



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

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING  
October 13, 2011**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held a special board meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 13, 2011, in the boardroom of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Melanie Fox presided.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Melanie Fox  
Jody Carreiro  
Michael Nellums  
Greg Adams  
Charles Armstrong  
Dianne Curry  
Norma Jean Johnson

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Morris Holmes, Superintendent of Schools  
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes  
Stephanie Branton, Court Reporter

**I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Ms. Fox called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All members of the board were present at roll call.

**PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

The meeting was called for the purpose of conducting an employee hearing. The hearing was closed at the request of the employee, <employee's name removed for public viewing>. Attorney Arkie Byrd represented the employee; Attorney Khayyam Eddings represented the district.

Superintendent Holmes recommended termination of <employee's name> and a copy of the termination letter was provided for the board's review and consideration.

<Employee's name> last assignment was at Washington Elementary School. During her tenure in the Little Rock School District, she had been assigned to teach at M. L. King Elementary, Mitchell Elementary, Baseline Elementary, Western Hills Elementary, and Washington Elementary.

A brief opening by Attorney Eddings revealed <employee name> had been on notice for questionable behaviors since the 1996-97 school year when she taught at Mitchell Elementary School. He reported on-going reports of conflicts with students and parents which escalated in severity over the course of fifteen years.

Attorney Arkie Byrd reported she had been retained by the Little Rock Education Association to represent <employee name> in this hearing. She thanked the board for providing the hearing for <employee name> to defend herself against the charges lodged against her. She stated <employee name> would deny the allegations of inappropriately touching a student, and although there were some incidents that were questionable in judgment, she didn't believe anything could be shown that would warrant termination.

Attorney Eddings called Lillie Scull as the first witness for the LRSD. Ms. Scull is currently the principal at Romine Elementary School; however in the 1996-97 school year she was principal at Mitchell Elementary. Ms. Scull was asked to review the final evaluation appraisal document for <employee name> for that school year. It was noted she recommended improvements in fulfilling a responsibility to parents and students in the areas of communications and improving interpersonal relationships with coworkers. Some of the reported incidents included embarrassing and demeaning students in front of the class and being confrontational and hostile to parents.

After allegations that a student had been pinched by <employee name>, the student was removed from her class and assigned to another teacher. Ms. Scull reported investigating and providing follow up to the warnings with a formal reprimand. In response to questions from Ms. Byrd, Ms. Scull reported she had requested <employee name> be moved involuntarily from Mitchell to another school in lieu of recommending termination.

Eleanor Cox, principal at Baseline Elementary School for 17 years, reviewed incidents from the 2005-2006 school year, when <employee name> taught first and second grade. Ms. Cox reported she had investigated complaints from students, parents, and staff regarding various inappropriate behaviors. Ms. Cox stated that Shantelle Fells, a paraprofessional at Baseline, had first brought to her attention that <employee name> had pushed and hit some children. <Employee name> and Ms. Fells argued about the incident in front of students, and Ms. Cox stated she had written a letter of reprimand regarding this and several other incidents. After another altercation between Ms. Cox and <employee name> at the school, Ms. Cox started the due process steps to have <employee name> removed from Baseline. She was sent home for five days without pay for the incident with the students. Ms. Cox reported <employee name> had filed numerous grievances against her.

<AS>, parent of <MF>, was called and asked to relay incidents from the time her son was a student at Western Hills. <employee name> was his teacher in the second grade. Ms. S expressed concern after first meeting <employee name> where she was told she expected M to be a “problem child,” was one of “those types of kids,” and was “unteachable.” Ms. S reported visiting the classroom often because of concerns regarding discipline and classroom management. She stated M was so intimidated by <employee name> that he was afraid to report her behaviors.

Ms. S discussed a conference she held with Principal Scott Morgan where <employee name> lost her temper, yelling and calling the student “bad.” Ms. S stated she had removed her child from the LRSD because of <employee name> and that she had eventually filed a police report against <employee name> for harassment and for mental abuse.

MF, now a fifth grade student at Crystal Hill Elementary, reported remembering <employee name> as his second grade teacher at Western Hills. He responded to questions regarding <employee name>’s actions toward him when he was in her class.

JB, parent of MB, testified regarding <employee name>’ behaviors when she was M’s second grade teacher. Her daughter was afraid to go to school, acted out and cried about having to go. She admitted to her mother that <employee name> had pulled her hair and had pinched other students. Ms. B stated she had held a conference with the principal regarding M and had reported her daughter was traumatized by her teacher. M currently attends Western Hills and has had no other behavior problems since being removed from <employee name>’ classroom.

SN, parent of AN, reported <employee name> was her child’s second grade teacher at Western Hills. Ms. N and her mother visited <employee name>’s classroom after her daughter reported the teacher was yelling at students, bumping into her chair while she was yelling, telling a student with ADHD that she had “imaginary friends,” and calling her child a liar in front of the class. Ms. N stated <employee name> wouldn’t respond to questions regarding incidents of hair pulling. Ms. N was highly upset about the physical contact and abuse of students in the classroom, and requested to have her child removed from <employee name>’s class. The request wasn’t granted however, and eventually <employee name> filed a police complaint against Ms. N.

BJ, grandparent of a student at Western Hills, reported her grandson had come home from school with a lump on his arm where <employee name> had pinched him. <employee name> had a number of ADHD students in her class, and Ms. J stated the teacher would “run them” on the playground so that they could run off some steam. She reported her grandson had fallen on the playground and hit his head. He came home from school with a large lump on his forehead which was not treated at school or reported to the parent by anyone at the school. Ms. J had witnessed <employee name> pulling a student by the hair and shoving her in her seat. She had reported the incidents to the principal.

SN, parent of a student at Washington Elementary School, reported she had requested her son be moved from <employee name>’ classroom at Washington Elementary

School. <employee name> had accused her child of stealing hand sanitizer. Her son was assigned to the ALC for a period of time, and when he returned to Washington she asked for him to be placed in another classroom. She reported once he was assigned to another teacher, he didn't have any other behavioral problems. She reported <employee name> had filed a police report against her son, accusing him of threatening her. <employee name> had told Ms. N that most of the children in her classroom were "medicated and . . . discipline problems."

Scott Morgan, principal of Western Hills, reported receiving a letter from SH regarding an incident in <employee name>' classroom. Mr. H's son was very high achieving, loved school, and had always done well in class. S's parents requested a transfer to another teacher's class because of his complete turnaround in attitude about attending school.

Mr. Morgan was questioned about DC, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student who had been assigned to <employee name>' class in second grade. D had related an incident regarding <employee name> bringing students to the office and shoving D into a chair in front of the office. He stated the school secretary had witnessed the incident. In another incident, a second grade student had reported to Mr. Morgan that <employee name> had thrown her backpack in the garbage can.

Mr. Morgan recommended termination of employment for <employee name>. He stated hearings were scheduled and postponed a number of times, and instead of termination, <employee name> was reassigned to Washington Elementary. He reported a number of instances regarding students being abused, pushed, shoved and having their hair pulled and yanked. He requested an investigation by the district's safety and security department, and they had interviewed every student in <employee name>' class. Their investigation resulted in his recommendation for termination.

Katherine Snyder, principal of Washington Elementary School, discussed concerns regarding whether a student's 504 plan was being followed in <employee name>' class. The student's grandmother requested a 504 conference and the team worked on developing a behavior intervention plan. The grandmother requested transfer to another class, but due to class-size reduction strategies, they were unable to grant that request. As a result, the grandmother transferred her child to another school.

In another instance, Ms. Snyder reported a parent's concerns which led her to place <employee name> on administrative leave. Ms. Snyder reported that after several parents requested their children be moved from <employee name>'s class she decided to place <employee name> on administrative leave.

Attorney Byrd called witnesses for <employee name>:

TM, parent of a student who attended Western Hills Elementary, reported <employee name> was good with her child, admitting the student could sometimes be a behavior problem. She expressed belief that <employee name> was good for her child, and she was satisfied because her student was bringing home good grades. She was pleased with <employee name> as a teacher.

Dr. Geraldine Mallette reported she had worked with <employee name>' students at Western Hills as a Title I teacher. She worked one-on-one with students on specific skills and in the after school tutoring program. She reported spending at least an hour every day in <employee name>' classroom. She stated belief that <employee name> was a good teacher, a professional and structured. She never witnessed <employee name> being rude to parents or using physical discipline with students. She described a special award program <employee name> held for her students to help celebrate their success at the end of the school year. Dr. Mallette had never heard <employee name> degrade or abuse children and had never heard anyone else report this type of behavior.

Mark Cebulski, Uniserve Director and a representative with the Little Rock Education Association reported he had participated in the administrative leave situation at Washington Elementary for <employee name>. He reported trying to facilitate a resolution over the summer, and he reviewed the number of times conferences and hearings were scheduled and postponed.

The board recessed the hearing at 10:15 p.m. The hearing was scheduled to be continued on Thursday, October 27, immediately following the regular board meeting.

APPROVED: 11-17-11

Originals Signed by:  
Jody Carreiro, President  
Charles Armstrong, Secretary