

Observer Corps Report, 9 January 2024

APS Board of Education meetings, 6 and 20 December 2023, 3 January 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. The public forum has been lightly attended for these meetings, perhaps due to the holidays. The forum continued to be dominated by speakers concerned with books and classes that potentially discuss gender-identity and the availability of gender-affirming counselling in APS schools. Supporters of the LGBTQ+ community continue to speak out in favor of schools as a safe space. Some speakers protested the idea of banning books in schools that discuss discrimination and other sensitive issues. One speaker expressed concerns about gun violence in the schools. The President of the Carpenters’ Union expressed support for trades classes in APS schools, to provide non-college prep options.

The Board meetings proper in December took up various end of semester business. The continuance of the APS local labor board was approved. Community events were planned to promote the importance of Early Childhood education and improve enrollment in these programs. There were student presentations, involving students from elementary, middle and high schools, about how their school achievement has been improved due to the teaching methods promoted by the new Student Outcome Focused Governance goals. Events were planned to allow for community input in the search for the new APS superintendent. The 3 Board members whose terms came to end at the end of December said their farewells. One item of new business is that Mayor Keller attended the 6 December meeting to propose a collaborative partnership with APS in requesting State funding at the next legislative session to develop more school violence intervention programs. At the 3 January meeting, the 3 new Board members were sworn in, including the first indigenous Board member, Renalda Tome Warito. Elections to the Board offices were held, and Danielle Gonzalez was elected President; Renalda Tome Warito was elected Vice President; Janelle Astorga, another new member, was elected Secretary; Josefina Dominguez was elected chair of the policy committee and Crystal Tapia-Romero was re-elected as chair of the finance committee.