



LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT
810 WEST MARKHAM STREET
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201

MINUTES
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, July 22, 2014

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held a Special Board Meeting on Tuesday, July 22, 2014, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Greg Adams presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Greg Adams
Norma Johnson
C. E. McAdoo
Jody Carreiro

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dianne Curry
Leslie Fiskens
Tara Shephard

ALSO PRESENT:

Dexter Suggs, Superintendent of Schools
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes
Stephanie Branton, Court Reporter

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mr. Adams called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Four members of the Board were present; Ms. Curry, Ms. Fiskens and Ms. Shephard were absent.

II. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The meeting was called for the purpose of conducting an employee hearing.

III. ACTION AGENDA

A. Employee Hearing

The LRSD was represented by Attorney Chris Heller. The employee, <CR>, was represented by Attorney Mark Burnette. <The employee> was recommended for non-renewal based on poor performance. Principal Dexter Booth and Laura Beth Arnold, lead teacher for social studies curriculum, followed the designated Professional Teacher Appraisal System (PTAS), to assist <the employee> in instructional strategies and processes for classroom performance.

There was discussion between the attorneys regarding the specific terms of the recommendation for terminating the employee's contract. Mr. McAdoo moved to suspend the hearing based on the procedural concerns expressed. The motion failed due to lack of second.

Jordan Eason, employee relations specialist, was called as the first witness for the LRSD. Ms. Eason responded to questions regarding her responsibilities for assisting teachers and administrators in following the various employee contracts. It had been her responsibility to document the various support systems provided to <the employee>. The file from Ms. Eason demonstrated teacher performance checklists, classroom observations conducted by the principal, and other communications between <the employee> and Dr. Booth.

Dr. Dexter Booth, principal of Parkview Magnet High School, was asked to explain to the board the reasons for the recommendation to terminate <the employee>. He was also asked to explain the steps taken to assist the employee through the PTAS appraisal. Dr. Booth specifically stated he was most concerned about the high number of requests from parents to have their students removed from <the employee's> classes and the unusually high failure rate of the students. By the end of the school term, there were only 79 students remaining assigned to <the employee's> classes. Another concern was the high number of students referred for disciplinary infractions and the unusually high number of complaints from parents and students based on unfair grading practices. Dr. Booth reported to the board his recommendation to terminate <the employee> was based on these factors, and on the fact that two years of support provided under PTAS, did not result in improvement of <the employee's> classroom instructional effectiveness. Dr. Booth closed his comments by stating, "<the employee> is an incompetent teacher."

Laura Beth Arnold was assigned to work with <the employee> during the PTAS assistance phase. She spoke to the board regarding his failure to follow through with student assignments, failure to respond to questions from students, and failure to follow the curriculum provided by the social studies curriculum maps. She observed many times in his classroom, and copies of the observation notes were provided for the board's review. In efforts to assist <the employee> Ms. Arnold printed out the curriculum maps and offered professional development. She accompanied <the employee> to visit classrooms at McClellan and Fair to observe teachers who were demonstrating techniques for following the curriculum. Her efforts did not result in any performance improvement.

<The employee> reported he was a ninth grade civics teacher at Parkview and a baseball coach at McClellan. He responded to questions regarding the documentation presented by Dr. Booth, Ms. Eason and Ms. Arnold regarding his poor performance as an instructor. During questioning by his attorney, <the employee> admitted he "needs to do something different." He presented information on the number of assignments missing from his first semester students. He alleged poor student behavior and lack of achievement was more their fault than his. He said the failures in his class were for not being attentive in class, not turning in assignments, and coming to class with their pants "sagging."

Mr. Burnette appealed to the board to consider <the employee's> 26 years of experience in the classroom. He expressed belief that the district failed to provide sufficient support for <the employee> during the PTAS remedial process. "The district is remiss in accepting a recommendation to terminate his contract at this point."

The board convened an executive session at 10:30 p.m.; they returned from executive session at 11:05 p.m.

Mr. Adams noted the two matters which were to be decided:

1. <The employee> failed to improve in the specified PTAS critical areas of concern to a level of proficiency. The following areas of concern contained in the individual Improvement Plan were still in existence for <the employee's> teacher performance:
 - a. Assessing student learning
 - b. Establishing a culture for learning, and
 - c. Communicating clearly and accurately.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion that these accusations were proven. The motion was seconded by Ms. Johnson, and it **carried 3-1**, with Mr. McAdoo voting no.

2. Based on the written conclusions set forth in the recommendation for termination, the board was asked to either uphold, reject or modify the Superintendent's recommendation.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to uphold the superintendent's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Johnson, and it **carried 3-1**, with Mr. McAdoo voting no.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:08 p.m.

APPROVED: 08-28-14

Originals Signed by:
Greg Adams, President
C. E. McAdoo, Secretary