Painted Desert Demonstration Projects
The STAR School

School Board Meeting
April 9, 2024
4:15–7:05 pm
The STAR School
145 Leupp Road
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

The STAR School Board meeting was called to order at 4:15 pm by Chair Mark Sorensen. The School Board offered this meeting via Zoom for some Board members.

Board members: Mark Sorensen, Chair, present; Pauline Young, present; Thomas Walker, present; Rick St. Germaine, Secretary, present via Zoom, and; Evelyn McCabe, present.

Others present: Jeannene Gross, Principal & Director; Andy LaFrate, Assistant Principal; Forrest Valora, Business Manager, and; Emerson Cleveland.

Thomas Walker, in the Dine language, acknowledged the presence of Board members and employees of the STAR School, offered traditional words of wonderment about the world around us, our relationship with the plants and animals, a respect for our ancestor's knowing ways, and our good wishes for our school stakeholders.

AGENDA

Chair Mark Sorensen reviewed today's meeting agenda with Board members.

A motion was made by Evelyn McCabe and seconded by Thomas Walker that the posted Board Meeting Agenda of June 25, 2024, be approved for this meeting. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0-0. Voting in support were Sorensen, McCabe, Young, Walker, and St. Germaine.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the School Board meeting of April 9, 2024, were reviewed by the Board.

A motion was made by Thomas Walker and seconded by Pauline Young that the minutes of the Board meeting of April 9, 2024, be approved. The motion was carried unanimously, 5-0-0. Voting in support were Sorensen, Young, Walker, McCabe, and St. Germaine.

REPORTS

Financial Report

Forrest Valora discussed the status of the current financial condition of the school. STAR School is in a healthy position operating within our budget. The fiscal year grants position is good. Competitive grant applications have been submitted. We are in a very sustainable position. Mr. Valora reported that project invoices were paid up to date.

Personnel Update

Andy LaFrate reported with a personnel update. The School is advertising for a bus driver. Certified drivers are in great demand nationwide. Compensation was raised. Heidi Mortensen, Counselor resigned and Rowina Keams was hired to replace as the new School Counselor. Alberta Neils (Art, Social Studies) resigned yesterday and a job posting will be made.

Open Positions
School Bus Driver
o
New Hires
Riley Burch - 4th/5th Grade Teacher
Selena Scarnato - Middle School ELA Teacher
Vernita Bob - Schoolwide Sub/EL Intervention
Rowina Keams - School Counselor
o
Changes in roles STAR School Departmental Structure: 2024-25 School Year

<u>Instruction</u>
Alchini Bighan:
Zoe Gale (PreK Teacher)
Ali Armstrong (PreK Teacher)
Shawlean Natay (Kindergarten Teacher)

Elementary School:
Elaine Jim (1st Teacher)
Bev Ed (2nd Teacher)
Becca Ed (3rd Teacher)
Riley Burch (4th/5th Teacher)
Katryna Mitchell (4th/5th TA)

Middle School:
Marilou Schultz (Math, PM Math Enrichment)
Selena Scarnato (ELA)
Julia Kentner (Science)

Enrichment:
Pamela Haffner (K-5th ELA Interventionist)
Lori Eltsosie (Math Interventionist)
Anna Conklin (TA)

SPED:
Justin Coffey (SPED teacher)
Juliet Carey (Para)

Specials:
Dan Smith (PE)
Pauline Young (DLC 6th-8th)
LouAnn Johnson (DLC K-5th)
Sarah Leon (grandparent)
TBD (Art, Service Learning, Culinary)
Vernita Bob (School Wide Sub)

Student Services
Rowina Keams (Counselor)
Joie Faulk (Safety & Health Coordinator)
Natalie Morawietz (District Test Coordinator)

Administrative
Jeannie Gross (Director/Principal)
Andy LaFrate (Assistant Principal)
Mark Sorensen (Sr. Consultant & Board President)

Business Office (Jeannie)
Jeannie Gross (Director)
Andy LaFrate (Coordinator)
Forrest Valora & John Piccione (Business Impact Solutions (Manager)

Facilities
Mark Gross (Asst. Manager & Gardener)
Dwight Gorman (Maintenance)
Emerson Cleveland (IT)

Transportation
Dwight Gorman (Manager, Bus Driver)
Donna Cody (Bus Driver)
Kresha Benally (Bus Monitor)
Mark Gross (Van Driver)

Kitchen
Robyn David (Manager)
Wes Hemstreet (Cook)

Front Office
Beverly Paddock (Dean of Students & Admin. Assistant)
Kylee Toehe (Community Support Specialist)

Grant Support
Natalie Morawietz (Grant Coordinator)

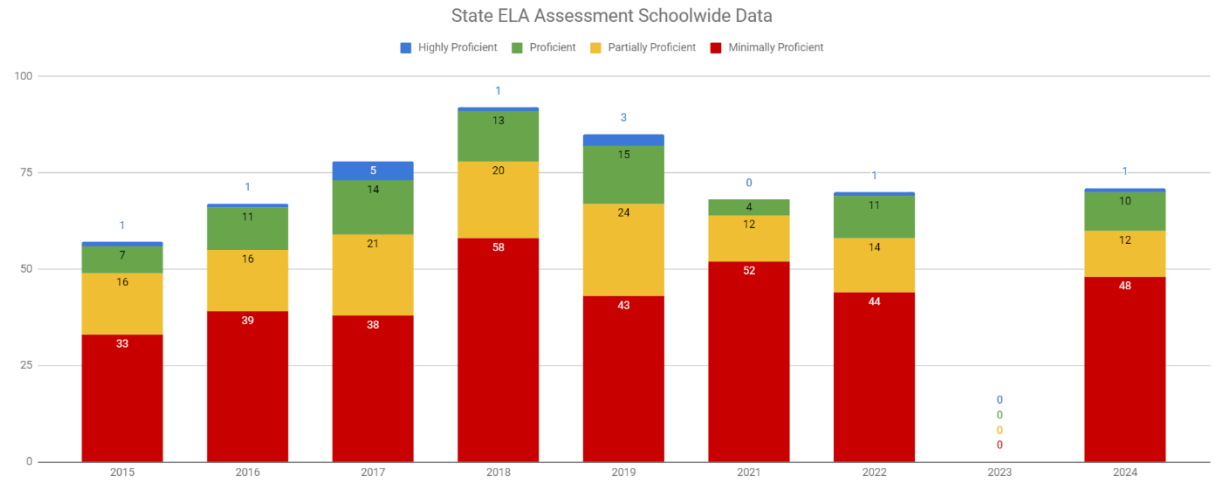
Arizona State Test Score Update

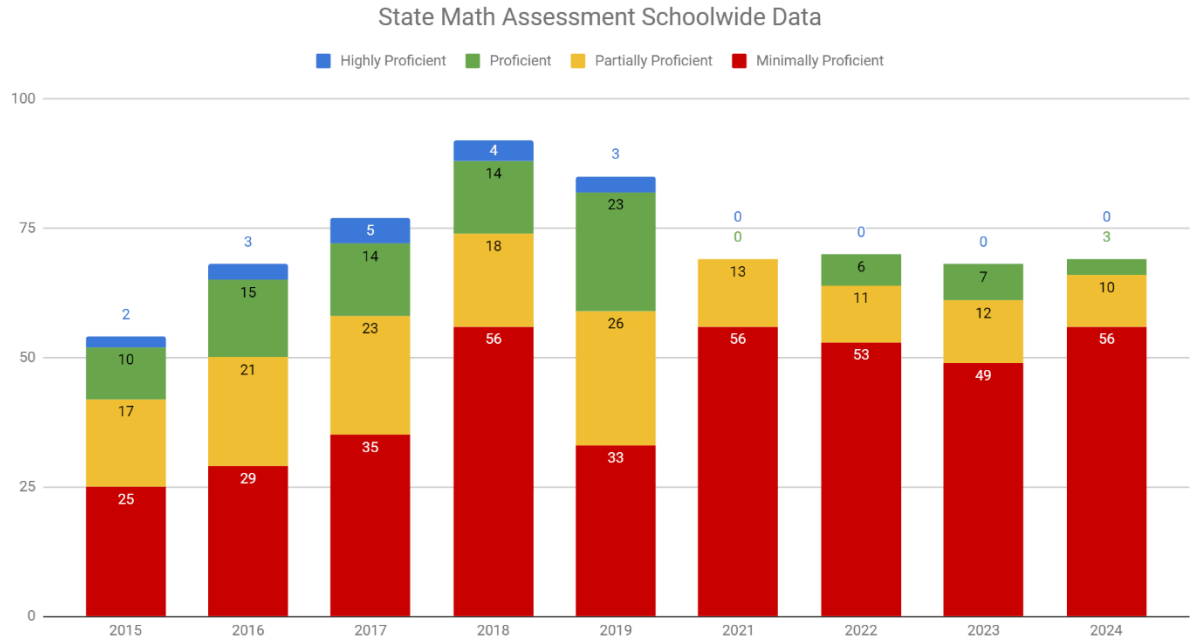
State Test Scores Update

Andy LaFrate reported the following data from the April AzMERIT student testing. Level 3 & 4 are passing. Regarding ELA growth, our students held steady. Despite having a math enrichment grant to strengthen math skills, only three of 69 students passed; a 10% decrease. The State Science Assessment show a progressively lower student proficiency level in recent years. The principals suggested that higher teacher absenteeism could be a reason for lower student test scores. On some days there may be 4-5 teachers absent. Substitute teaching is of much lower quality. Is there student test taking anxiety? Is our data driven instruction or math interventions not getting the job done? Do we need to focus our professional development on better instructional strategies? Andy LaFrate and Jeannie Gross had several suggestions about ways to improve instruction and improve student performance on assessments.

2024
ELA
Level 1 - 48
Level 2 - 12
Level 3 - 9
Level 4 - 1
% Passing = 14%

Math
Level 1 - 56
Level 2 - 10
Level 3 - 3
Level 4 - 0
% Passing = 4%





State Science Assessment								
		2017	**2018**	**2019**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**
Minimally Proficient		0	5	7	x	0	17	9
Partially Proficient		8	4	12	x	2	6	8
Proficient		10	13	8	x	12	3	2
Highly Proficient		7	6	5	x	7	0	0
% Passing		**68**	**68**	**41**	**X**	**90**	**12**	**11**

Update on Bid for the Construction of the Solar Generation Facility to Generate Well

Mark Sorensen reported on the posting only received one bid from a company Woodruff Construction at a proposed $1.2M. Our limit was $990,000, so we are negotiating with the bidder, which may result in scaling back a bit on the project. There was a discussion on applying for possible tax credits, but the project is a federal resource, so we may not be eligible.

Alchini Bighan Update

Principal Gross reported that STAR School lost our main resource support for our Alchini Bighan preschool. Scholarships are awarded to child care sites participating in the Quality First (QF) Scholarships Program to distribute to eligible families based on family eligibility criteria as determined by First Things First. A review team visited our school And we were missing a staff member and we performed poorly. Our four-star rating was reduced to a two- star rating. Our funding is now limited to supplies. We are so close to school start that it would be impractical to close down our preschool this late. Our school will now need to provide staff salaries, benefits to sustain our preschool. If we close the pre-school will we lose students for our kindergarten and 1st grades? Our Business Manager estimated that the cost may be $100,000 to $150,000. Our school has a large loan of about $400,000 balance. The payoff date will be in June, 2027. The cost of supporting a preschool with no funding source is sobering. One board member asked if we could receive support from our school community as a way of generating financial support?

Action/Discussion Items

Proposed FY 2024-2025 School Budget

The business manager provided a detailed report of the proposed FY 2024-2025 school budget with an analysis of budget sources and categories by spreadsheets. See attached budget.

A motion was made by Rick St. Germaine and seconded by Pauline Young that our School Board approve the budget proposal for FY 2024-2025. The motion carried 5-0-0. Voting in favor the motion were: Sorensen, Walker, Young, McCabe, and St. Germaine.

Recommendations for Policy Change

Existing Personnel Policy Updates

Board members discussed 4.5.B (P. 11) - Contract Expiration: "The School Board may decide to allow a contract to expire without offering a new contract ~~for the above mentioned reasons~~."

A motion was made by Rick St. Germaine and seconded by Evelyn McCabe to approve the policy change regarding contract expiration as follow: remove the words "for the above mentioned reasons." The motion carried 5-0-0. Voting in favor the motion were: Sorensen, Walker, Young, McCabe, and St. Germaine.

Board members discussed 12.13.A (P. 48) - State Testing: Add language stating that school board approval of the testing calendar is required.

A motion was made by Rick St. Germaine and seconded by Pauline young to approve the policy change regarding adding language: that school board approval of the testing calendar is required. The motion carried 5-0-0. Voting in favor the motion were: Sorensen, Walker, Young, McCabe, and St. Germaine.

Board members discussed 12.23 (P.52) - Sexual Harassment: an update policy using language from an example policy that was given in a training we purchased that defines terms, outlines complaint procedure, investigations, decisions, record keeping and disciplinary action.

A motion was made by Rick St. Germaine and seconded by Evelyn McCabe to approve the policy change regarding sexual harassment training: that was given in a training we purchased that defines terms, outlines complaint procedure, investigations, decisions, record keeping and disciplinary action. The motion carried 5-0-0. Voting in favor the motion were: Sorensen, Walker, Young, McCabe, and St. Germaine.

Existing Personnel Policy Updates

Board members discussed performance pay policies as proposed by our administrators on benchmark testing bonus, State testing bonus, and pay for coaches.

New Personnel Policies

The Board discussed 12.26 - Technology Agreement: will define ownership of intellectual property (IP), expectations around maintaining IP, consequences for intentionally deleting IP, access to school accounts upon termination, social media policies.

A motion was made by Pauline young and seconded by Evelyn McCabe to approve the recommended performance pay policies as follows: change wording for Galileo testing to say 50% of students showing growth, replace state testing incentive with letter grade bonus, revise attendance bonus to be a monthly bonus for perfect attendance for

teachers and increase coaching stipends by $200 each. The motion carried 5-0-0. Voting in favor the motion were: Sorensen, Walker, Young, McCabe, and St. Germaine.

There was agreement that further discussion and revisions were needed for the technology agreement policy that was proposed and the administrators will work on that.

Existing Student Handbook Updates

The Board discussed sports eligibility - applies only to sports (not tutoring or other after school activities); based on overall grade (not missing assignments) – receiving a D, the student can still attend practice but cannot play in games; receiving an F, the student cannot play in games or practice. This only applies to students in 3rd grade and above. Teachers must communicate with coaches and administrators well in advance, and the administrators have the final approval. Special considerations will be given to students on IEPs or 504s.

A motion was made by Pauline young and seconded by Evelyn McCabe regarding sports eligibility as follows: applies only to sports (not tutoring or other after school activities); based on overall grade (not missing assignments) – receiving a D, the student can still attend practice but cannot play in games; receiving an F, the student cannot play in games or practice. This only applies to students in 3rd grade and above. Teachers must communicate with coaches and administrators well in advance, and the administrators have the final approval. Special considerations will be given to students on IEPs or 504s. The motion carried 5-0-0. Voting in favor the motion were: Sorensen, Walker, Young, McCabe, and St. Germaine.

New Student Handbook Items

The Board discussed a proposed Student Technology Agreement – one that outlines appropriate use of devices, discusses inappropriate uses, and consequences. Board members want a rewrite of this policy proposal before taking action at the next meeting.

The Board discussed legislative changes affecting student discipline - updating a policy to reflect changes about suspension and expulsion to comply with statutes.

A motion was made by Evelyn McCabe and seconded by Pauline young that the School Board approve the policy recommendation regarding student suspension and expulsion to comply with Arizona State statutes, as follows: The motion carried 5-0-0. Voting in favor the motion were: Sorensen, Walker, Young, McCabe, and St. Germaine.

Searches of students and property - this was an example policy sent to us by our attorney and it suggested for us to implement.

A motion was made by Rick Saint Germain and seconded by Evelyn McCabe that the school board approve a new policy regarding student searches, as follows: The motion

carried 5-0-0. Voting in favor the motion were: Sorensen, Walker, Young, McCabe, and St. Germaine.

Schedule of Upcoming School Board Meetings

The next School Board meetings were scheduled by consensus of the Board members on July 9, 2024, October 15, 2024, January 14, 2025, April 15, 2025, June 24, 2025, July 8, 2025.

Public Comments

There were no public members present in the meeting.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Pauline Young and seconded by Evelyn McCabe to adjourn the STAR School Board meeting at 7:05 pm. The motion carried 5-0-0. Voting in favor the motion were: Sorensen, Walker, Young, McCabe, and St. Germaine.