

MINUTES BOARD MEETING

July 31st, 2023

SPECIAL MEETING

At 6:00 p.m. on July 31st, 2023 Mr. Hartsfield convened a special meeting of the district Board of Education. Board members present were Ms. Compton, Ms. White, Mr. Frazier and Mr. Moore. Ms. Whitaker and Mr. Milner were absent. School administrative personnel present was Mr. Hayden, Mr. Webb, Ms. Davis, and Ms. McNeal. IC Murrell from the Pine Bluff Commercial and a representative from Delta Plex were in attendance.

NEW BUSINESS.

Student Handbook. Ms. McNeal presented the changes to the handbook. She stated that everything was previously approved except the cell phone policy (pg. 46). Ms. Wilson reiterated the reason those changes were made to be proactive related to school safety, bullying, disciplinary issues, community issues being brought to school, etc. He stated we need to focus on instruction and not the outside issues that get promoted and brought in from outside within the school walls. Ms. White asked why do we have so many changes. Ms. McNeal stated that we had to go through the tiers and match things with the code of conduct through DOJ. The use of cellphones are a level 1 and there are only certain things you can do with a level 1. We are trying to make things match with the code of conduct and student handbook. Ms. Compton asked are we setting students up for failure telling them they can bring phones to school, but they are not allowed to use them. Ms. McNeal stated we are not saying they are prohibited but we are saying if you bring it and if you use it, there are consequences. The district will have to be consistent 100% of the time with all students. Ms. Compton expressed concerns with consistency and asked if we can keep the old policy. Ms. McNeal said the zones do not work and there is not enough manpower to monitor the zones. It disrupts instructional time and much of the inconsistency is due to lack and/or shortage of manpower. Accountability will be critical and the policies are not useful if not enforced with consistency. Mr. Frazier asked if we would repeat responsibilities by faculty and staff, for example teachers using phones when students cannot. Ms. McNeal talked about professionalism, teaching, facilitating learning and we have to inspect what we expect and hold accountable. Mr. Frazier talked about a happy medium and that there are pluses and minuses both way and it does distract from education. Ms. Compton stated in the case of emergencies, the school's response time and communication time is often unacceptable and how will this be addressed. Ms. McNeal stated she has met with Mr. Cooper to revise the crisis management plan to include a communication plan in writing with a direct line of communication and protocol to follow. We have to protect our instructional time and our test scores say that. Ms. Compton again wanted to clarify that elementary students can bring their cell phones, they just cannot use them. Ms. McNeal replied yes, but there have been very few incidents. Mr. Frazier said it would be beneficial if we explained the why and that this is

not to be punitive, but to be beneficial. Mr. Webb reiterated the benefit and that people want direction. On a motion by Ms. White and a second by Mr. Frazier, the board voted 5-0 to accept the new cell phone policy in the student handbook.

PERSONNEL.

Mr. Wilson received a letter of resignation from Katrina Harroway. Mr. Wilson recommended the board to hire Ora Reynolds as a Dean of Students and LaTonia Roberts as an Elementary Secretary. On a motion by Ms. Compton and a second by Mr. Moore, the board voted 5-0 to accept the resignation and the recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT.

None

Respectfully submitted by, Mr. Wilson and Dee Davis.

Alan, Frazier.
Board Secretary