

Cochrane-Fountain City School District  
Special School Board Meeting  
July 26, 2023

President Don Baloun called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the high school board room #335. Board members present were Larry Cyrus, Allen Bollinger, Niki Secrist, Darrin Dillinger, Lynn Doelle, Don Baloun, and Michael Ayala. Also in attendance were Troy White, Tom Hiebert, Wendy Hiebert, Heather Yates, Alishia Pronschinske, Brianna Wolfe, Cindy Lambert, Mary Anne McMillan Urell, Janelle Gibson, Linsey Kaufman, Thanh Bui-Duquette, Jennifer Marcum, Jenny Krause, Tori Bautch, and Carri Renchin.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Mission Statement was read by Don Baloun.

Don Baloun attested to the publication of the meeting.

### **Approval of the agenda**

Niki Secrist made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Michael Ayala seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Discussion/Possible Action**

- **Discuss Head Start partnership and space availability.**

Head Start staff Janelle Gibbons and Thanh Bui-Duquette presented a brief history on how Head Start started in the district with being in the homes of the families, then was moved into the school for a safer setting. There was information presented about the value Head Start provided to the families and the district. Testimony was given on the need in the county for childcare. Head Start expressed two main concerns. First, the District informed them that the renovations to the building for infants and toddlers would not be completed by March 2024 as they had hoped, and their grant depends on it. Second, their concern that the district's request to move classroom would not qualify for licensing, they would not have time to make the move, and they did not want to cause disruption to their families. Head Start suggested that they provide a copy of their progress reports to the administration and school board as well as present them annually or bi-annually at school board meetings.

Superintendent Troy White Clarified a few items. First, he and the district believe that Head Start is a great program that provides many benefits to the families they serve. Second, there has never been any representative of the district wanting Head Start to leave the building or the district. Third, the district has requested Head Start file for a one-time grant post-award amendment to request an extension of up to 12 months on the project. This would ensure the completion of the construction for the originally approved project during the summer of 2024. If Head Start determines an amendment is not in their best interest or the amendment is not granted, the district will not be able to accommodate the early childhood expansion under the March 2024 deadline. Fourth, he reminded Head Start of the ongoing conversations that started in the fall of 2022, that the district would be looking to return to using the kindergarten room #115 that Head Start is currently occupying. The increase in enrollment numbers in the district 5K level prompted the district to inform Head Start they would be moving to a different location in the building.

#### **School Board Members**

Asked questions about how licensure works, the size of classrooms, Head Start leasing building space in Eau Claire, and whether Head Start would be interested in partnering with the district to lease space if a separate childcare center was built.

After discussion over licensing and debate about needs the District and Head Start agreed to revisit the expansion of the Head Start program for infant and toddlers at a future meeting as well as the following options for the current 3- and 4-year-old classroom.

Option 1 – Head Start will move from room 115 to 144 if the room can be licensed for 17 children.

Option 2 – Head Start would remain in room 115 for one year until a location, licensed for 17 children, can be established.

### **Adjourn**

The board adjourned at 7:10 on a motion by Darrin Dillinger, seconded by Michael Ayala. Motion carried.