

**Minutes of Regular Meeting of the El Dorado School Board  
March 12, 2007**

The directors of the board met on the above date at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room, School Administration Building, 200 West Oak Street, with Larry Holder presiding. Other directors present were Joey Bauman, Vicky Dobson, Wayne Gibson, Larry Holder, Teresa Swint, and Susan Turbeville. Also attending the board meeting was Supt. Bob Watson, Dr. James Fouse, Tim Zylks, Don Thompson, and Lou Ann Voris.

Mr. Holder asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meetings held February 12, 16 and 26. On a motion by Teresa Swint, seconded by Susan Turbeville, 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 Teresa Swint, seconded by Wayne Gibson, 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.

Mr. Holder introduced the Student of the Month, Kate Snell. Kate is the daughter of Marsha and Rick Snell and in the sixth grade. Kate was nominated for her helpfulness toward the fifth graders, teachers, and especially new students. She is also a conscientious student, juggling academics and extra curricular activities. Washington Middle School staff and students are proud that Kate was chosen Student of the Month. Mr. Holder presented her with a certificate from the board.

Mr. Holder stated that Scott Bounds was chosen the Teacher of the Month. Mr. Bounds teaches fifth through eighth grades at Union academy of Health and Wellness. He received his bachelors and masters degrees from Southern Arkansas University and has additional graduate hours from Galveston University and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. This is his nineteenth year of teaching and those nominating him stated that Mr. Bounds has a heart of gold. He cares for each and every one of the children he teaches. He is always offering encouragement and positive comments to the students. They respect him due to the way he comes across to them. He is dedicated and wants to make sure each child succeeds. Mrs. Overturf said that Mr. Bounds is a model teacher. He spends countless hours preparing for his students and the students love Mr. Bounds. They know he goes the extra mile trying to get them to do their best. The parents appreciate him for all that he does for their children and that he keeps them abreast of their child's progress. The teachers are thankful to have someone like Mr. Bounds as part of their staff. He is respected by everyone – students, parents, and staff! Mr. Holder presented him with a certificate from the board.

Mr. Holder said that John Hight is the Classified Employee of the Month. John began working in the district's technology department in March 1998. He took a year off to work in his family trucking business and returned in September 2006 as the district's technology supervisor and in charge of new technology projects. Those nominating John said that he always puts those of us at ease that are technology illiterate and has a great way of helping you understand new areas of technology while encouraging you to learn more. John quietly does his job, is never one to complain, and is very knowledgeable about his profession. One staff member stated that John never makes you feel like you are intruding on his time...when you probably are! Dr. Fouse said that John is retired from the U. S. Army as a computer operations supervisor and then went to work for Ensco for five years. He also said that John has brought new dimensions to the district's technology capabilities with his special knowledge of networks. John is a valuable asset to the district and our technology department.

Bonnie Haynie, Elizabeth Mason and Janey Pirnique recently attended the AGATE Award presentation for the gifted and talented program. AGATE stands for Arkansans for Gifted and Talented Education. They presented two Challenger Awards: one to Mr. Watson and one to the district's gifted and talented program.

Mr. Watson stated that Tia Silliman with Day Spring Behavioral Health Services had requested to talk with the board regarding the services their facility offers. Rusty

Cranford stated that he was speaking on behalf of Mrs. Silliman. He stated the counselors are currently unable to go on campus to meet with their clients. They are asking for their business to be allowed to go on campus in the event of an altercation during school hours.

Mr. Cranford said there are currently fifty students in the district that are counseled during after school hours through Day Spring. He stated that parents would like the Day Spring therapist to be able to counsel with the student when there is a conflict. Mr. Cranford said they are not trying to get into competition with the current provider. Board members discussed that parents are already allowed to request counselors, teachers and/or principals to attend counseling sessions with students, and Day Spring therapists. Mr. Watson noted that schools already provide counselors for students on campus during school hours.

Louise Cook, a volunteer to help students cross West Hillsboro near the Hillsboro Street Church of Christ spoke to the board. She stated that motorists are not obeying school bus stop signs and are endangering the lives of children. She requested additional signs be placed in the area warning motorists of children crossing. Mr. Watson asked Tim Zylks, Director of Transportation to work with Mrs. Cook with this matter.

Mr. Watson stated the district is in a dilemma on whether to spend \$17 to \$20 million to upgrade and renovate the high school that is over forty years old – one with open hallways and deteriorating wiring – or to spend around \$25 million to build a new high school. According to state mandates it is a decision that has to be made in the near future. Mr. Watson discussed with the board the state's mandate that all school facilities within the state must provide basically equal educational opportunities and facilities for the state's approximately 450,000 public school students. He said the district doesn't have a choice about changing the condition of the high school but does have to decide whether or not to upgrade and renovate or build a new facility. While state officials have said they have \$450 million to put into educational facilities – that doesn't mean they will pay for all upgrades and new buildings they have mandated school district provide for their students. The state will only pay a portion of the costs for facility upgrades or new buildings – roughly thirty-seven percent. Local school districts will pay the remaining portion of the costs of the state-mandated improvements or about sixty-two percent.

Mr. Watson said a few years ago the state set up teams of individuals to travel around the state and inspect school facilities. Based on those findings schools were then required to devise ten year plans to comply with mandates determined after the inspections were completed. During the first year of the ten year plan the district complied with mainly safety or priority one issues – making sure fire alarms were in working condition, adding more lighting in some areas and correcting other potential safety issues. The second year of the ten year plan included replacing the heating and cooling system at Yocum Elementary – a plan that is still in the works and will probably cost the district between \$750,000 to \$800,000 with the state paying about thirty seven percent of that cost. Problems at El Dorado High School are the top priority for year three of the ten year plan and Mr. Watson explained when the list of needed improvements to facilities within the district was first released, over forty million in repairs, upgrades, improvements and additional space was listed for the entire district. He said that closing Southside Elementary and Watson Educational Center relieved the district of about four million of that cost.

The state said to bring EHS up to standard with other school districts in the state, at least \$17 million would be needed – \$12 million in upgrades, \$3.5 million in electrical work, \$1 million in roofing and another \$5 million for additional space. Mr. Watson said the state determined the facilities cost index for EHS was over 66 percent and if the FCI is over 65 percent for a school the state suggests constructing a new facility. Other factors to be considered when determining whether to upgrade and renovate or build a new facility is that at the current high school, utility costs are astronomical, Mr. Watson said. Every door opens to the outside and it is not energy efficient. The district spends between \$8,000 - \$13,000 each month in electricity alone at the high school. Another factor to be considered is at the current high school, safety issues are a concern with open

hallways, 16 – 18 gates, and no self-contained facility. It is easy to gain entrance to the school grounds in, on or from above.

Mr. Watson said the district needs to start making plans about what to do with the high school. He requested that board members suggest people to serve on a study committee – parents, members of the community, teachers, other school officials, patrons of the district – to study the issues and get lots of people involved in the plans. Mr. Watson reminded the board that currently classroom sizes are about 750 square feet and the state has set a new standard that classroom sizes should be 900 square feet.

Teresa Swint expressed a desire to have a town hall meeting soon to hear from people in the community. Wayne Gibson stated the bottom line is we have to pay for the state mandated renovations or new building and the district cannot afford either without a millage. Will Vance noted the district has not had a millage increase since the early 1970's.

The meeting adjourned to an executive session to discuss personnel matters, then reconvened to an open meeting. On a motion by Susan Turbeville, seconded by Joey Bauman, and carried on a 7-0 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.