

Observer Corps Report, 11 June 2024

APS Board of Education meetings, 1 May, 15 May and 5 June 2024

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I “attend” the YouTube live stream of the meetings, and I report on topics most relevant to LWVCNM policy positions.

Public Forum. Recent issues of relevance for LWVCNM members include, first, the reaction to a drag performance at the Atrisco Heritage Academy prom. Several participants in the public forum were highly critical of the performance, and the principal of the school has, actually, been sanctioned:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/us/prom-drag-show-high-school-nm.html>

One participant at public forum, though, was concerned about the effect of the negative reaction to the performance on LGBTQ+ students, staff and faculty at the school. Other concerns voiced at the public forum include: violent behavior and bullying towards students on APS school grounds and how it is best sanctioned/prevented; difficult work visa situation for teachers who are foreign nationals; impact of new late start/end bell times on quality of elementary education. Board meeting rules do not allow for dialog between commenters and the Board, but the President affirms regularly that the Board does follow up afterwards.

The Board meetings proper have been mainly concerned with presenting and evaluating the progress monitoring reports required under the new Student Outcomes Focused Governance (SOFG) goals and guardrails adopted by APS last fall. Indeed, the SOFG approach requires the Board to spend the majority of their time discussing SOFG related issues. The details of the process are probably a bit tedious for casual observers. What is important for League members is that the evaluation and reporting process leads to a much higher degree of transparency and accountability on the part of the Board of Education and its interactions with the Superintendent’s office. More time is also spent in arranging community outreach and engagement activities. As part of their community engagement activities, board members participate in a number of community organizations: <https://www.aps.edu/about-us/board/board-work/community-engagement-and-outreach/participation-in-organizations>. The 5 June meeting spent most of the time discussing community engagement, with a focus on how best to reach underrepresented members of the APS community, in particular students covered by the Yazzie and Martinez ruling. Board President Gonzalez reminded the Board that 70-80% of APS students are in this group, so it is important for the planned engagement activities to find ways to elevate all the voices in the various subgroups covered by the ruling. Engagement must result in giving community members an active voice, not just passive participation.