

**Minutes of Regular Meeting of the El Dorado School Board
November 9, 2009**

The directors of the board met on the above date at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room, School Administration Building, 200 West Oak Street, with Susan Turbeville presiding. Other directors present were Joey Bauman, Vicky Dobson, Wayne Gibson, Larry Holder, Renee Skinner, and Will Vance. Also attending the board meeting was Supt. Bob Watson, Rhonda Simmons, Shirley Billingly, Bonnie Haynie, Don Thompson, and Lou Ann Voris.

Mrs. Turbeville asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meetings held October 12 and 29. On a motion by Larry Holder, seconded by Vicky Dobson, and carried on a 7-0 vote, the minutes were approved.

The board reviewed the monthly bills. After some discussion and on a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Joey Bauman, and carried on a 7-0 vote, the bills were approved for payment. A list of bills paid and monthly financial statement are on file in the business office.

Don Thompson talked with the board about transferring six million to the general operating master account. After some discussion and on a motion by Larry Holder, seconded by Renee Skinner, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves Don Thompson to move six million to the district's general operating master account.

Mayor Mike Dumas read a proclamation naming November 16 – 22 as American Education Week in El Dorado.

Mrs. Turbeville introduced Cesar Castro, Student of the Month from Retta Brown Elementary. Cesar is the son of Carmen and Margarito Castro. He is a second grader in Mrs. Larry's classroom. Mrs. Larry stated that Cesar is a star student! He is very quiet, yet very attentive. He participates and is eager to answer questions. Cesar is polite and always respectful. He will gladly help his classmates and is a role model to others. Cesar works very hard in the classroom to be a successful student. He is an honor roll student and has good attendance at school. Staff and students feel that Cesar is very deserving of being Student of the Month. Mrs. Turbeville presented him with a certificate from the board.

Student of the Month from Barton Junior High School is Jactavis Williams. He is the son of Latanya and Erik Washington and an 8th grader at Barton. The teacher nominating Jactavis stated that he is one of the hardest working students they have ever had in class. His writing portfolio is not only complete, it is organized and neat! All objectives are dated and all of his essays are complete. His work ethic is not the reason he stands out. His attitude is what makes him a joy to teach. Not one day in the nine weeks that I have had Jactavis in my class did he walk in my room mad or angry. He participates in class and is respectful of his classmates. Jactavis does well because he wants to do so and best of all he does it with a smile on his face! Barton staff and students are proud that Jactavis was chosen Student of the Month. Mrs. Turbeville presented him with a certificate from the board.

Mrs. Turbeville said that Teacher of the Month from Barton Jr. High School is Lark Tommey. Mrs. Tommey attended the University of Arkansas with a major in child development and family relations. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Southern Arkansas University and is currently teaching 8th grade English. She is not only certified to teach English but also business education, American history, contemporary American history, world culture history, and family and consumer science – what a goal seeking educator!

Mrs. Tommey, her husband, and four children are all products of the El Dorado School District. Through the years Mrs. Tommey spent countless hours volunteering in her children's classrooms and also helping children in need throughout our community. Her

love of public school teaching began once her family was grown. One co-worker stated that Mrs. Tommey is able to reach every student at his or her level. She relates well with the students and is a positive and encouraging role model for her peers. Another said Mrs. Tommey is an outstanding teacher who works diligently to improve her students' grammar, writing, and reading skills. She incorporates strategies to engage her students in the English lessons and she is constantly searching for new ways to improve these strategies.

She recently held an event with a co-teacher called "Breakfast with a Book." More than forty students participated in this before-school activity. Students enjoyed spudnuts and juice while they discussed their class novel. One of her students commented that this was the best opportunity to ask questions about the parts that she did not understand. Many students at Barton are reading more and enjoying it as well because of Mrs. Tommey's encouragement.

Her principal, Sherry Hill said she was delighted with the faculty's choice of Lark Tommey for Teacher of the Month. Mrs. Tommey immediately fit right into the Barton culture and became an important player in the school. She comes early and stays late each day to provide the best possible educational experience for her students. She writes and mails notes to students each year welcoming them to her class and congratulating the 9th graders that she taught on their 8th grade Benchmark results.

Mrs. Hill said what impressed her most about Mrs. Tommey's dedication to improving the quality of education at Barton occurred about three years ago when she applied for an opening in the English department. Mrs. Tommey asked what Mrs. Hill thought about that. Mrs. Hill states: Well, once I got over the shock of a teacher from a non-tested subjected area actually thinking about moving to the most high-stake, high-pressure tested area – English – I had a very frank conversation with her. I discussed the time involved, the pressure of the test, the accountability, and I did discuss the positives as well. I told her to think about it and if she wanted the job it was hers – as it was a "win, win" situation for Barton. She came back and said she really believed she could make a difference in getting students to want to read and she really wanted to try. That was one of the best decisions made in the past three years! She has used her own money to build a large classroom library and works very hard to find just the right books for the right students. Lark Tommey really does make a difference in children's lives! Mrs. Turbeville presented Mrs. Tommey with a certificate from the board.

Mike Cobb with the firm of Cobb and Suskie, C.P.A. presented the annual audit report to the board. He said it was his pleasure to report no findings or weaknesses. Everyone has to work together to achieve this good report. It is a product of teamwork, leadership, and followship, Mr. Cobb said. He explained that over the years, the district has operated without debt and then entered into a period of building – the new high school – which was mandated by the state. This has shown the issuance of bonds and ongoing construction and in his report sees fiscal stability. The last two years have been tough for lots of different types of enterprises. Your numbers still look good – especially considering everything that is going on. He reported the district has \$16 million invested in capital infrastructure and \$39 million in total expenses. The district has \$33.681 million from taxes, state aid, and other sources, he said.

On June 30, 2009 the district was \$23,000 in the red, compared to \$34,000 a year prior. He told the board, you are a good custodian of the district's funds. The General Fund operated at a surplus of \$1.7 million and money went into Capital Outlay. You did well with what you had to work with. The General Fund showed revenue of \$33.272 million. Mr. Cobb said he was glad to be able to issue a clean report with no findings and no issues. You have close to a 30 day supply in the General Fund cash balance. This compares favorably to other years. You are meeting the challenges. Just keep on doing what you are doing. Mr. Watson added that between 87% and 90% of the school district's budget goes to salaries and benefits for teachers and all employees.

Mr. Watson said he received the following bids for 792 square feet of aluminum canopies to create an outdoor classroom at Barton Jr. High School:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Amount</u>
AACE, Inc., Shreveport, LA	\$17,424.00
Smith Canopies & Awnings, Bastrop, LA	19,900.00

He recommended the low bid from AACE, Inc. On a motion by Joey Bauman, seconded by Renee Skinner, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the low bid of \$17,424.00 from AACE, Inc. for canopies at Barton Jr. High School.

Mr. Watson said canopies at Yocum Elementary School were destroyed during a storm about a month ago. The following bids were received:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Amount</u>
AACE, Inc. Shreveport, LA	\$40,422.50
Pacheco Equipment, Little Rock, AR	58,525.00

He recommended the low bid. On a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Vicky Dobson, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the low bid of \$40,422.50 from AACE, Inc. for canopies at Yocum Elementary School.

Larry Walters stated when the 2009-2010 district calendar was in the works he failed to check a date turned in for the high school's baccalaureate. He asked that the board consider his request to have baccalaureate moved to May 23. On a motion by Joey Bauman, seconded by Vicky Dobson, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the date change for El Dorado High School's baccalaureate to May 23.

Mr. Watson reminded members of the board that a committee was formed to discuss the issue of school uniforms and the committee suggested school uniforms for the next school year. He said that board members had asked for more study on the subject and he had asked two principals and a student to address the subject. Sherry Hill reported on the number of students who were found to be in violation of the dress code, penalties for violations, and stated that some of their biggest problems are with parents, who tell school officials that because they don't buy the clothes, they cannot say what their child can wear. She said the dress code is in place for all students to create a more conducive learning environment and to minimize distractions to learning. Mrs. Hill reported that dress guidelines at El Dorado High School, Barton Jr. High School, and Washington Middle School are the same. When a child first gets sent to the office for a dress code violation, a parent or guardian is called to bring proper clothing to the school for that student. On a second offense, the student is sent to an alternative classroom, and the third offense warrants a suspension.

Mrs. Hill reported over two hundred incidents of dress code violations at Barton so far this school year with about fifteen to twenty percent of those being repeat offenders. One girl was sent to the office because her skirt was too short and the student said she brought pants just in case she got sent to the office – students are aware of the dress code, Mrs. Hill said. She said while boys with sagging pants are still a problem the biggest problem is with girls wearing too low and too tight blouses and skirts and dresses that are too short.

School officials spend most of the time dealing with parents of the offenders, Mrs. Hill said. She noted they get cussed at and so do the teachers. Teachers are only doing what administrators have told them to do. She said with uniforms they would have problems, too. Mr. Watson said the fashion industry is dictating what public school students want to wear. He noted the young people want to be fashionable and staff has other things to do besides police clothes. Talking with parents sometimes gets ugly, he said. They tell us their child wants to wear those clothes and they are buying them. Mrs. Hill said the

educational environment needs to be as free from distractions as possible and she has 650 students needing to focus on education.

Larry Walters reported that 98 of the high school's eleventh and twelfth grade students – 72 boys and 26 girls – have been cited with dress code violations so far this school year, compared to 89 students – 66 boys and 23 girls – in grades nine and ten. He said the student count at the high school is 1,380. Only about ten percent of the entire student body has been disciplined for dress code violations. He said, "I don't know if it is any better, but it is not any worse. Some students are getting the point." When a student sees a principal, teacher or other school official they will often pull up their sagging pants or zip up a jacket to hide a blouse that does not adhere to the dress code. Mr. Walters has told students that now the ball is in their court and if they don't want to wear uniforms, then they should dress appropriately for school and follow the dress code. He said the school also has problems with parents who say their child should be allowed to wear whatever they want.

Mr. Walters reminded the board that high school is on year four of school improvement and has to meet Adequate Yearly Progress as part of the Federal Act for No Child Left Behind. He said the school won't be able to meet that if students are frequently sent home for dress code violations. Mr. Watson added the district is hoping to achieve three things: Keep the board and public informed of the dress code situation; give the board an opportunity to solicit the help of parents in making sure their students wear proper attire to create a learning environment with as few distractions as possible; and to put the word out to the public that the district will continue to enforce the dress code policy.

Mr. Watson asked Trey Turbeville, president of the E.H.S. Student Council, to report about the Edline program. Edline is an American online school and class organization service that allows students and their parents to view grades and their student's progress online. Trey said students and parents have expressed positive remarks about Edline. "It's a great thing to have. Students like it," he said.

Mr. Watson asked the board for permission to select a committee to study the possibility of placing artificial turf at Memorial Stadium. He stressed that the committee would be charged with researching the pros and cons of artificial turf, costs of such a project, and how it would be funded. He said the district has no money to spend on artificial turf and it would have to be funded with private donations. He said stimulus and state money cannot be used to fund athletic facilities. It currently costs about \$35,000 annually for upkeep and maintenance of the field for salaries, watering, fertilizer, and other needed supplies. Mr. Watson said one company gave an estimate of \$500,000 to \$550,000 to place turf just on the field and between \$600,000 and \$650,000 for turf, covering, and everything within the track. He said the life expectancy of a turf covered field is from eight to twelve years – depending on the usage. On a motion by Larry Holder, seconded by Joey Bauman, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby gives the superintendent permission to appoint a committee to explore artificial turf for the field at Memorial Stadium.

Mrs. Turbeville stated the Arkansas School Boards Association Conference will be December 9-11 in Little Rock. She noted that the board needs to elect a representative from our board to the delegate assembly. Joey Bauman nominated Susan Turbeville. On a motion by Joey Bauman, seconded by Will Vance, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves Susan Turbeville as the board's representative to the delegate assembly at the Arkansas School Boards Conference on December 9-11, 2009.

Mrs. Turbeville said that Wayne Gibson is currently vice president of the board for the Arkansas School Boards Association. With nomination from our board he will be up for president-elect. On a motion by Larry Holder, seconded by Vicky Dobson, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby nominates Wayne Gibson to the position of president-elect of the Arkansas School Boards Association.

The meeting adjourned to an executive session to discuss personnel matters, then reconvened to an open meeting. Wayne Gibson left prior to the vote. On a motion by Renee Skinner, seconded by Vicky Dobson, and carried on a 6-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the superintendent's recommendations concerning the acceptance of resignations and the employment of new personnel.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.