

**J.O. COMBS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 44  
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2015**

A public meeting of the J.O. Combs Unified School District #44 Governing Board convened on Wednesday, December 9, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at the J.O. Combs Middle School. Members of the Governing Board present were Shelly Hargis, President; Kathy Bourgeois, Clerk; Pat Pinckard, Member; Bob D'Elena, Member; and Dr. Gary Kemp, Member. Administrators, Directors, and Coordinators present were Marcus Berkshire, Tammy Stimatze, Angie Beauchene, Bradley Shepstead, Mark Mauro, Karla Slovitsky, Jane Rupard, Jack Wallbrecht, Shannon Weber, Kelly Guerra, Santa Dunker, and John Scrogam; Dr. Patty Rogers, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Gayle Blanchard, Superintendent, and MaryLou Martinez, Administrative Assistant.

**Call to Order** – Governing Board President Ms. Shelly Hargis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Approval of Meeting Agenda** – Ms. Bourgeois made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. D'Elena, and the motion carried 5-0.

**Welcoming of Guests**

**Pledge of Allegiance** – Ms. Hargis invited the Armstrong family to lead the pledge.

**Superintendent Report** – Dr. Blanchard shared a few items from the Superintendent's Update:

- Current District enrollment is 4,489.
- Combs Traditional Academy sixth grader Anissa Deel was awarded the T-shirt Prize at the 2015 Pinal County Attorney's Anti-Drug Poster Contest awards ceremony in November. Anissa's poster design is on t-shirts that will be distributed to all of the top finalists as well as throughout the county.
- Congratulations to the Combs Community Education Department for a successful Polarfest event held at Combs Middle School on December 5.
- In November, the Combs High School Drama Club participated in the Arizona Thespians Festival. Congratulations to Kayla Santos, Juan Dominguez, Grace Porter, Lexi McManigal, Hailey Pickett, Kaila Parent, and Spencer Mattson for their achievements in individual events. Congratulations to Hailey Pickett for earning a full-tuition scholarship to Grand Canyon University with her stellar scholarship audition.
- Ellsworth Elementary second grade students had the opportunity to show off their acting skills on stage with their production of "Pies and Plays."
- Ranch Elementary held their first "Battle of the Books" event in November. The competition continues in January.
- San Tan Valley Farmers Market will be held at Combs High School on December 12 starting at 7:00 a.m.

**Student of the Month** – Ms. Sharon Lind, Chief Executive Officer of Banner Ironwood Medical Center was present to assist with the Student of the Month recognition. Ms. Lind shared exciting news and updates about Banner Ironwood with respect to the addition of two new obstetricians, Dr. Lowe and Dr. Danielson, who have offices at Queen Creek Health Center and are based at the hospital. She also mentioned two new surgeons, Dr. Biehn and Dr. Diener who join Dr. Nilsen in orthopedics. Ms. Lind said these physicians are a great addition to Banner Ironwood medical staff to meet the future needs of the community.

Dr. Rogers acknowledged audience members and J.O. Combs staff who took the time to come out and support student recognition.

The J.O. Combs District continues to partner with BIMC recognizing one student every month from each of the schools where students are recognized for the various pillars of character, which include Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Citizenship, Caring, Respect, and Fairness. Dr. Patty Rogers, Assistant Superintendent read a

brief paragraph about each student and presented certificates to all recipients and they then had a photo taken with the representative from Banner Ironwood, the Governing Board, and Superintendent Blanchard.

**Volunteer Recognition** – Ms. Kelly Guerra, Coordinator of Community Education, recognized Harmon Elementary Principal Ms. Angie Beauchene and Social Worker Ms. Emily Phares for a very successful food drive which provided 71 families with a thanksgiving meal as well as 410 individual meals in the community. Ms. Beauchene and Ms. Phares were presented with the first annual United Food Bank trophy. Ms. Guerra shared that the Harmon campus brought in over seven very large food boxes including monetary donations as students helped raise money to buy additional turkeys for those in need.

Ms. Guerra recognized two Encanterra residents, Ms. Lorraine Klein and Ms. Roberta Feingold. Encanterra is a great community partner and both Ms. Klein and Ms. Feingold have spent many hours throughout the year assisting Combs Migrant Liaison Ms. Elizabeth Kloehr, especially with preparing food boxes. Ms. Guerra thanked Ms. Klein and Ms. Feingold for giving their time and donating their gift of assistance and presented them with certificates. Ms. Guerra also recognized Ms. Kloehr for doing an amazing job, in addition to the angel tree and food drive.

Ms. Guerra discussed utilizing social media to promote the good things happening in the District. In support of this, she announced “Jo the Combs elf” will be traveling throughout the district, so follow us on twitter and help us find where he is.

**Focus on Students/Programs** – Ms. Santa Dunker, Coordinator of Curriculum & Instruction, introduced the Combs High School Orchestra. Under the direction of Mr. Earl Thornton, the symphonic orchestra played several musical pieces. Mr. Thornton has been with Combs since 2005 and currently serves as the music teacher for middle school and high school.

**Citizen’s Comments** – None

The Governing Board invites the viewpoints of citizens throughout the District under guidelines as presented in Policy BEDH. (Policy BEDH—Public Participation at Board Meetings is posted in the Governing Board Room or available at the District Office.) State statutes prohibit the Governing Board from discussing an item that is not on the agenda, but they do listen to compliments / concerns and request that staff follow up on any questions.

**Approval of Consent Agenda Action Items** – Ms. Pinckard made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. D’Elena, and the motion carried 5-0.

- A. Approval of Minutes
  - i. Regular Meeting November 4, 2015
- B. Business and Finance
  - i. Monthly Financial Report November 2015
  - ii. Student Activities Financial Statement November 2015
  - iii. Expense Vouchers

# 7021	\$ 122,565.66	# 7023	\$ 87,575.31
# 7022	\$ 188,592.11	# 7024	\$ 107,158.06
  - iv. Payroll Vouchers

# 20	\$ 303,072.80	# 23	\$ 597,497.05
# 21	\$ 593,501.03	# 24	\$ 323,875.55
# 22	\$ 600.23	# 25	\$ 1,796.12
  - v. Intergovernmental Agreements
    - a. Agreement between the East Valley Institute of Technology and J.O. Combs Unified for Provision of Joint Technical Education District Courses
    - b. Agreement between Higley Unified School District and J.O. Combs Unified School District for Sharing of Special Education Teacher
  - vi. Bid Request(s)
    - a. None
  - vii. Bid Approval(s)
    - a. None

- viii. Purchase(s)
    - a. None
  - ix. Grants, Gifts, and Donations
    - a. Donation of one rototiller from San Tan Landscape Management, valued at \$160 to Simonton Elementary
    - b. Donation of 6 Dream Tablets from Donors Choose, valued at \$1,158.78 to Ranch Elementary
    - c. Donation of sand and water sensory table, foam letters and numbers and variety of manipulatives, valued at \$137.96 to Ranch Elementary, Kindergarten
    - d. Donation of Federal Signal Light Bar/Whelan Siren, valued at \$400 to Combs High School Athletic Department
  - x. Overnight and/or Out-of-State Travel Request
    - a. NIKE Coach of the Year Football Clinic, Jesse Hart, Steven Larson, Drew Ammon, CHS Football Coaches, Las Vegas, NV, February 25-27, 2015
  - xi. Disposition of Equipment
- C. Personnel  
 (A.R.S. §38-431.03 (A)(1) the Governing Board may go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters)
- i. Job Descriptions
    - a. None
  - ii. Administrative Staff: Employment, Transfer, Leave of Absence, Resignation, Termination
  - iii. Certificated Staff: Employment, Transfer, Leave of Absence, Resignation, Termination
  - iv. Support Staff: Employment, Transfer, Leave of Absence, Resignation, Termination
  - v. Substitute Staff: Employment, Transfer, Leave of Absence, Resignation, Termination

**Combs High School Courses for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018** – Ms. Dunker discussed the list of new courses for the high school. She explained the list is updated annually to provide the most recent information to students and parents about course requirements and options. Ms. Dunker noted additionally there is one course for the 2017-18 school year allowing for adequate course development and that courses will only be scheduled if adequate enrollment is achieved. Ms. Dunker discussed the financial component of the textbook purchase for French 2, Dual Enrollment College Algebra, Computer and Software Engineering, and Sports and Entertainment Marketing courses.

Ms. Bourgeois made a motion to adopt the new course offerings for Combs High School as listed for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, seconded by Dr. Kemp, and the motion carried 5-0.

**Approval of District Calendar for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018** – Ms. Kelly Guerra presented the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 district calendars. She discussed the calendar committee which is comprised of leadership team and representatives from all school sites who met monthly before making recommendations.

Dr. Kemp made a motion to approve the District Calendar for 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 as presented, seconded by Mr. D'Elena, and the motion carried 5-0.

**Student Achievement-AzMERIT Presentation** – Ms. Santa Dunker shared AzMERIT results, score reporting information, and District AzMERIT data for discussion. Simonton Elementary Principal Bradley Shepstead, Middle School Principal Mark Mauro, and Combs High School Department Chairs Ms. Diane Ouellette and Ms. Jess Furman discussed next steps for the elementary schools, middle and high schools.

Ms. Dunker discussed how AzMERIT is different from AIMS and that high school testing is in line with high school course work. She pointed out AzMERIT is not a graduation requirement.

Ms. Bourgeois asked for clarification regarding AIMS, student proficiency, and the high school graduation requirement. Ms. Hargis asked if AzMERIT will be a high school graduation requirement sooner or later. Ms. Dunker commented proficiency expectation are much higher than AIMS and focused on student proficiency with end-of-course assessments and that she hasn't heard anything more from the Arizona Department of Education.

Ms. Bourgeois asked if parents can request to “opt out” of AzMERIT. Ms. Dunker stated students cannot opt out of AzMERIT. Dr. Blanchard explained the Attorney General’s decision and that districts provide make up opportunities for students. Ms. Bourgeois questioned if it is tied to funding at all and how does it benefit the student. Dr. Blanchard explained AzMERIT gives a snapshot of what the student understands and shows proficiency.

In reference to National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) academic content which is administered every two years in reading and mathematics and administered to a sample of students in selected grades, Ms. Hargis wanted to know who does the selection. Ms. Dunker explained the state selects the students as well as administers the test.

Ms. Dunker shared some highlights from across the district--Combs Traditional Academy math ranked number 2 in Pinal County and Combs High School Algebra II ranked number 3 in public schools in Pinal County.

Mr. D’Elena commented that the results for English Language Arts (ELA) shows a larger span or wider range than Math which shows the span of the grade is closer (narrower). He asked if there is any explanation as to what would cause that. Dr. Blanchard commented that it may be a result of the very specific attention to math. Dr. Kemp commented that perhaps math is math and ELA is a different kind of valuation where you can have a range of answers, where as in math you do not. Dr. Blanchard described some adjustments with math content and how that scoring works. Ms. Dunker said there are some adjustments and would agree District has had an intentional focus on math over the past several years. She added that District is looking at ELA unit plans to see if they represent the depth needed.

English Department Chair Ms. Ouellette and Math Department Chair Ms. Furman presented the next steps for the high school. Ms. Furman mentioned that in Algebra I starting a turnaround class in which students who have failed will see first semester material again in a slightly different format and in the summer will start semester two curriculum.

Mr. D’Elena asked what kind of articulation is taking place in elementary and middle school in relation to high school (gaps in high school students). Ms. Furman explained they are looking at what the standards are and where standards are now placed as well as looking at that particular grade level and where the gaps are.

Ms. Dunker stated the secondary administrative teams meet monthly for articulation. Next year, administrative teams will start articulation earlier in the year and look at AzMERIT data.

**Policy First Read** – Dr. Blanchard discussed the new policy to make our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs more robust and to assist our students with an alternative pathway. She mentioned the policy is modeled after other school policies, included involvement by CHS administration, CTE Coordinator, counselors, and has been reviewed by the county attorney.

IHAQ Career/Transition - To - Work Education (Work Experience Learning Opportunities)

No action required at this time, the policy will be on the January 2016 agenda for a second read.

**Revised Budget 2015-2016** – Ms. Karla Slovitsky, Director of Business Services, discussed the revisions/adjustments to the budget explaining the District can revise budgets multiple times prior to May 2016. Ms. Slovitsky summarized the adjustments to maintenance and override carryover, unrestricted capital, carryover amount for unrestricted capital and interest earned in unrestricted capital as well as the adjustments to district additional assistance and adjusted revenue control limit for unrestricted capital. Because of all adjustments, the M&O budget was reduced by \$2,686 and the Unrestricted Capital budget was increased by \$132,293.

Mr. D’Elena commented that the revised budget was very easy to understand.

Mr. D’Elena made a motion to adopt the Revised 2015-2016 District Expenditure Budget as presented, seconded by Ms. Bourgeois, and the motion carried 5-0.

**Inflation Funding Settlement Presentation** – Ms. Slovitsky presented on the inflation funding settlement which will be called Prop 123. She spoke about the history behind the lawsuit and the topics of key elements of the resolution, other fundamentals, why is it good for kids, next steps, and the base level per student and what the courts ruled. She noted that there is no specific requirement on how the money is spent, yet there are contingencies and triggers in place that would still protect the base level preset. Ms. Slovitsky explained that if voters approve Prop 123, and since the election is late May, districts can roll dollars into next fiscal year. Ms. Slovitsky explained that if passed, the District will get less than 1 million in 2016 and may be less depending on current year funding.

Ms. Slovitsky said it must be voter approved. If it fails, there is no additional funding and the lawsuit will resume.

Ms. Slovitsky emphasized that the May election needs to be treated in the same manner as an override or bond election and that A.R.S. 15-511 has to be followed.

**Adjournment** – Ms. Hargis made a motion to adjourn at 7:24 p.m., seconded by Ms. Bourgeois and the motion carried 5-0.

One or more Governing Board members will / may participate by telephonic or video communications. The Governing Board reserves the right to change the order of items on the agenda, unless a specific time is listed on the agenda.

The Governing Board reserves the right to move into executive session for legal advice with its attorneys, in person or by telephone, for any item listed on the agenda, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3).

J.O. Combs Unified School District #44 endeavors to make all public meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. Please call (480) 987-5300 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to request an accommodation to attend or participate in the public meeting.

Governing Board Members

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Shelly Hargis, President

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Kathy Bourgeois, Clerk

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Patricia J. Pinckard, Member

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Gary F. Kemp, Ed.D., Member

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Bob D'Elena, Member

Respectfully Submitted by:  
MaryLou Martinez  
Administrative Assistant  
Superintendent / Governing Board  
December 9, 2015