

**Earle School District**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Central Office Boardroom**  
**January 23, 2015**  
**5:00 PM**

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Saturday, January 24, 2015 at 5:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order with the following members in attendance: Mr. E. Cox, Mr. C. Cox, Mrs. S. Johnson, Mrs. A. Weatherspoon, and Mr. A. Berry. *(Members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting and if there were any questions or corrections. There were no questions or additions. Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mr. C. Cox seconded. The motion passed unanimously).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “We will now have the financial report by Mr. Hicks.”

**Mr. Hicks:** “We ended the month of December with a legal balance of \$724,000. We have had significant expenses to cover for the month and should expect to see our balance stabilize over the next months.” *(There were no questions for Mr. Hicks with regard to the financial report).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Now we will have the remaining topics from Mr. Nicks, the superintendent.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “I have the mayor's proclamation on the end of the agenda, but we're at a point where we need to go ahead and formally recognize Ms. Carolyn Jones but we've been held up and I'd like to move that to the top of the meeting. As you well know, we've been fortunate to have a newly elected mayor in the city, the first woman mayor in the history of the city. Being one of the largest employers in the city, we'd like to extend to her our congratulations, and if the Board would in the form of a motion, we'd like to proclaim and recognize the Honorable Carolyn Jones as the newly elected mayor of the city of Earle.” “We would certainly like to extend to her this plaque on that behalf and ask her to have a few words to say.”/

**Mr. E. Cox:** “On behalf of the Earle School District, we'd like to entertain a motion to give Ms. Carolyn Jones a proclamation for making history as the first female, and African-American female, elected as mayor of the city of Earle.” *(Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mrs. Weatherspoon seconded the motion to present the plaque to Ms. Jones in recognition of her outstanding accomplishment, The motion carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “Mayor Jones, if you would please come forward. Also, I'd like to get a picture to be published in the newspaper.” *(Board members and Mayor Jones assembled for a group photograph).*

**Mayor Jones:** “Thank you for the proclamation. I am really looking forward to working with the school. When I think of Earle, I think of a thriving city like when I was growing up. Maybe it will never be like that again because things have gotten so out of hand, but we can work to try to make it like that. All of you who grew up in Earle know how it was – back in the day.” “It was a clean town, a nice town. But I know that with drugs, etc., it's going to be hard to do that.” *(Mayor Jones concluded with suggestions regarding the use of backpacks for students that do not visibly display contents, student behaviors that need addressing, and comments indicating her willingness to work hard to perform effectively in her new role as mayor and her intent to cooperate with our school system to develop more opportunities for the youth of Earle. Ms. Jones was excused from the meeting to pursue other activities for the evening and the meeting continued).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “We thank you for coming out tonight and again, congratulations. We look forward to working with you, Mayor Jones.” *(The meeting attendees gave Ms. Jones a round of applause as she again thanked the Board for the proclamation and plaque as she was leaving).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “The rest of the agenda is just basically for your information to bring you up to date on where we are. The after school program – we've pretty much wrapped up after school tutoring in the elementary. Their testing starts early, so their tutoring has pretty much run its course. The only exception is the special needs testing and tutoring.” “The high school tests later on in the year. They're just starting their after school program this coming week. They're going to rotate every three or four weeks, depending on the needs of the students and the tests that are coming up. But we'll talk about that.” “I put in your packets the spring testing schedule. This is how serious this has gotten. If you'll look at the testing schedule, you'll see it basically starts in February – the practice exam – and it runs all the way through May. Now, that's the spring testing schedule, it's front and back.” “That's how much testing that they're asking your children to do each and every year. I didn't think you were aware of how much we test. Now – let me bring you up to date on this, all of our tests are computerized. This is the first time ever that the students have taken the standardized tests on computers; all the way through. I'm proud to say that we have every campus fully equipped to handle the testing load that we're going to have. We're one of the very few schools in the State that are test-ready as of right now. So, I have to give Mr. Lockett a lot of credit. He's getting us to that point and we've invested a lot of money in getting the proper machines up and running. We have three new labs at the high school, two new labs on the elementary campus and we're updating the old lab of Mrs. Peacock's, so we're up and ready and we can handle about seventy kids per grade in that testing window. So, we're excited and we're hoping that the kids do well. Whenever there's a transition here – common core and the PARCC Assessment – now, at the end of the year, this is the first time we'll do the PARCC Assessment. The sad part is that they don't have the measurements from the old Benchmark exams to PARCC Assessment, so we're going to see how it goes at the end of the year and we will keep you up to date with that.” “Testing is real – it's here and we've got to make sure that we're ready, so anytime you're out, just check into the schools and see where things are.” “But I think we're in great shape. It's up to the students now, we've got all the mechanics in place and the logistics worked out.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “The School Board Association meeting is in March. It's in Nashville and the dates are March 21-23, 2015; I believe it's a weekend, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. So, if you want to go, let us know. This is the national meeting, the regional is in the summer. I think it's going to be in Biloxi.” But the national is in Nashville and we have to start getting booked pretty soon, so if you want to go just let us know.” “I just wanted to bring that to you.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Annexation – I talked briefly about Hughes and what's going on there. I met with Ms. Owens a couple of times and we're not able to come to any agreement on anything as far as what we can do and what I would do, to go to the State Board with; nothing that I feel you all would be comfortable with. So what we are going to do is sit idly by and let them work out whatever deal they can elsewhere and see what happens.” “If by some miracle they end sending part of those kids to Earle, we'll gladly take them, but we're just not in a position to be bargaining and making promises that we may not be able to keep. Of course I'm listening; I'm open and I'm talking to people in the community down there and you never know what happens when it gets into the State Board's hands. We won't know that until after the February State Board meeting.” “They'll make a decision based on the plan that Hughes proposes – if the State Board accepts it – and it probably won't include us in any way. If the State Board rejects that plan, then the State Board will make a decision and we may be considered in that annexation.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “That's basically all I have. Now this is January, my contract extension month, and it's up to you all if you want to vote to extend it. I'm currently employed through 2016-17. If you extend it, I'll be employed through 2017-2018. It's up to you all. If you want to go into Executive Session to discuss it, I will gladly step out...” *(Mr. E. Cox interrupted asking for a motion to extend the Superintendent's contract through 2017-2018. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded the motion to extend the contract. The motion carried unanimously).*

*(Mr. Nicks thanked the Board and remarked that he will continue to give the best he has to his position as Superintendent).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “That's all I have. If you all have any questions or concerns, we will address those.” *(Mrs. Johnson asked if the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC After-school program was included in the tutoring programs mentioned earlier. Mr. Nicks replied that it is an entirely different program that runs year-round. There was no further business and Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mr. C. Cox seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:58 PM).*

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*Eric Coy*

Board President

*Arthur Borczyk*

Board Secretary

*1-27-15*

Date

**Earle School District**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Central Office Boardroom**  
**February 21, 2015**  
**5:00 PM**

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Saturday, February 21, 2015, at 5:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order with the following members in attendance: Mr. E. Cox, Mrs. S. Johnson, Mrs. A. Weatherspoon, and Mr. A. Berry. *(Members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting and if there were any questions or corrections. There were no questions or additions. Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion passed unanimously).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “We will now have the financial report by Mr. Hicks.”

**Mr. Hicks:** “We ended the month of January with a legal balance of \$805,000. This pretty much comes in line with where we want to be with a projected ending balance of around \$850,000.” *(Mr. E. Cox asked if there were any questions for Mr. Hicks. There were no questions regarding the financial report).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Now we will have the remaining topics brought by the superintendent, Mr. Nicks.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Very quickly, there are a few items I want to bring to your attention. Number one, you know the weather has been bad here lately and we've missed some days from school. I almost didn't call school off on Monday because it was not doing anything at my house ten miles up the road. I saw on the news that people were closing school left and right so I went outside and there was still nothing on the driveway and nothing on the highway. West Memphis had closed and so had Marion, Hughes and Palestine. So I got in my truck at almost 11:30 PM and drove to Earle. I did not run into any inclement weather until I got out here at Three Forks; there was a little ice. So, I came a little farther and crossed (Hwy) 64 and it was slick, so naturally we had to cancel school for Monday, but I almost missed that one.” “So, we've missed three days, and it always comes up so I wanted to remind you of the policy. No matter how many days we miss for inclement weather, unless they're excessive and when I say excessive it has to be at least ten, then the Board policy states that we make those days up at the end of the school year. Even if the teachers want to get the masses together and do all that. It takes all the guesswork out. The reason I want to stick with that is, people plan spring breaks, they plan the other holidays that we're out and I've done this so that they know that even at the end of the school year, it's a possibility that we're going to hit that final ending date that's on the calendar, so don't make plans for that and that kind of keeps everybody on the same track.” “So, I just wanted to remind you of that so when they start coming to you as you know they will; especially if we miss a couple more days, remind them that it's

already policy and that we'll make those days up at the end of the year. And that we will all be clear and we'll all be on the same page.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “February is the month I like to issue Letters of Intent. I'd just like your permission to issue these for the coming school year. That way, we'll go ahead and get a feel for who's coming back, who's leaving and we'll start making changes for next year; so we don't need a motion or anything, just need you to know we'll be issuing those letters.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “The G&K settlement - that's the case for the company who did carpets, rugs and things when Mr. Crumbly reneged on the contract back in 2010 – they won a settlement for \$80,000. I told you all about that.” “We're in a negotiation with them to pay that off. We offered them \$5,000 to settle it and walk away. They countered with an offer of \$60,000 to pay out over six years. Of course we didn't accept that so we're back in negotiations with them and we're hopeful that if we can get it reduced down to \$20,000 or \$30,000, we can pay it out over six years, and the lien on the school's property, we can get that off and move forward.” “Mr. Bequette, the school's attorney, is working on that, so we just wanted to bring you up-to-date on that.” “Are there any questions about that deal before we move on?” *(There were no questions concerning the G & K case).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “Alright, the long-term subs – I need to hire Karmen Moore as a long-term sub at the high school. We lost one of our TFA's. She had to have surgery and she will be out the remainder of the year and will not be coming back next year. I just need to complete this process and issue this sub a contract. That's why I need you all to hire her. She's teaching biology – she's a biology major. She's not certified but she is a biology major and we can use her for the remainder of the year. You know she taught math for us last year, didn't get her certificate in place, but if I can get a motion on that we can move forward.” *(Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Weatherspoon seconded the motion to hire Ms. Moore as a long-term sub for the high school vacancy).*

**Mr. Nicks:** The final thing that I'd like to present to the Board is that you all have been selected as an Outstanding School Board in the State of Arkansas and they sent you a certificate recognizing that all of our members have achieved at least twenty-five hours of training and I think that's a nice accomplishment. I'll talk to my secretary and see if we can get this framed and we'll hang it on the wall somewhere. But that is the absolute last thing that I had on the agenda.” “So I thought that was very nice.” “Every time I go to the School Board Association Meeting, all the other boards have that out by their names, so now we have it by our name; so I'm excited about that. Outstanding School Board Award!” “And I do encourage you all to continue to go because it really helps me a lot when you already know things and I don't have to try to explain; because sometimes I don't know. We'll get it framed and hung up.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “The other thing I'd like to do is get a nice picture of the Board and mount it here in the central office because, as you go through, things change and it's good to have a record of who served and how long and things like that.” “Alright, other than that, that's all I have for the month of February unless there's something you want to bring up.”

“We're still struggling with the old budget. Trying to keep it in line. If nothing else, that's it for me.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Can we get a motion to adjourn?” *(Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 5:41 PM).*



  
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Board President

  
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Board Secretary

  
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Date

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

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Thursday, March 19, 2015, at 5:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order with the following members in attendance: Mr. E. Cox, Mrs. S. Johnson, Mrs. A. Weatherspoon, and Mr. A. Berry. *(Members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting and if there were any questions or corrections. There were no questions or additions. Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion passed unanimously).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Has everyone had an opportunity to review the minutes? If there are no additions or corrections, we'll move forward with the financial report from Mr. Hicks.”

**Mr. Hicks:** “For the month of February we ended with a legal balance of \$805,000. *(Mr. E. Cox asked if there were any questions for Mr. Hicks. Mrs. Weatherspoon cited the beginning balance on the report and asked for clarification. Mr. Hicks explained that he ran the report for March which reflected the \$859,000 beginning balance. Mr. Nicks offered further explanation of the anticipated amounts of monthly revenue which should have us where we need to be at the end of the year. Mr. E. Cox asked whether there were additional questions for Mr. Hicks).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Now we will have the remaining topics brought by the superintendent, Mr. Nicks.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Let me bring you up to date on the G. & K. lawsuit that the District lost to the cleaning service that was illegally terminated. We originally offered \$10,000 and they, of course, rejected that offer. They countered with \$60,000 offer to settle, paid out in installments of \$10,000 over six years. We went back with a \$5000 offer over six years proposal. They rejected that, but offered us – and this is where we are and you all tell me what you want to do – they offered to settle the entire thing for \$30,000, but they want it all at one time.” “Now we can make one more counter offer, or we can settle and pay.” *(Mr. E. Cox asked what Mr. Bequette's opinion was on the matter. Mr. Nicks replied that Mr. Bequette thinks that we won't get a much better offer than the one countered by G. & K.)*

**Mr. Nicks:** “But, my thing is let's shoot them one more offer. No matter what we settle, we're not going to pay it before July 1<sup>st</sup>. But I wanted you to be aware that we have whittled it down some, and if we can get by with \$20,000 and push it into next year, whatever we settle on it won't be paid out of this year anyway. So let's counter one more time and see if they'll back off that thirty thousand – maybe \$25,00 – we'll ask that and



see what happens.” “Will that work for you all? I don't need a motion or anything on that.” *(The consensus was to make the counter offer to G. & K.)*

**Mr. Nicks:** “I want to hire the administrative staff tonight. I have not gotten a chance to go through the Intents, but we can go ahead and, if you will, approve the administrative staff for the coming year. And that includes everybody – Mrs. Guess, Ms. Bohanon, Ms. Maples, Coleman, Dr. Bean, Ms. Forrest, Guy Watson, Vaughn Sanders, Mr. Hicks and Mr. Lockett.” *(The Board President called for a motion to hire the administrative staff. Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “The next item is the cleaning service. Their contract is up for renewal. They've got an option to terminate and we have the option to terminate. I just thought I'd throw that out at you. Mr. Hicks can tell you that we're saving money using the cleaning service. Now, we can either open it up for bids again, or we can continue with the group that we're using. You all tell me what your thoughts are on that.” *(A brief discussion was held regarding the cleaning service and Mr. Nicks stated that they're doing a good job and that he is pleased with their performance. Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to retain the current cleaning service for the District. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously to renew the contract with the cleaning service).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “You should have in your packets the NSBA agenda. You know it starts Saturday and you all will be leaving tomorrow. So, we're ready to go with that.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Spring break starts – tomorrow we were scheduled to have a professional development day. Since we had to take two days, not for snow, but for professional development, earlier in the year, we're making up a day tomorrow with the students.” “But anyway, at least we'll get one student contact day. We lost five days for inclement weather, so that gives us six days that we've got to make up at the end; puts us getting out on June 8<sup>th</sup>, thereabouts. Since we had that day, we went ahead and took it.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “We started PARCC testing at both the high school and elementary. That's the computerized test that the State will no longer require after this year because the legislature voted it down. But we had some glitches the first day. We're up and running and everything went well. We're real pleased with Mr. Lockett and his efforts he put forth to get it up and running so we can monitor it. I went to a superintendent's meeting this week and everybody up there had the same problems we all had. It wasn't the school's fault. We're up and running and where we need to be.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “When we come back from spring break, the second week in April we have an on-site review. The on-site review is the old North Central Accreditation. It's AdvancED now. Both elementary and high school will be going through the accreditation process. It's not something that's required but it is kind of like being certified by the State Police Department if you're in law enforcement. It's not a requirement, but if you've got certification it makes you look a little better. So we're going through that process. We'll have an on-site team and they may want to interview

some of you all if you can make yourselves available during that time. They may contact you and ask that you come up for an interview. It's kind of like the Scholastic Audit was a few years ago only this is a volunteer thing that we're doing."

**Mr. Nicks:** "Let me bring you up on one other thing and that's all we'll have for tonight. That's the Hughes situation. I have been summoned to the Department of Education, Pastor Cox and I, for the State Board meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup>, and they'll make a determination as to what they're going to do with Hughes. They said to be prepared to answer questions, if asked. So, for the record, I wanted to know where you all are on that. It's a plus anytime we can pick up students, especially since we're down around 600. Now I don't know if they're going to send them to us or part of them to us, but if asked I'm going to ask for them if it's alright with you all." "I just think it will benefit us overall in the long run. We may not get all of them; we may not get any of them, but we're going to certainly ask to be included in that star-burst if that's the way they do it. Because conventional wisdom seems to be that they're going to split them up into a couple of different directions. I've been in contact with legislators and you should do the same; anybody down there that you know who has some influence. Call your State representatives, your State senators, even your Governor's Office and let them know that we have a pretty good school system and that we'd be interested in taking them in if that's what they choose to do."

**Mr. Nicks:** "Other than that, unless you all have something else, that's all I have."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "Can we get a motion to adjourn?" (*Mr. Berry motioned to adjourn and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:32 PM.*)

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Board President



Board Secretary

3-23-15

Date

**Earle School District**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Central Office Boardroom**  
**May 28, 2015**  
**5:00 PM**

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Thursday, May 28, 2015, at 5:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order and established a quorum with the following members in attendance: Mr. E. Cox, Mrs. S. Johnson, and Mrs. A. Weatherspoon. *(Members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting and if there were any questions or corrections. There were no questions or additions. Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion passed unanimously).*

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

**Mr. Hicks:** “For the month of April we ended with a little over \$600,000. We paid the debt service of \$309,000, and we should be headed in the right direction from now on.” *(Mr. E. Cox asked if there were any questions for Mr. Hicks regarding the financial report. There were no questions).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Now we will have the remaining topics brought by the superintendent, Mr. Nicks.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “You should have in your packets a list of the people leaving the District this year and I normally don't list them but I just wanted you to be aware that we've got some turnover. We've pretty much replaced everybody. I'm about to replace the math/science position; and we may have to replace Mr. Wright. So just keep that in mind. That means that we have one at the high school and two elementary positions. I've got a couple of prospects on them. I just need your permission to accept those resignations at the end of the school year.” *(Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned to accept the resignations and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “On the cleaning service – unless you've got a problem with what we have currently going on. I did solicit a couple of deals and one of them came in at around \$106,000 and the one we have has agreed to do it at the same rate, so if you all are satisfied with where we are, I recommend that we stay with the one that we currently have.” *(Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion on the cleaning service. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously to retain the services of the current cleaning service).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “The elementary has been basically sent to the Department of Education for probationary status based on the fact that we had one of their teachers who was not certified. We are going to appeal the decision because of the way we acquired her. It was

through Teach for America, whose responsibility it is to provide us with certified, or people that can be certified. So we're appealing on those grounds. That's June 11<sup>th</sup>, so I'll be going down there to appeal that." "It's no big deal unless you get on probation two years in a row, but this is one of those instances where I don't even want to be labeled as "probationary" when we don't deserve it. So, I'm going to throw Teach for America under the bus. They might as well get ready. I told them that they need to be there. I'm going to tell them it's their fault and I'm not going to take the blame; even if they put me on probation, I want them to know that it's Teach for America that dropped the ball." "Their response was, 'I'm going to try to get this worked out by Tuesday of next week.'" "I told them, 'that's up to you, but on June 11<sup>th</sup>, I will be there.'" "I just want you all to know that."

**Mr. Nicks:** "I have the G. & K. settlement in your folders. We're going to go ahead and settle that with them; we've got sixty days to pay it off. It's \$30,000. It's down from the \$80,000 that the judge awarded them, but we've been able to negotiate that down. Now, the problem with that is, they have a lien attached to the District's property. So we've got to get that cleared up." "We can't do anything basically as long as they have that lien, when it comes to borrowing money if we need to, or whatever. We need to get that cleared. So, we've negotiated that down to \$30,000 – a one-time payment. We're going to pay it out the first of July and we'll be through. They'll release the lien on the District and we'll try not to get out there in a bind again." "It wasn't my headache, but I think we finally got it resolved." "I have to give Mr. Bequette his dues, he doesn't quit. He just saved us fifty thousand dollars right there, that we would have had to pay. It had gone to court and the judge had awarded it and we didn't have the right to appeal or anything and he got back to us and said, 'let me take it and see what I can do with it'. So I'll give him his props. He did a wonderful job and we're going to be okay with that."

**Mr. Nicks:** "The curriculum instruction report and the school improvement report – we're going to put those reports in the minutes because we're required to; and we're going to designate this our parent notification meeting, just so you'll know. And we'll write them up and put them in the minutes for next time. If we go on probation, they'll expect that they are included in the minutes. Just wanted you all to know that."

**Mr. Nicks:** "The last thing is there should be a list of school choice students coming from Hughes and we have to approve that. That list should include all those who show up between now and August. I don't care when they come, they're on the school choice list." *(Mr. E. Cox raised the question as to whether there was any news on the lawsuit involving Hughes' consolidation. A brief discussion of the potential outcome of the matter was held).*

**Mr. Nicks:** "We have a couple of teachers to hire. I just need permission to hire any that we get between now and next board meeting. I don't want to lose any; we'll issue them a contract and we'll hire them at the next meeting." "That's all I have. School is out next Friday."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "Can we get a motion to adjourn?" (*Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mrs. Weatherspoon seconded. The motion carried unanimously to adjourn at 5:34 PM.*)



  
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Board President

  
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Board Secretary

6-3-15  
Date

**Earle School District**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Central Office Boardroom**  
**June 27, 2015**  
**5:00 PM**

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Saturday, June 27, 2015, at 5:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order and established a quorum with the following members in attendance: Mr. E. Cox, Mr. Charlie Cox, Mr. A. Berry, and Mrs. S. Johnson. *(Members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting and if there were any questions or corrections. There were no questions or additions. Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. C Cox motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion passed unanimously).*

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

**Mr. Hicks:** “For the month of May, we ended with a legal balance of \$700,000. We're working right now to be where we need to be at the end of the year.” *(Mr. E. Cox asked if there were any questions for Mr. Hicks regarding the financial report. There were no questions).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Now we will have the remainder of our topics for discussion brought by Mr. Nicks, the superintendent.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Very briefly, I need to bring you up to date on a couple of issues. We've got to hire a resource officer for the school. We had to relinquish our contract with the county; we were way over budget. Although he did extra work, for what we were paying him, we should have had the FBI.” “So, we've released that contract and I'm going to hire someone within the next week or so and I just need your permission. I've talked to a couple of people and if it all goes as planned, I'm going to hire a person that we can go ahead and train. I think we can save at least half that salary that we paid the county last year. I don't understand why we had to pay anything.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Does this call for some action?”

**Mr. Nicks:** I just need your permission to hire someone.” *(Mr. E. Cox called for a motion. Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously for the superintendent to hire a resource officer).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “We went down to the Department of Education. You know we had received notification of being placed on probation. We appealed that decision to the State Board of Education about the elementary being placed on probation. It was not our fault; and we successfully appealed it; with a 9-0 vote.” “So, we can forget about that and start anew in the fall. It's going to be a job; we need quite a few teachers, so if you've got

anybody you know who's certified that's looking – elementary or high school - have them give me a call.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “I need to bring you up to date on the student handbook. The only changes are those that are State mandated; so we'll go ahead and get those approved before we give them out.” *(Mr. Berry motioned to approve the student handbook and Mr. C. Cox seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*


**Mr. Nicks:** “I need a motion to approve the personnel policies, Mission Statement and salary schedules. These policies are policies that were changed by law in the Legislative Session. There are no policies changed by the Personnel Policy Committee. So we need to make these changes based on the new laws and move on from there.” *(Mr. C. Cox motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion to make the necessary personnel policy changes and to approve the Mission Statement and salary schedules carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “I have one person I want to hire for first grade. Jana Hatley from Marked Tree has applied and I need a motion to hire her.” *(Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mr. C. Cox seconded. The motion to hire Mrs. Hatley carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “That's all I have unless you want to adjourn and I can tell you about this project. That's it unless you have questions.” *(There were no questions concerning the general topics. Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned.*

\*\*\*\*EXECUTIVE SESSION\*\*\*\*

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Board President



Board Secretary

7-1-15

Date

**Earle School District**  
**CALLED BOARD MEETING**  
**Central Office Boardroom**  
**July 14, 2015**  
**9:00 AM**

The Earle School Board of Directors held a called meeting on Tuesday, July 14, 2015. Mr. E. Cox established a quorum with Mr. Charlie Cox, Mr. Arthur Berry, Mrs. Sarah Johnson and Mrs. April Weatherspoon present.

**Mr. E. Cox:** "We have a quorum. We will now hear from Mr. Nicks, the superintendent."

**Mr. Nicks:** "We need you to approve a resolution to borrow money for our construction project on the elementary campus. We've got the signature pages for you to sign . I don't have all the figures at hand, but we will get those for you." *(A brief discussion was held concerning specifics of the post-dated warrants. Board members were in agreement with the planned project and its requirements. Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to approve the Resolution to secure the loan. Mr. Berry motioned and Mr. C. Cox seconded the motion, which carried unanimously).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** "If there are no questions for Mr. Nicks and no further discussion, can we get a motion to adjourn?" *(Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mrs. Weatherspoon seconded. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned).*

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Board President

  
Board Secretary

7-14-15  
Date



**Earle School District**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Central Office Boardroom**  
**July 30, 2015**  
**5:00 PM**

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Thursday, July 30, 2015, at 5:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order and established a quorum with the following members in attendance: Mr. E. Cox, Mr. A. Berry, and Mrs. S. Johnson. *(Members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting and if there were any questions or corrections. There were no questions or additions. Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion passed unanimously).*

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

**Mr. Hicks:** “We're still working on getting all the numbers for the end of the year. It will be another week before it's finished.” “We're pretty close to where we need to be.”

**Mr. Cox:** “Does anyone have any questions for Mr. Hicks? *(There were no questions).* If not, we'll now have the topics for discussion brought by the superintendent, Mr. Nicks.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Okay, I believe you'll have the list of new hires in your packet. You'll notice the number of new hires we have at the high school and the elementary. It's quite a turnover, about fifteen people; and I'm just going to ask you to go ahead and rehire everybody and hire those new people.” *(Mr. Nicks gave a brief summary of the new staff members and their respective positions).* “Now, Karmen Moore, Kourtney Moore, and Mary Ann Craft will be hired with provisional contracts. They will have until the first of December to pass their PRAXIS exam; along with Cance Tunstall and Jackie Tunstall at the high school. They are in with that group, and any of the TFA's that fall into that category – but most of them should be okay.” “So, we're including those. I'm saying this in open session so that Mr. Hicks can include that statement on their contracts, that unless those requirements are met by December 1<sup>st</sup>, they will be terminated at that point.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Can we get a motion to approve?” *(Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously to hire those recommended by the superintendent).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “This is the time of the year for bread and milk bids. We only have one bread bid and one milk bid. Looks like we'll have to go with the only bids submitted. The bread bid is from Flours Bakers from Batesville, AR and the milk bid is from Turner Dairies. I want to get your approval on those.” *(Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to accept*

*the bread and milk bids. Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously to accept the bids).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “The activity insurance bid is from Dwight Jones. It's the only one we have, so I need your approval to accept that.” *(Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion. Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*


**Mr. Nicks:** “School Improvement – the School Improvement Plan has to be submitted. We have to go to the State Board, Ms. Bohanon and I, on the fourteenth. The first day of In-service is on the 10<sup>th</sup> and Ms. Maples will handle that and she has an itinerary coming out. The first day of school for the students is the seventeenth of August.” “Student registration will be all week. Our numbers look okay.” “We're in the process of securing a loan for the paving project. We don't have everything wrapped up yet, but we will. I hate to start working on that roadway after school starts, but we want to get all those activities taken care of.” “Other than that, that's all I have. I will be out of the office until Wednesday of next week. I'll be leaving on Saturday, but if you need me you can call me on my cell phone. Alright, that's all I have. Do you have any questions or concerns?” “We've got school board elections coming up in September. I think we have both positions opposed, so keep that in mind. You need to get out and go to work!” “There are two polling places, the City Hall Annex and St. Luke Church.” *(There was no further discussion. Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to adjourn and the meeting adjourned at 5:23 PM).*

\*\*\*\*EXECUTIVE SESSION\*\*\*\*

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Board President

  
Board Secretary

  
Date

**Earle School District**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Central Office Boardroom**  
**August 27, 2015**  
**5:00 PM**

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Thursday, August 27, 2015, at 5:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order with the following members in attendance: Mr. E. Cox, Mrs. S. Johnson, and Mrs. A. Weatherspoon. *(Mr. E. Cox asked Mrs. Johnson to call the roll of members and a quorum was established with Mr. Berry joining the meeting in progress. Members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting and if there were any questions or corrections. There were no questions or additions. Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion passed unanimously).*

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

**Mr. Hicks:** “We ended the year with \$1,066,000.”

**Mr. Cox:** “I've got a couple of questions, Mr. Hicks, that you may be able to help me with. We've had some vendors that have been calling us with bills and debts that we didn't pay and I guess I'm asking if that \$1,066,000.00 is our money; or is it tied up somehow. I don't have a lot of clarity on how it works; whether it's federal money or what's our money. You take for instance, local vendors are calling saying they haven't been paid. The guy who has the stuff that they spray to mark the football field with, Coach Williams played a message where he says he hasn't been paid since January. And I'm thinking that if we've got a million and sixty-six thousand dollars, we shouldn't owe anybody.”

**Mr. Hicks:** “Well, with some of things where vendors are calling saying we owe them; a couple of them we might owe \$162.00, or might owe them \$4,000. There's not a lot of money out there and that's one of the things we're putting in place right now. In this school, over the years, nobody has taken control of it because we're busy doing all these other things and catching up with other stuff. Now, what we've been doing, and it's a disgrace and I'm almost ashamed to say it, that we have everybody in this school going all different directions, calling people and saying they want to buy something and it is just totally impossible to keep up with that.” “So now I'm putting in place a purchasing system so that when somebody buys something, I'm going to know exactly who bought it and why they bought it and be able to trace it back to the invoice and so every thirty days, all I have to do is go through the folder and see what we've got out there and get everything cleared.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “And the reason I'm asking is because me and Mrs. Sarah and Arthur are pretty much seen every day and you bump into people and when people get stuff that says

this hasn't been paid – just like Mr. Waymire or folks who say, 'well, Reverend, you all owe me...' and I'm saying, I don't owe you anything. What do you mean, 'owe you'?" "It starts speculation for a lot of rumors with people saying that the school is broke, you don't have any money, so and so is doing this and that. And this is my suggestion, if a joker is crazy enough to go order something in the District's name, and Mr. Nicks hasn't given him the authority to, he should be fired that day." "You all correct me if I'm wrong, but if I go over there and get a motor for a Toyota Camry and it's not even listed – we don't have a Toyota on any of our stuff and I go and get it, even though I'm not paying for it and they ship it here, that joker ought to be fired right then." "Because I know that, not taking anything away from you, but Mr. Nicks has, you all have, scrapped hard to get the District back because when you're on fiscal distress, the first thing people say is 'Negroes don't know how to handle money, they're stealing ...' the first thing it ties back to is that we're letting folks do whatever way they want to do and there's no other way – you can't civilize some of these folks. It's just not possible – they're just not going to stop until somebody changes things. That's just the bottom line."

**Mr. Hicks:** "I am putting into place some measures – if you'll give me 30-60 days you'll see a difference from what it is right now."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "Because that's it. Even with the bus people that gripe. If Mr. Sanders is responsible for filling out those folks' time sheets... let's give you a scenario: Every day, and I told Mr. Nicks, every day Mr. Nicks gets hit with a bunch of unnecessary complaints – 'he won't give me my money' and they tell you. Then you have to run up there and say, 'Mr. Nicks, I hate to bother you but so-and-so said ...' but then Mr. Nicks has to (run interference). He shouldn't have to do a thing but what he's told."

**Mrs. Weatherspoon:** "If he's not doing his part of the job, there needs to be some disciplinary action on the one that's not doing their part of the job." "You cannot abuse the people that are below you because you have a problem doing what your job title tells you to do." "If you can't do what your job title tells you to do, then you need to be put on paper, and when your paper adds up, you need to be fired. It's just that simple."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "Because when they start raising questions about that money I get paranoid; because I can't be tied to – I just don't want to deal with any of that. If it's that you need some help, or somebody needs to help you track it...if there's somebody Mr. Nicks can give you. It's a lot of work and I can understand the human side when you forget or may overlook something; so maybe somebody needs to help you to double check and say, 'we've got A,B,C and D done that would help.'" "Man, it's a lot for one person; not saying that we've got to go and hire someone, but it's a lot for one person to keep up with that much stuff that goes on in the run of a day as far as paying people and that sort of thing."

**Mr. Hicks:** "Actually, we've talked about that and I do need help and we've got everything in place."

**Mr. Nicks:** "So we're going to have someone step in and kind of streamline some of the minor stuff that needs to be done and I think we can help to alleviate some of that."

Sometimes you can take on a bit much so we can take down some of the lesser things so that the big stuff can get taken care of. Then we can close up some of the small mouths around town. We'll work on that end."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "Another thing is that a couple of the ladies were griping about one got paid during the summer and one didn't get paid and they were talking about how this one got a time sheet and that one didn't. If you can't get done what you need to get done in your work day, that either means that we need to get somebody else or your workload is too much. There's no reason a contracted employee ought to be getting overtime. You know, if they can't do what they need to do in that time, you have no use for them; because evidently, if that eight hours in the day if you can't do what you need to do in that length of time, we have no use for you." "But everybody – it only takes one little thing and it blows stuff completely out of proportion and you're answering questions that you have no answer to and I put it all back in Mr. Nicks' lap. But it's not fair to him; but it's always going to be tied back to, 'Mr. Nicks is getting our money, y'all let Rickey Nicks get all the money, he's doing whatever he wants to do'" and that's my thing. That's not fair to him."

**Mr. Nicks:** "We try to control any overtime. There's a difference between overtime and time sheets for people doing jobs outside their contracts; just wanted to make sure you understand. We do have people who do jobs outside their contracts but it's an extended day type of thing, not overtime. I would dare say that no one, from this point on if it's not an extended day situation, will be paid overtime."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "That's my only concern. I hate meetings, I don't want to sit through one of those fiscal distress things where folks come and ask you those questions and they say your balance is declining, because if you say we've got a million, sixty-six thousand dollars, as long as you say we have that amount, I'm satisfied. I just don't want those folks to show up and say, 'y'all don't have a million, sixty-six thousand dollars.'" "You know, Mr. Crumbly was saying, 'we're going to need such and such...' and if Mr. Nicks hadn't come and said, 'hey, Rev., y'all need to get that money borrowed because we're a negative thirty-something thousand dollars in the hole. But he had just asked me and Arthur and them to buy him a car because he said we had plenty of money.'" "I don't mean any harm, Mr. Hicks, but you're the Chief Financial Officer and if our money is messed up, that's Mr. Hicks' fault."

**Mr. Hicks:** "That's going to be on my head."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "It's going to be: 'This is what Adolphus Hicks told us, this is what he said we had... I'm putting all of it on him.'" "You know, I'm not trying to be funny but I'm not fixing to answer any questions about money."

**Mrs. Weatherspoon:** "And the bank drafts are done to match what we have as a legal balance."

**Mr. Nicks:** "We'll be okay. We're going to work harder to see that things are lining up. My job is always to make sure that things are running smoothly. By January we'll let you

know where we are. We're going to start looking at not just ending balances, legal balances but we're going to look at cash flow, accounts, and that kind of thing, so we'll know where we are.”

**Mrs. Johnson:** “So he said he's going to get it under control on the spending?”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Oh, we're definitely going to get control of the spending. We've done much less spending this year than we've done in the past.”

**“Mrs. Johnson:** “But the ones who are doing it – like each and everybody just going out buying stuff..”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Right, we've stopped that.”

**Mr. Hicks:** “We've shut it down.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “But the one thing I've noticed is that you have cut \$30,000 out of the athletic budget. And Coach Coleman did an excellent job and there's a person who understands what you're trying to do.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “We've had to make some adjustments. And I'm with you all. I don't want to end up back in fiscal distress to have to stand in someone's face and explain why and where we are. We worked hard to cut staff to keep up with the student loss to get to where we needed to be. I don't think I could look at you all if we end up having to fight that battle again.” “We've done some major cuts – we've trimmed the staff ratio as close as we could. We're tight in some grades; we're almost where we need another teacher so I would be very disappointed if we end back up in that situation.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “So, where do you think we'll land in January?”

**Mr. Hicks:** “In January? I think we're going to be somewhere around \$800,000. When I say 'legal balance', you don't include federal funds. When you have that balance, technically you don't have that much cash in the bank but that's what everybody's looking at. That's the reason why it's called a legal balance because that's what the Education Department and everybody else is judging you on, the legal balance. Because no other dollars control the legal balance, just the federal dollars.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “I hate to be elementary but, just for my own ... you're saying that Earle School District is sound financially?”

**Mr. Hicks:** “Yes, we're solid enough to make it through January; yes we're doing fine.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “That's all I wanted to know.”

**Mr. Hicks:** “I'm telling you, now, I'd be more worried about this than anybody in this room.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “But you know the big difference is that we can't leave. We've got to forever live here with these folks and I don't want to go down with my last little mark in history is that me, Sarah Johnson, April, Charlie and Arthur – that we bankrupted the school and we let Mr. Nicks do it.”

**Mrs. Weatherspoon:** “I have a question – just a random question – about the kind of money for band trips for playing at away games and things like that. How is all that handled?”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Well, I've had to address just going to be going.” “I don't mind and I am the absolute strongest supporter of the band but they've gotten to the place where they just want to go every time they get an opportunity to play.” “They can stand down on the field and practice, but they don't need to go to every game.” “They had been scheduled to go to a jamboree. I don't even send cheerleaders to jamborees because it's just a practice game, basically. So, we've cut that. I've talked with Ms. Bohanon and I've talked with the band director. We have supported the band and I will continue to do so, but just going every night and sometimes two or three times a week.... we're cutting some of that stuff out.” “We've got kids in school who are gone sometimes two, three, four times a week. They've got homework. They're doing way too much going and we're limiting that stuff and that cuts down on expenses as well. I mean, you're not going to see a big decrease in expenses, but it will help a lot over the long haul. So, we'll be addressing all those things. Believe me, we've not left any stone unturned as far as this goes. We've got to slow some of this down.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “I think it's only three senior high away games.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “And only one that we've got to beat.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “And that's Salem. And if the junior high band would just play at home...”

**Mr. Nicks:** “That's one of the things Mr. Hicks and I talked about; the junior high band playing at home, the junior high cheerleaders only cheering at home. Why send those kids out to away games. That doesn't even make sense.” “On Friday nights ... I'll issue the directive officially.”

**Mrs. Weatherspoon:** “It needs to be addressed officially.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “I'll get it out officially. Because they've got to get up on Friday...”

**Mr. E. Cox:** ... And come back to school. It's a difference on Fridays.”

**Mrs. Weatherspoon:** “I agree. I have absolutely no problem with that and I have no problem with not going to away games.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Well, you see, that's the thing. Most of the away games, even senior high games, there's no need to go. Now if we're just going to Marked Tree to a game; fine, go. I just don't see the need in sending the band on Friday night to play.”

**Mrs. Weatherspoon:** “Right. Anything over an hour, hour and a half, there's no need for that.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Right, all that's expensive and it adds up over the long haul. I have no problem with any of that. I will send out an official memo on that tomorrow.”

**Mr. Berry:** “You've got to pay the driver and all that.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Another thing we're cutting down on is field trips. Like last year, we were going on field trips every day – somewhere. Now we're going to give them one field trip per grade and that's going to be it; we're not going to be doing all these field trips. And from the faculty side, during the school year there should be very little professional development that takes them away from school. So we're not going to do that where every week we've got two or three teachers gone somewhere overnight and we're having to pay subs and that kind of stuff. We're not going to do that. We've looked at a lot of cost-cutting measures, trying to get things back in line and I've gotten those phone calls that you guys have got from local businesses and one of the things I've asked Mr. Hicks that we're going to do is pay local businesses every month, regardless; I don't care what happens, because it's never that much; and those are the people that's going to make the biggest racket. If you miss a month paying the guy who's depending on his little bit of change, he's going to raise heck with you and I know that.” “Now somebody off in New York, you might put them off a few months if you're trying to manage the cash flow or whatever, but these local folks...but we won't embarrass you all again, I promise you not for that.”

**Mrs. Weatherspoon:** “Is there a lot of credit in place just in case?”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Yes, we keep a lot of credit in place for things like that. But we can manage to not have those shortfalls. It's only a hundred and fifty thousand dollars. We're working to have the bank increase it to a half a million dollars; just for these emergency type things. But we're okay – as far as I know – we're okay.” “I'm not the financial guru, but I do think we're close.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Okay. If there are no more questions... we hate to dump all that on you, Mr. Hicks.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Now, our next topics of discussion will be coming from Mr. Nicks.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “If you'll notice, there is a bond refinance. Now that goes back to what we just talked about - making sure we stay financially balanced. Every so often we get an opportunity to lower our payments and interest rates. All it does is extend the debt but lowers the interest rate and I would ask you all to do that because it helps curtail cash



flow issues.” (Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to approve the bond refinance. Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mrs. Weatherspoon seconded. The motion carried unanimously).

**Mr. Nicks:** “I have initiated auditors due to some concerns I had – we were having the auditors come in anyway – so we went ahead and initiated their visit to sort of calm some fears and concerns and the best way to do it is to have an audit and let everybody see what's there; so we wanted to make you aware of that process has started, okay?” “And I think they will verify any and all items that we've discussed. So that's in place.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “The Board election is coming up in September. They've got two polling places; I wanted to make you aware of those – St. Luke and the annex uptown. We'll be responsible for handling those elections; you need to get out and start campaigning if you want to stay with us.” (A brief discussion ensued regarding the Board members up for re-election and their opponents).

**Mr. Nicks:** “Before I get to the external providers' contracts, let me talk about the school improvement Flexibility Waiver. The high school is a priority school for the third year. With the new Flexibility Waiver, we'll talk about it in more detail as the school session goes on, we have to make some changes in the way we do things.” “We have had an external provider for the past three years. The Department of Education has brought up some concerns about external providers. They have asked the District to hire their own School Improvement Specialist, a person who will be the high school every day. That's compared to the one that the State would have coming every week. Alright, the State is still going to send that once a week person, but the District has to hire one full-time themselves.” “Now, the Flexibility Waiver requires that we re-do our plan and every 45 days report to the Department of Education on the process and the product – what we're doing; and that we kind of move away from the external providers.” “The only problem I have with that, is that I have an external provider contracted until the end of school. It was not voted on, and we've not signed. We've just simply talked verbally about the contract and what's in place. We can get by with hiring an external provider for the first part of the year. Now, no matter what happens I want to keep the ACSIP using the external provider, if we can do that – I'll let you all tell me the kind of direction that we want to go in.” “It's about \$180,000 worth of contract, and probably \$80,000-\$90,000 worth of contract with the School Improvement Specialist that we're going to have to have. So, I'm kind of wrestling with that.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “I'll tell you what – I'd keep him for the ACSIP plan, but it's going to save you a hundred thousand or so, isn't it Mr. Hicks, if you send him on down the road? Because if you've got to have one anyway, it will end up where you're paying an external provider's contract and they will still make us hire a School Improvement Specialist. You're going to pay the \$180,000, plus you're going to pay the School Improvement Specialist. So you could actually pay the School Improvement Specialist out of the \$180,00 that ECS is getting.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “And that's kind of the direction the Department is sending us; whether we want to go or not.” “We're going to have to decide which way we want to go. They're

telling you that, maybe not starting out, but in January, you're going to have to have that School Improvement Specialist on campus every day – a salaried person. We have to go out and find someone to do that. And that's why I wanted to bring up the Flexibility Waiver first so you'd have a clear understanding of what we've got." "We've approved them in the past, but we've not approved them for this year."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "You're saying we could either pay \$80,000 or \$260,000?"

**Mr. Nicks:** "That's what I'm saying." *(Mr. Nicks and Board members discussed the advantages to the District of services offered by the external provider versus the limited functions of a salaried School Improvement Specialist and the cost effectiveness of both).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** "You can still use them for your grant writing and things like that."

**Mr. Nicks:** "Right, but I'll need a motion on the contract."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "Can we get a motion to reject the contract with ECS?" *(Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously to decline contracting the external provider, ECS, for this school year).*

**Mr. Nicks:** "The final item I have is that I need a motion to advertise for a School Improvement Specialist. I've got a job description that was given to us by the Department of Ed. We'll clean it up and put it in the paper. If we can find someone that can start before January, I'd like for us to hire that person. If not, I've got to have somebody in place by then. So I need a motion to advertise and before I hire, I'll bring it back to the Board, okay? And let you look at what we have." *(Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Weatherspoon seconded and the motion carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** "The very last thing I want to talk to you about is the Emergency Response System. And the reason I didn't put it on the agenda is that we won't get it in place until the first of September. It has to be activated by September 15<sup>th</sup>. We've got to have every school building, parking lot, playground, school facility in the system. It's called Smart 911." "I just wanted to make you aware of that. *(Mr. Nicks explained the system's functionalities to Board members and answered pertinent questions concerning its operations. He explained the difference from the ERS and Call Reach after a question was raised. Further, Mr. Nicks said that as a follow-up, there would be a brief training session at the next Board meeting).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** "I have one suggestion for you – I know we have to approve it, but you might want to pick your own person for the School Improvement Specialist position. My concern is that if you get the wrong person and you have to go before the State Board of Education, they will sling you under the bus."

**Mr. Nicks:** "I understand that. You've got to get the right person; that's critical."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "You need to get somebody that you can work with because people have a tendency of getting in front of folks and not knowing what in the world to say."  
*(Further discussion was briefly held concerning hiring for this position. There was no further business. The Board President called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The meeting adjourned).*

\*\*\*\*EXECUTIVE SESSION\*\*\*\*

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Board President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Earle School District**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Central Office Boardroom**  
**September 29, 2015**  
**6:00 PM**

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Tuesday, September 29, 2015, at 5:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order with the following members in attendance: Mr. E. Cox, Mrs. S. Johnson, Mr. A. Berry and Mrs. A. Weatherspoon. *(Mr. E. Cox asked Mr. Berry to call the roll of members and a quorum was established). Members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes of the prior meeting and if there were any questions or corrections).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “Before you continue, I might interject that the results from the last board election have been certified; however, I want to wait until the next board meeting to do the re-organization, that way it won't interfere with this month's.” *(The Board acknowledged the Superintendent's suggestion. There were no questions regarding the minutes. Mr. E. Cox asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Our financial report will be brought by Mr. Hicks.”

**Mr. Hicks:** “We finished the month of August with a legal balance of \$653,000.00.” *(There were no questions for Mr. Hicks).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “The next topics of discussion will be brought by Mr. Nicks.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “The 2015-16 budget has been prepared and has to be submitted by tomorrow; I'll ask Mr. Hicks to kind of go over it with you so we can know where we expect to end up next year.”

**Mr. Hicks:** “We ended this past year with \$1,045,000 and we are projected to end this year with about \$850,697.00.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “That's a decline of about \$200,000; so where are we?”

**Mr. Hicks:** “We are looking at making some pretty nice reductions.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “So that projected ending balance doesn't include any loans or anything like that?”

**Mr. Hicks:** “No, that cleans everything up, so hopefully we'll end with that balance at the end of next year.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “And it doesn't include any debt?”

**Mr. Hicks:** “No, that clears up everything.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “The only problem with that is we're ending with less than we did this year, but we'll just make adjustments where we can. It looks as if the student population is about the same, so that's not going to change anything. But we'll need a motion to approve the budget for submission based on the information that we've received.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Can we get a motion to approve the 2015-16 budget?” *(Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned, Mrs. Johnson seconded and the motion carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “The second issue is the bond re-finance. Again, I'll ask Mr. Hicks to explain where we are on that.”

**Mr. Hicks:** “They sold the bonds and this will mean a savings of \$210,000.”

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Is that this year?”

**Mr. Hicks:** “Yes, this year.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “So all we need to do is sign the document on that.” *(Further brief discussion was held concerning the bond issue).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “We previously talked about the position of School Improvement Specialist. I'll need a motion to post the job. That position will pay between \$75,000 and \$80,000 a year. We need to post it. They frown upon hiring from within; so that kind of eliminates all of our people. We'll be opening it up to outside sources and see what we can find.” *(Mrs. Weatherspoon raised a question regarding the position's salary and Mr. Nicks addressed it, re-stating the amount and saying that it would be paid from NSLA funds. Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to approve posting the School Improvement Specialist's position. Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Weatherspoon seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “We have a resignation at the high school. Mr. Tunstall taught business ed. He and his wife were hired and after two weeks he resigned, so I'll need a motion to accept his resignation and we will get busy and find someone to replace him.” *(Mrs. Johnson motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously to accept Mr. Tunstall's resignation).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “Before I get to the last item, let me just tell you about the Panic Button. If you have your phone with you, let me put you in the system.” *(Mr. Nicks took this time to further explain the system and assist Board members with set-up).*

**Mr. Nicks:** "The last thing is that Homecoming is coming up soon. We will have a short parade. It will be simple and sweet." *(Mr. Nicks gave Board members an overview of the parade route and schedule of activities).*

**Mr. Nicks:** "I want to give the City credit – they've agreed to do the policing. And with the police they have now, I'm pretty excited about them helping. Several of them go to the ballgames when they're off duty and they're not on payroll. I really appreciate them and how they help us out." *(Mr. Nicks gave further details of the parade line-up procedures and answered questions of the Board members).*

**Mr. Nicks:** "That's everything I have unless you all have further questions about the parade. Like I told them, we'll see how it goes – see if they act right and we'll do it again." "Is there anything else?" *(There were no further questions).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** "Can we get a motion to adjourn?" *(Mr. Berry motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned).*

\*\*\*\*EXECUTIVE SESSION\*\*\*\*

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Board President

  
Board Secretary

10-2-15  
Date

**Earle School District**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Central Office Boardroom**  
**October 22, 2015**  
**5:00 PM**

The Earle School Board of Directors conducted their regular monthly meeting Thursday, October 22, 2015, at 5:00 PM in the Central Office Boardroom. Mr. E. Cox called the meeting to order to establish a declaration of quorum with the following members in attendance: Mr. E. Cox, Mr. C. Cox, Mrs. S. Johnson, Mr. A. Berry and Mrs. A. Weatherspoon.

**Mr. E. Cox:** “The first item on our agenda before our topics of discussion is the Board Re-organization and we'll allow Mr. Nicks to govern that.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “Pursuant to law, after the school board elections each year, all positions on the school board are declared vacant. I must ask if both of you (Mr. C. Cox and Mr. Berry), because I haven't had an opportunity to ask, have been sworn in?” *(Mr. C. Cox and Mr. Berry both stated that they had been sworn in as elected officials).* “At this time, I will declare all positions vacant and we'll take the nomination for president.” *(Mr. C. Cox nominated Mr. E. Cox as president. Mr. Berry seconded. There were no other nominations. All members voted unanimously to re-instate Mr. E. Cox as Board president. Mr. Nicks then turned the meeting over to Mr. E. Cox to continue).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “We will proceed with the remainder of the positions. Next is our vice-president. Can we get a motion for vice-president?” *(Mr. C. Cox nominated Mr. Berry as vice-president. Mr. E. Cox seconded. There were no further nominations and the votes carried unanimously to name Mr. Berry as vice-president).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “The next position is for secretary.” *(Mr. C. Cox nominated Mrs. Johnson. Mr. Berry seconded. There were no other nominations and the votes carried unanimously).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “The next item – the minutes from the last meeting. Are there any corrections or additions that need to be made?” *(There were no corrections or additions to the minutes).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “We will move forward to our financial report which will be brought by Mr. Hicks:”

**Mr. Hicks:** “We closed the month of September with \$850,000. That's pretty much where we were trying to be.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “You'll notice on the financial statements that we're hovering around \$800,000 to \$850,000. Now, that's going to dip, just wanted to bring that to your attention. And we'll try to get past that.” “In November, we'll bring in our tax funding which will kind of balance us back out. But our goal is to stay close to that figure. We're going to see a slight dip in the next month or two; we've got some items that we're going to have to deal with, but I think we'll be in pretty good shape.” “Our goal is at the end of the year not owing anybody anything.” *(Mr. Nicks briefly restated some of the debt/expenditures that contributed to the slight fall in balances; some of which were carryovers from the previous year and inflated spending in certain departments, i.e., athletics).* “We've trimmed back tremendously in that department and will contain to maintain it. We've hired a financial strategist to maintain our purchase ordering.” *(Board members commented on the attention to detail that is now being given to the purchasing system and its effectiveness).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “Does anybody else have any questions for Mr. Hicks?” *(There were no questions).*

**Mr. E. Cox:** “If not, the rest of our topics will be brought by Mr. Nicks.”

**Mr. Nicks:** “A few things that we need to throw around – we're still in the process of trying to hire a teacher, even at this late date. We're going to have to hire a long-term sub at the high school for Mr. Tunstall, business education.” “I hate to do it but we just can't find anyone. That's the situation we're in out there. We're looking at a couple; both of them have degrees, but neither one has a teaching certificate. All we can do is hire some one as a long-term sub and hope that we can get someone certified in that spot before the final submission goes in; just wanted you to keep that in mind.” “So, basically we just need to hire a long-term sub. We've posted the position; there's just no one out there. And if someone comes along before the next board meeting, I don't want to have to call a special meeting to hire for that position.” *(Mr. E. Cox called for a motion to approve the hiring of a long term sub for the vacant business education position and to approve hiring a certified teacher, if one that is well-suited becomes available. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mrs. Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “AdvancED training – now, we are in the process of starting a scholastic review basically with AdvancED. All of our forms and submissions have to be done through AdvancED now. You may remember it as the old North Central Accreditation. All the schools had to have North Central accreditation. Now it's AdvancED; it the regional accreditation.” “Now, the elementary has never been North Central accredited. The high school has been accredited since 1927; that's how long they've been in business. What we're doing now is trying to get the entire district north central certified.” “What does that mean to you as the Board? That means that if your district is AdvancED accredited, that a student who graduates from Earle, or is in the process of graduating can go anywhere else in the country and be recognized as having received the proper education. Any college or university, no matter how prestigious, recognizes AdvancED



accreditation.” “So you want your elementary to be accredited and you want your high school to be accredited so you won't have any problems. A lot of schools will not accept the student, or grant scholarships, unless that child comes from an accredited old North Central – or now AdvancED - program; so that's what we're working on now.” “How it works is that each school does a self-assessment through student surveys, parent surveys, community surveys, kind of like the scholastic audit we did three or four years ago. Once we compile all that information, it helps us determine where we think we are educationally as a district. Then, they send a team of five people, almost exactly like the scholastic audit. The scholastic audit cost us \$5,000, the State paid it. This process cost \$750 per school and \$750 for the district; as well as the room and board for the people who come in and do the evaluation.” “All of our surveys and everything has to be submitted by the sixth of November. The team will come December 6<sup>th</sup> through December 9<sup>th</sup> and do the actual on-site observations.” “Now, what they're looking for is where you are from an educational standpoint. They're going to rate your district on a 1-4 scale and grant you an “accredited status”, or “accredited under review status”, based upon what they find. And after that, if you are fully accredited, you don't have to do anything except keep your membership up for the next five years. If you are not fully accredited, or accredited under review, they come back once a year to check your progress. So, you do a self- evaluation, and determine where you are. Then they establish all these goals for you to meet, and then you work on them. That is probably the best thing that I see coming out of it.” “Now, the tools that they use are ones that the district can use on their own to help continue to improve our educational process. The State does the same thing but the only problem is that their program is not a continuous program. This is a continuous program; it rolls over every year. We've done this at the high school but this process that they've changed over with AdvancED has given us the opportunity to bring the elementary school online. So, I think it's the best thing for us.” “So, just keep in mind those dates – November 6<sup>th</sup> for the submission date. I'll have some surveys for you all. Just come by and get your surveys. All of this has to be done by November 6<sup>th</sup>.” “The high school is giving out theirs, all the surveys can be done electronically.” *(Further discussion of the AdvancED process was held with questions being answered by Mr. Nicks).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “The next thing on the agenda is the Panic Button operations. Did everybody get an opportunity to get that done?” *(Mr. Nicks gave a brief overview of the progress that has been made with regard to getting the system fully operational. Mr. Campbell has installed numbers on exit doors and buildings).*

**Mr. Nicks:** “This has been a long and tedious process, and remember, we weren't notified until after July and it had to be up and running by September. But we've got our system up and running.” “And we're proud of the fact that we were able to put it all together so quickly.” “Along with that, and I don't have it on the agenda, if I can interject an item here. Let me tell you about a proposition that came to us; it's something that we need to look at. It's going to cost us about \$5,000. I haven't had a chance to run it by Mr. Hicks yet. But it's Air-Evac. They will provide us with a service where they will transport any

of the students, any of the teachers, anybody who works for the school for \$6.00 per person per year. Now what that means is that if we have someone to get hurt on the football field, or someone gets hit by a car out front; as long as that person is covered, they will send a helicopter to pick that child up and take that child to the hospital. Or, if you have something catastrophic to go on, they're going to transport them." "It's \$5,000 a year and what I wanted to run by you is, you know the state of ambulance services in Earle. Is it something we want to entertain?"

**Mr. E. Cox:** "I'm going to tell you why I think you should. Two weeks ago, they had a kid somewhere who got hurt on the football field and he died, not because of his injuries, but because they had to transport him in an ambulance. If they had air-lifted him, it would have been fine. Or, if some kid has an allergic reaction – if anything happens at the school – you can't beat that."

**Mr. Nicks:** "And it's a direct line. I don't know, it just came to me a couple of days ago. We'll have to find some way to pay for it; I'm sure we can. And the good part of it is: say you're having a football game and someone on the other team gets hurt – if they get hurt, they will transport that student." That really provides you a layer of protection that you don't get by not having it. The lady is pushing us for a contract, so just think about it. What if we have a shooting?"

**Mr. E. Cox:** "I'll tell you one that we don't even think about. "It's raining and the tuba player slips down off the bleachers and breaks his neck. And then if it's a visitor, we're going to be liable and the shame is going to kill you for not having an adequate emergency response mechanism in place."

**Mr. Nicks:** "And the other thing is that if we have it in place then we've taken every measure possible to provide for the safety of the children. And for the price – they charge you per student and per faculty member, staff member, whoever you put on the list – as long as they're on the school campus. And if our kids go somewhere and they get hurt, they will transport them from that location, as long as we notify them that they're Earle High School or Earle Elementary School students. It has some great benefits."

**Mr. E. Cox:** "Is that the same as if the little kids were on a field trip...?"

**Mr. Nicks:** "If they're on a field trip over at the Parkin park and one of them falls off a slide over there and gets hurt. They will pick him up in Parkin, rather than having to wait for an ambulance to come and pick someone up." "It's okay as long as it's not your child, but when it's your child, it becomes a serious matter, you know, and that's the way these parents feel. So you want to make sure you provide this."

**Mrs. Weatherspoon:** "Are there extra insurance benefits for us, meaning that maybe we get a discount for having the service?"

**Mr. Nicks:** "I don't know; I haven't gotten that far into it yet but I'm going to pursue that, but I just wanted you all to be aware of the process and get your permission on it if it's feasible for us to do so. And I didn't have it on the agenda and I apologize for that but I think it's something well worth looking into." *(Mr. E. Cox called for a motion. Mrs. Weatherspoon motioned and Mr. Berry seconded. The motion carried unanimously).*

**Mr. Nicks:** "School Improvement Specialist – let me run that by you. We talked about it last time. We've posted the position – it's open until November 1<sup>st</sup>. After November 1<sup>st</sup>, we will interview for a two-week period. We're going to try to come back and hire someone before Thanksgiving. We've posted the qualifications online and we have one applicant as of right now." "So, that kind of tells you where we are. Just wanted to bring you up to date on that." "That's all I have, unless there are any questions." *(There were no questions or further discussion)*

**Mr. E. Cox:** We will now conclude the Regular Board Meeting and have the Annual Report to the Public conducted by Mr. Nicks."

*(Mr. Nicks began the discussion for the Annual Report, copies of which are available in the Central Office).*

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Board President

  
Board Secretary

10-26-15  
Date