

**SOPER BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
Monday, April 19, 2021  
7:00 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order by Angella Dancer.

*Members present: Robert Spaulding, Gaylen Branton, Arlis Young, Bruce Roebuck, Angella Dancer.*

*Administration present: Scotty Van Worth, Tina Jeffreys.*

It was determined that the agenda for this meeting was posted in due time.

Motion was made by Arlis Young and seconded by Gaylen Branton to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for the Soper School Board for February 22 and March 22, 2021. Angella Dancer—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, Gaylen Branton—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye.

The Board welcomed visitor, Brian Moore. Mr Moore did not address the Board with any concerns.

Dr Scotty Van Worth reported that we are in the last three weeks of school and all is going well, including Prom, which was in the new cafeteria. The May 3 Baccalaureate Service will also be held in the cafeteria. The FFA Banquet will be the first Tuesday in May. Senior graduation at 10 a.m. on the morning of May 8, the second Saturday of May, is being planned for outdoors, per student preference.

In other business, Dr Van Worth reported that a new bill is about to be implemented that will cut the budget by as much as \$140,000 in the coming school year. Part of the reason includes programs such as Epic Charter School and other options now available to students. With two teachers retiring after the current school year, the plan was to absorb those positions and allow the extra money to become a cushion for the next school year. With these cuts, absorbing the positions will be less optional, as the budget will be tighter.

Dr Van Worth also reported that the transfer window is open for students from neighboring school districts. In the past, administration could turn down transfer requests, but that is no longer the case with the exception of absenteeism or

discipline issues. Limitations for accepting students requesting to transfer in will be based on capacity. The policy must be in place by January 1, and this policy will be under audit. Dr Van Worth says that the capacity needs to be figured out by August, but the OSSBA Q&A is not yet complete. What is important is figuring out how many non-Soper School District students Soper can accommodate according to maximum capacity while being open to filling those extra seats with students who will be positive additions to the student body. Numbers would be in the category of K-6 at 20 students per class, 7-9 at 36 students per class, and high school students being seen at the rate of 120 per teacher per day (meaning total head counts per class per day per teacher).

Covid money is still coming and must be spent by July. The effort is to carry over \$800K, and we still have a healthy building fund, having finished all payments on the cafeteria. Discussions for shopping for the new mower are still ongoing, but it will be purchased, and the awning in front of the cafeteria will be installed.

Grant money will pay for the new camera/security installation with Inside Technologies. Concessions are going well, and all activity accounts are doing well. Administration is considering putting together a ballgame for the small students so that their families can watch them play.

There will be an OSSBA conference in Oklahoma City in August. Those interested should notify Dr Van Worth. Audits have returned no deficiencies for accreditations.

Board member Bruce Roebuck asked if the administration has any plans in place in case the transgender question comes into play, given upcoming legislation. Dr Van Worth acknowledged that it could come into play in the near future and potentially affect Federal funding, but that the self-contained bathrooms in the new cafeteria are a part of the effort to get ahead of the situation. Privacy for all students is key in that respect. Also, if a student were to declare that he or she is differently gendered from what is stated on his or her birth certificate, a parent will have to sign a form making the statement valid. Currently, not much more is known about how this policy might evolve.

A motion was made by Arlis Young and seconded by Gaylen Branton to approve the general fund encumbrances 269-299 & 70123-70124 and checks. Robert Spaulding—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, Gaylen Branton—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, and Bruce Roebuck—Aye.

The Principal's report was delivered by Tina Jeffreys. At the time of the meeting, State testing was underway, expecting that most of April will be spent in this endeavor. All seems to be going well.

Ms Jeffreys announced that so far there are 56 K-6 students (and counting) signed up for Summer School. All who want to come are encouraged to do so. It is hoped that the Summer School session will help any student who did not thrive during distance learning; this is not limited to only struggling students. There will be enough students to employ four teachers for the classes. Classes will be held for six weeks and the theme will be The Great Outdoors. Fun activities are being planned to accommodate the theme and make the efforts of the students enjoyable.

The decision was made to not have a formal Kindergarten graduation, as it takes so much class time to prepare the program and time is better spent in class preparing to move into First Grade. However, Ms Jeffreys and her staff agreed that some kind of celebration needs to happen, so they have decided to have a classroom party with parents. This will give opportunity to honor the achievements and still utilize remaining class time for learning. The importance of having fluent readers entering First Grade is the priority of the teachers and staff at this time.

High School Principal Parker Harless was not present at the Board meeting, but he was necessarily representing the administration at the ballgame. One of the three administrators is required to be at the school's extracurricular activities.

In other business, Dr Van Worth presented the Board with his proposed four-day school calendar for the 2021-2022 school year. Most Monday holidays have been removed, the exceptions being Martin Luther King Jr Day and Labor Day, but this calendar is otherwise the same as past four-day calendars. Dr Van Worth also offered a five-day calendar as an alternative, although he recommended the four-day calendar in order to stay consistent with other local school districts. This will probably be the last year to be allowed a four-day option, and Dr Van Worth

believes that retaining current staff and students is better supported by continuing with this choice for the final year.

Upon Dr Van Worth's recommendation, Robert Spaulding moved to adopt the four-day calendar for School Year 2021-2022 as presented by Dr Van Worth. Angella Dancer seconded the motion. Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye.

Kiamichi Vo-Tech has submitted math and science course availability to Soper's high school students for the coming year. Arlis Young made a motion to approve Kiamichi Vo-Tech courses, and Bruce Roebuck seconded it. Gaylen Branton—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye.

Gaylen Branton moved to approve the Total Rehab services agreement, which is the Special Education and Physical Therapy services for students of various special needs, including occupational, speech, and any other needs that could be required for students. All needs are covered by this agreement, meaning no student need will be difficult to assist, and no single teacher will have to be hired for any particular need. Arlis Young seconded the motion. Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye.

Dr Van Worth recommended that the Board approve the retirement bonuses for the two retiring teachers this school year: Julie Harless and Kim Smith. This incentive is created from up to 120 unused sick days accumulated over a teacher's tenure at the school, capping at \$1600, and is offered as a retirement gift/bonus. Robert Spaulding made a motion to approve the bonus, and Angella Dancer seconded the motion. Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Gaylen Branton—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, and Arlis Young—Aye.

Gaylen Branton moved to approve the Crossroads Psychologist and Counselor Services contract, which funds the services of Jennifer Moyer with the school district. Counseling is a necessary service to qualify for Special Education services in the school district. Bruce Roebuck seconded the motion. Angella Dancer—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Gaylen Branton—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, and Arlis Young—Aye.

The Board discussed whether or not to continue school bus services and whether or not to consolidate the routes. Dr Van Worth advised that an open position has been posted for six or seven months now with no applicants resulting. If a CDL driver were found right away, it could take another six to seven months to get him/her certified to work with the school district. Since transport is not a legal requirement of the school district, with the exception of Special Education students, the question of eliminating school bus transport was suggested as an option. Other options would include condensing the routes from four to three and/or setting up bus stops in lieu of sending buses to all homes.

While the Board is divided on the discussion of eliminating transportation, as Angella Dancer reminded members that some children get themselves on the school buses and might not have any other transportation to get to school, they also agree that there will be several issues to work out if bus stops are created. About 95% of elementary students rely on the buses to get them to school. Dr Van Worth suggested that the Board table the discussion for the next meeting. Meanwhile, he will continue to seek the needed driver while also working on a proposal for a working plan if one cannot be found. The Board unanimously agreed.

The Board discussed removing Drivers Education from the curriculum going forward. Dr Van Worth said that the district loses a lot of money on the Drivers Ed program, and the state does not reimburse the district for all of the instructors' pay. While some schools charge students for the service, there are adequate online programs that are just as efficient and cost-effective for the students and their parents. Several Board members have experienced the effectiveness of the online course, and they agree that it works well with parent instruction. Robert Spaulding moved to remove Drivers Ed from the curriculum going forward. Bruce Roebuck seconded the motion. Gaylen Branton—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye.

There were no purchase requests nor any new business to discuss.

A motion was made to adjourn by Gaylen Branton, and it was seconded by Angella Dancer. Gaylen Branton—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye.



Ben Reed  
Gaylen Branton  
Arlis Young