

RECORDS AND PROCEEDINGS

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Pulaski County Special School District was held at 925 East Dixon Road on September 14, 2010.

Opening
9/14/10

President Tim Clark called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Present: Mr. Tim Clark, Mr. Danny Gililland, Mrs. Sandra Sawyer, Mrs. Mildred Tatum, Ms. Gwen Williams, Mr. Charlie Wood and Superintendent Charles Hopson

Mr. Vasquez arrived at 7:20 pm.

Sierra Davis, representing Jacksonville High School, served as the student board member.

National Anthem
9/14/10

Raven Jackson, a fifth grade student at Clinton Elementary, sang the Star Spangled Banner.

Special Recognition
9/14/10

Certificate of Achievement

A Certificate of Achievement was presented to Arnold Drive Elementary for being recognized nationwide as a 2010 Blue Ribbon School for academic achievement.

Good Apple Award

Ms. Erma Cummings, a teacher at Mills University Studies High School, was presented the Good Apple Award.

Minutes
9/14/10

Mrs. Tatum moved, seconded by Mr. Gililland, approval of the minutes for the August 10 regular board meeting; August 16 and September 1 special board meetings. The motion carried.

Reports
9/14/10

Early Indicators of Fiscal Distress

Anita Farver, Chief Financial Officer, presented a report regarding early indicators of fiscal distress. This report to the Board of Directors is mandated by ADE Rules identifying and governing the Arkansas Fiscal Assessment and Accountability Program Section 12.00 – EARLY INDICATORS OF FISCAL DISTRESS.

First Semester Student Assignment Report

Dr. Brenda Bowles, Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Pupil Services, presented the First Semester Student Assignment Report.

Annual Recruitment Report

Dr. Brenda Bowles, Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Pupil Services, presented the Annual Recruitment Report.

Public Comments
9/14/10

Rizelle Aaron, chairman for the Jacksonville Chapter of the NAACP, voiced his concerns regarding his organization being excluded from the decisions made by the Jacksonville Education Foundation. He said this intentional exclusion caused great concern by their lack of willingness to allow the voices of civic leaders to be heard; and shows their contempt of the needs and opinions from minority groups. He stated that the NAACP supports Dr. Hopson and his aggressive acts to make Jackson-

ville equal or better than the rest of the district regarding academics and facilities. Mr. Aaron stated the NAACP does not support further negotiations of a separate Jacksonville district at this time. He requested the original decision of the board be honored and this item be tabled until a decision has been made pending the desegregation case, and the City of Jacksonville be equally represented based on the racial diversity of the city and its civic organizations.

Cheryl Carpenter voiced concerns regarding comments made by the district regarding teacher salaries and responsibilities.

Kelly Swope addressed concerns regarding the bell schedule which she did not support.

Terri Withers requested permission for the fourth grade classes at Landmark Elementary to be allowed to attend the Field Trip in Biloxi, Mississippi. This would not cost the district or schools.

Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mrs. Sawyer, permission to allow the Landmark Elementary fourth grade classes to attend the field trip in Biloxi, Mississippi. The motion carried.

PACT

Marty Nix, President of PACT, stated that she wanted to clarify that PACT had nothing to do with scheduling school board elections. She asked the board to take no action on New Business #1 and to review and consider carefully the personnel issue approving a family member. She commented that on September 9th the PACT Executive Board met with the Cabinet and thanked Dr. Hopson, Mr. Brewer, Mr. Brown, Ms. Laster, Mrs. Farver and Dr. Clowers. She expressed concerns over the lack of basic supplies in the schools for students and teachers. Ms. Nix talked about the outcome of the vote on September 18th regarding the Personnel Polices and Personnel Policies Committee with the vote being 221 for and 1,140 against. She referred to the article by Dawn Jackson regarding accusation of teachers' abuse of leave. She expressed concern over issues regarding administration taking leave. She commented on the legal expenses accrued by the district and how these issues could have been resolved without the cost. Ms. Nix reiterated her concerns over the boards' negotiation regarding the PACT contract which should have been resolved in December. She thanked Ms. Williams, Mrs. Sawyer, and Mr. Vasquez for their support of PACT. She stated that Ms. Williams had nothing to do regarding the accusations recently made and she could not wait until those involved were exposed. She stated that she and PACT would support Ms. Williams throughout this issue. She encouraged everyone in Zones 4 and 5 to vote during the school board elections.

PASS

Emery Chesterfield, President of PASS, thanked Dr. Bowles and Mrs. Farver for their timely response regarding information he requested. He asked the board to give PASS their recognition and contract back. He thanked Mrs. Sawyer, Mr. Vasquez, and Ms. Williams for their continued support for PASS and informed Ms. Williams that PASS would be there for her. Mr. Chesterfield encouraged everyone in Zones 4 and 5 to vote in the upcoming school board elections. He stated it was time for change. He

stated it did not make sense to lease buses, if the district had money in the bank, why not buy them.

Joshua and Knight
Intervenors,
PCSSD Equity/
Pupil Services

No representative from ODM, Joshua and Knight Intervenors, or PCSSD Equity and Pupil Services expressed a desire to address the board.

New Business
9/14/10

Salary Adjustment
Director of
District Athletics

Dr. Hopson requested this item to be pulled from the agenda.

2010-2011
Budget

Mrs. Tatum moved, seconded by Mr. Gililland, approval of the adoption of the 2010-2011 budget. It was confirmed no changes to the budget had been made since the board workshop on September 1, 2010. The motion carried.

Business
Procedure Manual
Out-of District

Mr. Gililland moved, seconded by Mrs. Tatum, approval of the Business Procedure Manual revisions regarding Out-of-District Travel. These revisions to the current procedures are requested to enhance compliance and improve processing of out-of-travel reimbursement for employees. The motion carried.

Business
Procedure
Manual - Travel
Reimbursement

Mrs. Tatum moved, seconded by Mrs. Sawyer, approval of Business Procedure Manual revisions regarding Local Travel Reimbursement. The motion carried.

Business
Procedure Manual-
Blanket P.O.

Mrs. Sawyer moved, seconded by Mr. Gililland, approval of Blanket Orders (i.e. Blanket Purchase Orders) to be deleted from district policy. The motion carried.

Business
Procedure Manual
Confirming P.O.

Mrs. Sawyer moved, seconded by Mrs. Tatum, approval of revisions regarding Confirming Purchase Orders. The revisions to the current procedures are to enhance compliance and improve processing of Purchase Orders. The motion carried.

Mr. Vasquez arrived at the meeting at 7:20 pm.

Procurement
Cards

Mr. Gililland moved, seconded by Mrs. Sawyer, to recommend approval of the procurement cards at cabinet level. After discussion, Mr. Gililland moved to amend his motion to have the administration research and bring more information regarding the procedures for the procurement cards to the next board meeting for reconsideration of approval. Mrs. Sawyer seconded the amendment. The motion carried.

Policy BID-R
First Reading

Revision of Board Policy, BID-R, Expense Policy for Board Members. First Reading – No action required.

Addendum:
Jacksonville
Education Fdn.
Repeal

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Clark, approval to repeal Resolution #3 passed July 2009 which states that the PCSSD Board of Directors hereby resolves to suspend negotiations toward detachment of territory to create a new Jacksonville district until Pulaski County Special School District is declared unitary. Attorney Patrick Wilson requested this repeal. After

lengthy discussions, Ms. Williams called for the question. A roll call vote was requested.

Roll Call Vote

Yes: Gililand, Wood

No: Clark, Sawyer, Tatum, Vasquez, Williams

Mr. Clark stated the reason he voted no was so he could bring this issue up again.

The motion failed.

Superintendent's

Comments

9/14/10

Dr. Hopson congratulated Arnold Drive Elementary for achieving and being recognized nationwide as a 2010 Blue Ribbon School for academic achievement; that this is the level of academic status he wants for all of the schools in the district. He recognized the efforts of Dr. Freeman regarding the state compliance issues at Northwood concerning licensure and facilities and reported that Northwood had passed with flying colors at the State Board meeting. He thanked Dr. Freeman for his leadership and the Cabinet's support to Dr. Freeman to achieve this accomplishment. Dr. Hopson said that he would be at Baker Elementary this week as part of his 100-day listening tour, and had been humbled to be able to talk to teachers, parents, and students regarding their passion and beliefs for this district. He stated the listening tour enables him to visit every school and at the completion of the tours, it will give him the opportunity to go before the board noting both the promises and challenges; and to give a summary of the findings specific to his vision as superintendent of this district. He said in order to lead this district effectively, he needs to go to where the teachers and students are and listen and observe in order to shape those visions instead of trying to do it from his office. He said that he had been so enriched and looked forward to future opportunities to listen to the hearts and souls of so many in the schools. Dr. Hopson stated the district had some of the best teachers in the country – and commended those that have shared their passion and beliefs in students. He thanked all the staff in the district for the trust they have given him in sharing their challenges and that he was pleased to be part of this district.

Board Member

Comments

9/14/10

Mr. Vasquez apologized for being late. He read a letter regarding the resignation of his wife from Jacksonville Elementary School. He told Dr. Hopson that he has his respect, that he believes he will do what is right and lead the district in putting children first. He said that he looked forward to working with him.

Mrs. Sawyer thanked Dr. Hopson and the Cabinet for their leadership and for their support in Zone 2. She encouraged her fellow board members to keep their eyes on the prize and instead of being distracted, to remember that our goals are to support Dr. Hopson and staff. She stated the board should consider the outcome of issues being brought before them and

if this was not done it would lead to the district going down the wrong path. She said that the timing is wrong – that Dr. Hopson is in the process of reevaluating his staff, putting people in the right places and making changes that will impact the district. She stated that she was not against or for the issue of the separation, but she needed more details and documentation and that is why she voted no. She stated the district did not need this additional task at this time.

Mr. Wood voiced his opinion of the union and stated he did not believe that the union was good for the district. He said there are hundreds of school districts in Arkansas that do not have unions and these problems, that they are better districts because of this and the our district needs to move in that direction . He expressed his opinion regarding the merit system – pay raise of 10% for the As and 5% for the Bs. He said regarding the issue of sick leave, that it had never been his intent to punish or deny those that had real problems. He stated that if teachers use accrued leave they did not have to give a reason and all he wanted was to provide a method to deny unreasonable abuses of leave. He stated that he did not think teachers are the source of all problems in the district, that there are excellent teachers in the district. He commented on the upcoming board election and the disrespect he and board members had received at previous meetings. Mr. Wood told Mr. Vasquez that what he did at the meeting tonight by reading the letter was very low class and that it was very disrespectful to the principal.

Mr. Clark said he would add to the comment made by Mrs. Sawyer regarding this not being the right time and he agreed. He said that decisions made recently had not been the right time, for example, the new iPads the board had just been issued. He stated for the record that he did not receive an iPad from the district, he was using his personal iPad. He stated Maumelle and the other schools he represented needed textbooks and the students were told that if they had internet at home, they did not need a book. He said that anyone that stated this should be fired. He requested Dr. Hopson to look into this issue, and even if there were financial problems, the main concern should be that the students have books. Mr. Clark said that he had called the district numerous times regarding the air conditioning problems in some of the schools. He said when teachers made a report about these issues no one would listen and then they would call him to take care of the situation. He stated that things had to change at the district, that he supports the teachers and when they have a problem, they are the ones that need to be listened to because they are on the front line with the students. He said that he respected Dr. Hopson's decision regarding the bell schedule, but that he had talked to teachers and they did not like the bell schedule. He stated everyone needed to look within them-selves and ask what is best for the students. He commented on an email he had sent to Dr. Hopson which outlined these issues. He said he will give him all the respect he deserves and he thinks he is doing a great job, but needs to look at issues closer and fix basic things.

Mrs. Tatum complimented Fuller Middle School and Mills University Studies teachers that open house this year was the best. She stated she did not attend the open house at College Station because she did not know about it in time, but the principal said there were over sixty-five parents that attended. Mrs. Tatum commented on the TAG team at Mills and how honored they were to have Senator Joyce Elliott attend. She said Senator Elliott did a wonderful job and presented over \$1100 to the TAG students. She told Dr. Hopson that it will take time and has appreciated working with him. She said she knew the task was not going to be easy and looked forward to him doing the best he can for the board and the district.

Ms. Williams thanked everyone for the support and condolences she received regarding her uncle's recent death.

She thanked everyone, especially Mrs. Dawn Jackson, Mr. Vasquez, Mrs. Sawyer, Reverend Michael White, Ms. Nix, Mrs. Roy, the Chesterfields and Dr. Hopson, for their support regarding the recent issue reported in the media. She said in the past fourteen years that she had tried to give her best to the kids and community. She stated the allegations were not true and she knows that everything will be resolved and taken care of. She told Mr. Wood that it was a low blow that he released the information to the paper without all the facts. She thanked the employees, patrons, and her work family for believing in her and that she had no intention of resigning from the board. She informed Mr. Lawson that her audit bill with the district has a zero balance.

Consent Agenda

9/14/10

Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mrs. Sawyer, approval of the consent agenda including the updated revision to the financial report. The motion carried. Ms. Williams voted no.

Those items included:

- Personnel--certified and support staff
- The bills for payment
- Award of Bids
- Financial Report

Hearings

9/14/10

Rafeea Williams
Certified/ Open

Mr. Wood excused himself from the meeting. Attorney Paul Blume, Hearing Officer, representing the District, called the hearing to order at 9:45 pm. Rafeea Williams, a certified teacher at Daisy Bates Elementary School, requested a hearing to appeal the Superintendent's recommendation of termination of her teaching contract. The reasons for this action were: repeated pattern of insubordination, incompetent performance, conduct which materially interferes with the continued performance of her duties, repeated and material neglect of duty, failure to follow reasonable written regulations and policies, and conduct unbecoming a professional teacher. Ms. Williams requested the hearing to be held in open session and represented herself. Paul Blume, Attorney at Law, served as the Hearing Officer. Ms. Deborah Coley, Executive Director of Human Resources,

represented Pulaski County Special School District. After all testimony, Mrs. Tatum moved to go into executive session at 11:10 pm. The meeting reconvened at 11:30 pm.

Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mr. Vasquez, that the school board find that reason No. 1 set forth in the recommended termination of the employment contract of Ms. Rafeea Williams is not true. The motion carried.

Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mr. Vasquez, that the school board find that reason No. 2 set forth in the recommended termination of the employment contract of Ms. Rafeea Williams is not true. The motion carried.

Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mr. Vasquez, that the school board find that reason No. 3 set forth in the recommended termination of the employment contract of Ms. Rafeea Williams is true. The motion carried.

Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mr. Vasquez, that the school board find that reason No. 4 set forth in the recommended termination of the employment contract of Ms. Rafeea Williams is true. The motion carried.

Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mr. Vasquez, that the school board accept the superintendent's recommendation that the employment contract of Ms. Rafeea Williams be terminated. The motion carried.

Lydia Lee
Support Staff
Closed

Attorney Paul Blume, Hearing Officer, representing the District, called the hearing to order at 11:35 pm. Lydia Lee, secretary to the Director of Special Education, requested a hearing to appeal the Superintendent's recommendation of termination of her contract. The reasons for this action were: inefficiency, failure to follow reasonable written regulations and policies, insubordination, and conduct unbecoming a professional employee. Ms. Lee requested the hearing to be held during closed session. Paul Blume, Attorney at Law, served as the Hearing Officer. Ms. Lee represented herself. Deborah Coley, Executive Director of Human Resources, represented Pulaski County Special School District. Mr. Clark excused himself from the meeting. After all testimony, Mr. Vasquez moved to go into executive session at 12:10 am. The meeting reconvened at 12:30 am.

Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mrs. Tatum, to accept the superintendent's recommendation that the employment contract of Ms. Lydia Lee be terminated. The motion carried.

All actions taken during the closed hearing were affirmed in open session.

Adjournment
9/14/10

Mrs. Tatum moved, seconded by Mr. Vasquez, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 12:35 am.

Board President

Board Secretary