

Earle School District
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Central Office Boardroom
November 19, 2015
5:00 PM

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Thursday, November 19, 2015. Those present were: Mr. E. Cox, Mr. A. Berry (who joined the meeting in progress), Mrs. S. Johnson and Mrs. A. Weatherspoon. *(Board members reviewed the previous month's minutes and there were no questions or concerns with regard to the minutes. Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to accept the minutes. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*

Mr. E. Cox: "We will now have the financial report from Mr. Hicks."

Mr. Hicks: "We ended October with slightly over \$700,000 as a legal balance."

Mr. E. Cox: "Does anyone have any questions for Mr. Hicks regarding the financial report?" *(There were no questions for Mr. Hicks).*

Mr. E. Cox: "If not, the next topics for discussion will be brought by Mr. Nicks."

Mr. Nicks: "Each year we have to approve the school's Master Plan, and what the Master Plan is, let me bring to your attention, is the facilities aspect of the Department of Education." "That's where they look at all your buildings, any construction projects that you have, and any long-range plans that you may have for the facilities. At this point, we don't have anything on the agenda for construction. We had scheduled a new elementary school in the 2017-19 funding cycle. I just don't see ... I know we're not going to get there. We tried to apply for funding. They'll fund 75% of it. The only problem is with that building costing four million dollars, we've got to come up with a million dollars in local revenue. We just don't have the carryover in any building fund for that; and until we can see a clearer way, we're going to work with the Legislature to seek full funding like other districts at our level, for a facility." "Other than that, we still have the driveway and the canopies in the Master Plan for the next cycle. But basically, that's where we are and we'll need a vote to approve the Master Plan as proposed." "You can go online and look at it if you have any questions or concerns." *(Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to accept the Master Plan as proposed by the Superintendent. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mr. E. Cox seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*

Mr. Nicks: "The AdvancED visit – let me tell you what AdvancEd is about, we talked about it earlier on. AdvancED is the old North Central Association Accreditation program. The high school has been North Central accredited since 1925. Now, the elementary has never been North Central accredited. What we're doing now is trying to

get the District to become fully accredited; which means that the elementary and high school will be fully AdvancED accredited – meaning that the district overall will be AdvancEd accredited. What's going to happen is – we've already submitted all the preliminary plans and documentation for the visit. We finished that up today, as a matter of fact. All of that has been submitted.” *(At this point, Mr. Berry joined the meeting in progress).* “On December 6th, which is a Sunday, the AdvancEd team, made up of five members, will come to the District. We will meet them over at the Hampton Inn in Marion where they will be staying for their three-day visit. And, of course, we have to bear all the expenses.” “On Monday morning, they will to the District; some to the central office to interview board members, some to the high school and others to the elementary. The next day, Tuesday, they will question parents, students, faculty and staff. They will interview every board member. They will interview you in two's so that they won't go past a quorum. Also, you need to be available on the ninth, around lunchtime, so put that on your calendar. On that Monday, maybe we'll have lunch here for the team and for the board members, so they'll be here, they'll visit, they'll make all their documentation; they're going to check on the curriculum, the facilities, the transportation, extracurricular, every aspect of school life to determine if we are deserving of being accredited by the AdvancED people.” “They will be ready to caucus with me on the ninth, around noon. Now, if we are deemed worthy of AdvancED accreditation, in the fall of 2016, they will award us our accreditation status and the Board will have to go to Little Rock for a ceremony.” “ So that is what the AdvancEd process is all about. I just need you to make yourselves available on those dates.” “Are there any questions or concerns?” *(There were no questions).*

Mr. Nicks: “The District Strategic Plan – This is the overall plan we're looking for the next five years. We have looked at the strategic plan; I'm in the process of revising it. I'm going to send you a copy of it before the next board meeting, let you review it, so that at the next board meeting we can have an open and frank discussion with the principals with regard to the direction of the District team; so look for that and we'll get that out to you. We have not revised it in three or four years and it's time for a revision. Part of the AdvancEd process asks that we present a revised plan, so I'm going to do that and get that to you so that you can read through it and if there are things that you think need to be changed or addressed, we can address it so that on January 1st, we can start out under the new plan and proceed forward.”

Mr. Nicks: “Fall break starts tomorrow at two o'clock. At 1:30, the kids will be dismissed and the teachers leave at 2:00 PM. We're out all next week. I will be around Monday and Tuesday if you should need something or something comes up. We will be out of town Wednesday and Thursday, and probably back in town on Friday.” “If you need to, call me and leave me a message and I promise I'll get back with you.”

Mr. Nicks: “School board fall meeting – I believe you all go down on the eighth, so it won't interfere with the AdvancED interviews, which will be done on the seventh. If you still want to go, it's not too late to get you registered and your hotel. It might not be in the building where the meeting is, but we'll try to get you close enough where you can walk

over to it.” “If you want to do that, let me know because I noticed that not everybody has signed up to go.”

Mr. Nicks: “And the final thing we have is two resignations to consider. I think we'll take these individually. Ms. Whittington, a special ed. teacher at the high school, has some health problems and has been kind of forced to resign. She won't be able to make it out here everyday. We hate to lose a teacher. She has done her due diligence; we're going to let her go home.” “And the good news is that we don't have to replace her. If push comes to shove and we have to hire an aide, I will. I'm trying not to do that. Every dollar we save we can roll onto that ending balance.” “I need a motion to accept this resignation.” *(Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to accept Ms. Whittington's resignation. Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Weatherspoon seconded. The motion carried unanimously).* “The other resignation is Cantrell McGee. She's trying to leave here at the end of the year. She's retiring after forty-one years.” *(A brief discussion was held wherein Board members made kind remarks toward Mrs. McGee's retirement. Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to accept Cantrell McGee's request for retirement. Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Weatherspoon seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*

Mr. Nicks: “That's all I have unless you all have something else. We're getting a little better and that's all we're trying to do. But, I'm cautioning you now, come March we'll have another RIF, reduction in force, we've got to cut where we can. Even with the few students we've gained we're still about where we were last year. That tells you we lost thirty kids this year. We've got to cut back, so keep that in mind. We're just trying to stay where we are, and I promise you we picked up thirty kids; so you know where we would be otherwise.”

Mr. E. Cox: “Can we get a motion to adjourn?” *(Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 5:38 PM.*


Board President


Board Secretary

12-2-15

Date

Earle School District
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Central Office Boardroom
December 17, 2015
5:00 PM

The Earle School District Board of Directors conducted its regular meeting on Thursday, December 17, 2015, at 5:00 PM. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order with the following members present: Mr. E. Cox, Mrs. Sarah Johnson, Mrs. April Weatherspoon, and Mr. Arthur Berry. *(After the quorum was established, Mr. E. Cox asked if everyone had reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting, and if there were any questions. There were no questions, additions or concerns. Board President, Mr. Cox, asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.)*

Mr. E. Cox: “Now we will have the financial report by Mr. Hicks.”

Mr. Hicks: “We ended the month of November with a legal balance of just over \$700,000, which is where we expected to be.” *(There were no questions concerning the financial report).*

Mr. E. Cox: “The remaining topics will be brought by the Superintendent.”

Mr. Hicks: “I have given you a copy of the information on the young lady that we’ve interviewed for School Improvement Specialist; the one we talked about earlier in the year. We have to have her in place by the second semester, which starts in January. I just wanted to let you know that we did interview her with the committee and the committee gave the recommendation that we hire Mrs. Regina Williams as School Improvement Specialist. I need a motion that we do that, unless of course you have questions. The salary will be determined on the salary schedule, plus index; and I can tell you that it will be one of the higher salaries in the district.” *(Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously to hire Mrs. Regina Williams as School Improvement Specialist for the Earle School District).*


Mr. Nicks: “The second item is a first grade teacher. Now, I’ll tell you why I have it on there in that way. We are right now, currently, sitting at 50 students in first grade. That is dead square where we must be. If we get another student, we are mandated to hire another teacher. Now, I know how Christmas is and I know how transient people are at this time of year. I need to be prepared to hire a teacher between now and the first of January, if the need arises. If we come back in January, we won’t have a board meeting until the third Thursday in the month. If we come back on January 5th, and we need a first grade teacher, I need to be able to go ahead and hire that teacher based on our numbers. And I’ll need a motion to do so.” *(Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to hire a first grade teacher, if necessary. Mr. Berry motioned, Mrs. Johnson seconded and the motion carried).*

Mr. Nicks: “All of you were here for the AdvancED process, except for you, Mrs. Weatherspoon, and that went really well. I want to give you a brief update. I talked with Kenny Pennington yesterday. The team has not sent out the final results, but they did make the

recommendation for accreditation. You all saw that. So, I have to give the teachers, the principals, and curriculum people a hand for working through that process; making sure that everything went well. We've got quite a bit of improvement to do, but we'll get on that as soon as they send us what we need and we'll be moving forward. Next September, we'll go down to Little Rock at their State meeting, and we'll get our accreditation plaque at that time. I'll let you know when that comes about."

Mr. Nicks: "Winter break comes up next week. Starting tomorrow and going through the fifth of January. I will be in town if something comes up; I'm not going anywhere. We're going to shut everything down. The cleaning crew will come in and do some waxing and things like that. Other than that, we'll be pretty much shut down." "Two things I wanted to mention to you before we adjourn this meeting and you can ask questions. I want to get this on the record. Back in May, I asked you all to approve a loan for four hundred thousand dollars. Do you all remember that?" "Somehow or other, either the auditors did not catch it, or whatever, but I wanted to make you are aware that we did borrow that money. We have paid that money back because we didn't need it. But we couldn't get it for the ten-year period that we thought we could get it. So, I want to make sure that this is in the minutes - that you were aware of that situation - in case I can't go back and clearly delineate it in the minutes that this is what happened. The other thing is overtime. We've paid over-time to different individuals over a period of time. They're telling me that anytime that we do pay over-time we have to come back to the Board and ask permission. Now, that's never been the case before. So, anytime there is overtime - remember, we had this conversation during the summer about people who work extended day- that is not overtime. Tutoring or driving the bus is not overtime. We eliminated over-time at that point, if you'll remember and we've not had anyone with overtime. But I wanted to make you aware that, any over-time going forward, I will be coming to you and asking you for overtime for an individual, or a group of individuals, or anything that goes beyond the designated salary. That does not require a motion or anything but I do think we needed to have brought up these issues on that policy." "Other than that, that's all I have. If you have questions, I'll address those. I almost hate to have you come over, but we had to get this meeting in." "We will be looking at our District Strategic Plan when we come back. We've got to look at the long-range forecast of what we're going to do; and we'll look at that when we come back and start working on that. I'll have a group of teachers who will work on the planning aspect so we can talk about some things - where we want to be five years from now. That will go along with the AdvancEd report that we're doing so we can have all the academic and strategic plans so we can move forward."

Mr. Nicks: "You know that this is Mrs. McGee's last week, tomorrow is her last day. We're very pleased to have had her work here. She has been very loyal and dedicated to her job and I appreciate that." "We will be in contact. I'm going to try and get her to help me out from time to time on a voluntary basis; especially at Board meetings, cookie baking, and whatever else we have going on." *(Mrs. McGee expressed her appreciation to Mr. Nicks and the Board members for their kindnesses during her employment at the District. They, in turn, offered kind words and good wishes. Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned, Mr. Berry seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:33 PM).*


Board President


Board Secretary

1-4-16
Date