

Painted Desert Demonstration Projects ***The STAR School***

School Board Meeting

June 24, 2025

4:01–5:57 pm

The STAR School

145 Leupp Road

Flagstaff, AZ 86004

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Mark Sorenson at 4:01 pm.

Present: Mark Sorensen, Thomas Walker, Pauline Young, Rick St. Germaine (via Zoom), and Evelyn McCabe (arrived at 4:40 pm.)

Others Present: Director Jeannie Gross, and Business Director Forrest Valora (via Zoom).

Opening words of encouragement were offered by Thomas Walker in the Dine language.

Board Chair Mark Sorensen discussed the agenda, which had been posted.

Motion was made by Thomas Walker and seconded by Pauline Young to approve the posted agenda. The motion carried 4-0-0. Those voting in favor were Thomas Walker, Pauline Young, Rick St. Germaine, and Mark Sorensen.

Board Chair, Mark Sorensen briefly discussed the Board meeting minutes of April 15, 2025.

Motion was made by Rick St. Germaine and seconded by Pauline Young to approve the minutes from the School Board meeting of April 15, 2025. The motion carried 4-0-0. Those voting in favor of the motion were Pauline Young, Thomas Walker, Mark Sorensen, and Rick St. Germaine.

Reports

Academic and Testing.

Director Jeannie Gross reported school K-8 enrollment for the coming school year is 91 at this time. Typically, we will have more students enrolled in August. Jeannie spoke with an official who indicated that our student test results factored

into a B calculation, but other considerations will need to be made before we receive a grade for the SY 24-25. Missing data from last year's late testing problem may impinge on our final grade, but we are hopeful. The third grade students did very well. The Eureka Math K-8 curriculum has been faithful. There are more proficient to highly proficient scores. This is the first year there will be no new core teachers. For teacher orientation week in early July, teachers have asked for more time to spend in their classrooms to get ready for students. There will be two trainings. We will have a new Assistant principal, Loretta Eltsosie, who will serve as our academic coach. On July 11, Board members will have lunch with our teachers. Some of our Board members will work with our middle grade students on peacemaking and conflict resolution lessons, using Navajo methods and cultural healing, which is grant supported.

Financial Report

Forrest Valora, Business Manager, provided the financial report using two sets of financial spread sheets which all Board members viewed and followed as he described them. There has been a pre-K decline in revenues as there are no longer any pre-K grants. As facilities age, we are amortizing facilities expenses. We are cash flow positive. There are highs and lows during the school year as teachers make curriculum purchases early in the school year and insurance payments are made in the first three months. We will be cash healthy this year. The State of Arizona has a \$2billion shortfall in June, but the Legislature is working on it. 40% of our monies, will come in July this year from State Equalization. In past years, it was 60%. We may receive our continuation funding in July. These are our best projections in an uncertain year. We meet with the State Charter Board on a monthly basis. With Blue Cross Blue Shield, our premiums are not as high as we have not had as much use from employees. There will be some premium returns or a small rate increase. Evelyn McCabe entered the meeting at 4:40 pm.

Grants Update

Jeannie Gross sent us a report with dollar amounts in advance and provided a brief review. Natalie is our grant writer. This year, we will have the NAL grant, NAM grant, FEWS grant, FEWS mini-grant, Farm to School grant, NAF Youth grant, Newman's Own, Sprouts grant, RISE grant, School Safety grant, and

Arizona School Nurse Equipment. We have applied for the following grants: ANA, NAAF Youth 2025, Harvest Festival Grant, Sprouts Grant, and Newmans Own grant.

Action Discussion Items

SY 25-26 Budget

Forrest Valora, Business Manager, provided spread sheet information to Board members in advance. The proposed budget is prepared from last year's budget. Revenues are increasing, approved in the Legislature. Teacher compensation increased and expenses increased. Other expenses are maintenance, debt service, and instructors and benefits. We need to monitor enrollment. I meet with the principal on a regular basis. The State payment is not in June. Debt service is \$3,200 less each year because of interest reduction. There were no questions.

Motion was made by Evelyn McCabe and seconded by Thomas Walker that School Board approve the SY 25-26 Budget as presented. The motion carried 5-0-0. Those voting in favor included Thomas Walker, Mark Sorensen, Evelyn McCabe, Pauline Young and Rick St. Germaine.

Performance Pay Policy Update

Jeannie Gross reviewed the Performance pay policy. She provided a report prior to the meeting. Our school provides employees with compensation for additional work that is not included by the salary scale, but is encouraged with additional funds when it is considered in the best interest of student learning and supports the goals of our School as articulated by the Board. The report itemized activities, such as: exceeding minimum expectations for student improvement in reading or math; school letter grade bonus; exceeding expectations for students in Dine language; development of a year long 4Rs service learning project that serves the community or school; development of a year-long project on sustainability, recycling, energy use reduction, or green-school production; perfect attendance bonus; unpaid coursework for professional development; sponsorship of a year-long after school activity; athletic head coach; athletic assistant coach; athletic director; and, the process for receiving such performance pay. The Board discussed increases in compensation as recommended by the Principal.

Motion was made by Pauline Young and seconded by Thomas Walker that the Board approve the policy pay recommendation, as itemized in the policy (see attached). The motion carried 5-0-0. Those voting in favor included Thomas Walker, Mark Sorensen, Evelyn McCabe, Pauline Young and Rick St. Germaine.

Student Handbook Revision

Principal Jeannie Gross discussed the new state law, HB 2484, that forbids student use of electronic devices during the school day. She reviewed the new policy in the Student Handbook, which was distributed to Board members prior to the meeting. The new policy was drafted into the Student Handbook and discussed with Board members. Our school attorney was consulted. Parents have been notified.

Motion was made by Rick St. Germaine and seconded by Evelyn McCabe that the STAR School comply with HB 2482 state law that forbids student use of certain electronic devices during the school day (see attached policy section). The motion carried 5-0-0. Those voting in favor included Thomas Walker, Mark Sorensen, Evelyn McCabe, Pauline Young and Rick St. Germaine.

NAFIS Membership

Mark Sorensen discussed proposed membership in the National Association of Federal Indian Schools (NAFIS). Mark and Rick telephoned the Executive Director regarding possible federal cuts to Impact Aid and suggested that STAR School become a member this year SY 25-26 to support advocacy efforts.

Motion was made by Pauline Young and seconded by Thomas Walker that the Board approve membership with NAFIS for the SY 25-26. The motion carried 5-0-0. Those voting in favor included Thomas Walker, Mark Sorensen, Evelyn McCabe, Pauline Young and Rick St. Germaine.

Community Comments

There were no community members present.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Thomas Walker and seconded by Evelyn McCabe that the Board meeting be adjourned at 5:57 pm. The motion carried 5-0-0. Those voting in favor included Thomas Walker, Mark Sorensen, Evelyn McCabe, Pauline Young and Rick St. Germaine.