – Board will consider approval of Resignation Letter from a teacher – L. Chapman moved approval of resignation letter from Teacher Nancy Huffaker effective June 30, 2023, seconded by S. Bunce; carried unanimously.
- f) Discussion/Action – Board Approval of FY'24 School Calendar and FY'24 Pre-School Calendar – D. Bell moved approval of the YPS School Year Calendar and the YPS Pre-School Calendar as presented for FY '24, seconded by P. Hageman; carried unanimously.

g) Discussion/Action – Board will ratify a Teacher contract for FY 24, which had errors corrected from original approval – P. Hageman moved to approve the corrected Teacher Contract as presented for FY '24, seconded by S. Bunce; carried unanimously.

8) Discussion Only Items:

a) Discussion – Board will hear and discuss updates on the 90-day letter response – Mr. O'Donnell shared additional progress being made on the 90-day letter received regarding the 29 major finding from the 2020-2021 school year financial audit. Mr. O'Donnell and Ms. Leopold still plan to have the response uploaded to the AZ Auditor General's Office by next week to allow enough time to receive feedback and clean-up, before the May 23, 2023 deadline. Mr. O'Donnell also clarified that the current audit (2021-2022 year) should be completed by June 1, 2023 which will clear up the possibility of another 90-day letter from the AZ Auditor General's Office.


10) Adjournment – P. Hageman moved to adjourn at 8:40 pm, seconded by S. Bunce; carried unanimously.

*Action Item

As authorized by ARS 38:431.03, this public body, upon majority vote, may choose to convene in an executive session for the purpose of discussing items allowed by law. **Upon official notice the officer, appointee, or employee may choose to hold discussion and/or consideration in open meeting.** No final action can or shall be taken in the executive session. Items of business suggested by employees and patrons of the District will notify the Superintendent of the particular item of business at least four working days before the Board meeting (Young Public School Policy Manual- Policy BEDBA).

Attendees: _____

6/12/23

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The top signature is a cursive name that appears to be "Sarah". The bottom signature is a stylized, less legible cursive name.