

Minutes of Regular Meeting of the El Dorado School Board
January 13, 2020

The directors of the board met on the above date at 6:08 p.m. in the Board Room, School Administration Building, 200 West Oak Street, with Renee Skinner presiding. Other directors present were Vicky Dobson, Wayne Gibson, Renee Skinner, Keith Smith, Todd Whatley and Shaneil Yarbrough. Also attending were Supt. Jim Tucker, Rhonda Simmons, Melissa Powell, Katie Sandifer, Bonnie Haynie, Shelley Pruitt and Lou Ann Voris.

Representative Sonia Barker stated Governor Hutchison has proclaimed January as Arkansas School Board Member Recognition Month. Representative Barker expressed hers and Speaker Matthew Shepherd’s appreciation to the school board members for their tireless work on the board. She noted that although it is an elected position, it is one that they volunteer for and each director is so appreciated. Rep. Barker read the following:

State of Arkansas
House of Representatives

Certificate of Recognition

WHEREAS, the month of January 2020 has been designated as Arkansas School Board Recognition Month; this is a time to celebrate the hardworking school board member’s efforts and to educate the public about the important role the school board plays in our communities and schools; and,

WHEREAS, this certificate is awarded to all of the hardworking elected volunteers on the El Dorado School District Board for their commitment, sacrifice, and unique role of championing and advocating for quality education in our local public schools; the members are Renee Skinner, (President), Shaneil “PJ” Yarbrough (Vice President), Susan Turbeville (Past President), Vicky Dobson, Wayne Gibson, Keith Smith, and Todd Whatley; and,

NOW THEREFORE, the El Dorado School District Board members are recognized for their dedication and are to be commended for their positive influence on the district and the outstanding services they provide to the community.

signed/Sonia Eubanks Barker	signed/Matthew Shepherd
State Representative, District 7	Speaker of the House

Following Rep. Barker’s presentation, board members and audience enjoyed an entertaining video, made by Katie Sandifer, of students and staff that were asked: What do you think a school board member does? 6:16 p.m.

Mrs. Skinner asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting held December 9. On a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Vicky Dobson, and carried on a 7-0 vote at 6:17 p.m., the minutes were approved.

The board reviewed the monthly bills with Shelley Pruitt. After some discussion and on a motion by Keith Smith, seconded by Shaneil Yarbrough, and carried 7-0 vote at 6:18 p.m., the bills were approved for payment. A list of bills paid and monthly financial statement are on file in the business office.

Mrs. Pruitt explained it is time to renew the school leader’s errors and omissions liability insurance policy that will run from February 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021.

<u>Company</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Policy Through</u>
A.S.B.A. – Bancorp South, Inc.	\$13,389.00	QBE Insurance Co.

She explained no other companies have bid therefore, this will be a renewal request to the board. Mrs. Pruitt said the superintendent’s recommendation is to go with Arkansas School Boards Association/Bancorp South, Inc. for a policy through QBE Insurance

Company for \$13,389.00. After a time of discussion and on a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Renee Skinner and carried on a 7-0 vote at 6:20 p.m., it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the renewal of the School Leaders Errors and Omissions Liability Insurance policy with A.S.B.A./Bancorp South with the policy from QBE Insurance Company for \$13,389.00. The policy will run from February 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021.

Mr. Gibson introduced Karsyn Curtis, Student of the Month from Yocum Primary School. He said that Karsyn is a first grader in Ms. Barnett's classroom and the daughter of Ashlee and D'Anthony Curtis. Ms. Barnette said: Karsyn stands out to me. She works hard and maintains self-control. She is dependable and has manners and respect for others. Her principal, Mrs. Michelle Henry said that Karsyn is a joy to have at Yocum. She is dependable and can be trusted to make the right choice, even when no one is looking. She has a great work ethic and puts her best efforts into academics. She is respectful, mannerly and friendly.

Karsyn takes her role as big sister seriously and carries that role over at school. When a new student moved to her classroom, she made them feel welcomed and showed her the ropes of Ms. Barnett's classroom. She is thoughtful and kind to her fellow peers and is willing to help tie a classmate's shoe or help them look for a lost coat without being asked.

Karsyn told me her favorite things about school are: lunch, recess and learning...in that order. When she grows up she wants to be a farmer because her momma loves pigs but her daddy says they are stinky! We are delighted Karsyn is a Yocum Primary Scholar! We are proud to have her represent our school as the Student of the Month for El Dorado School District! Congratulations Karsyn! Mr. Gibson presented her with a certificate from the board. 6:22 p.m.

Teacher of the Month from Yocum Primary School is Taylor Wells. Ms. Wells received her degree in early childhood education from the University of Arkansas at Monticello. She has completed all coursework for her Master's in teaching, K – 6 and will take the Praxis soon. She is a kindergarten teacher at Yocum and has been teaching two years – both at Yocum.

Co-workers nominating Ms. Wells said: Taylor Wells is certainly doing a good job in her second year. She is consistent with her discipline and expects the best from her students. She asks for help when needed and knows teaching is a team effort. Another said Ms. Wells is a delightful teacher who is full of joy! She has a positive attitude, even when situations are tough. She cares for all her students. Her principal, Mrs. Michelle Henry said: Ms. Wells is only in her second year of teaching but to enter her classroom, one would never know she is a novice teacher. She knows there is an elusive art to being firm but fair, having rules yet building and maintaining relationships and remembers that though she teaches numerous content areas...she is really teaching "children" whom she freely offers love, acceptance and grace.

Ms. Wells understands the importance of establishing relationships with students and parents and the impact it has on student learning. As students leave her classroom every afternoon, you will hear Ms. Wells say (in the most southern accent you have ever heard), "I love your!" This is not just something she does, but something she shows them on a daily basis. Students reciprocate that love for Ms. Wells, too.

Yocum is proud of Ms. Wells and her early accomplishments in the classroom. We look forward to seeing her grow as an educator and the difference she will make on a daily basis in the lives of her students! Congratulations Ms. Wells! Mr. Gibson presented her with a certificate from the board. 6:25 p.m.

Mr. Gibson said Classified Employee of the Month is Lawston Holloway. Mr. Holloway is a para-professional with five years' experience and four of those at Yocum Primary School. Fellow co-workers nominating him stated: Mr. Holloway is hands down the best para-pro ever! He works so hard with our students during RTI time. My students have

made significant growth in math and reading, thanks to Mr. Holloway. He always has a smile and positive attitude.

Another said: Mr. Holloway cares for each student he comes in contact with daily and puts all effort into helping them learn – not wasting any time. He has helped my students grow by leaps and bounds and makes sure to not miss any time with them. His efforts show daily, along with his connections with the students, as they are so excited to learn with him. One said: Mr. Holloway goes above and beyond for teachers and students. We can always count on him.

His assistant principal, Mrs. Jessica Moore said: When I asked our young, kinder friends what they loved about Mr. Holloway, some of the answers included – He is nice. He helped me learn my letters. He is kind. He helps me write my name. He gets me out of the car in the morning. He plays basketball with me at recess. He teaches me my numbers and he wears Jordan's! Mrs. Moore added: Mr. Holloway is one of the hardest working people I know. He is kind, loyal, chivalrous, professional, dependable and fun. He is the first to say, "I'll do it." Even if it means another recess in the blazing sun. And you can bet he will do it without complaint and with a smile on his face. Yocum Primary has labeled him our "Yes Man" because if you ask him for help his answer is always, "Yes."

Mr. Holloway provides intervention to students in math and reading. He wastes no time and makes every instructional minute with them count. He is their biggest encourager. Developing mutual respect and rapport with students comes natural to Mr. Holloway as he always displays a calm, even demeanor and good sense of humor on a daily basis. We are thankful and appreciative for the work Mr. Holloway does. He truly goes above and beyond for the staff and students at Yocum and we love him for it! Mr. Gibson presented Lawston Holloway with a certificate from the board. 6:28 p.m.

Kyerra Bridges is Student of the Month from Yocum Elementary School. Mr. Gibson said Kyerra is the daughter of Rissa Carey and a second grader in Mrs. Gulick's classroom.

Mrs. Gulick said: Kyerra is a joy to have in class. She is a hard worker and always does her very best. She is kind and respectful to everyone. Kyerra always willingly helps her classmates and they love her! Another teacher said: Kyerra is a smart, kind, hardworking and helpful student. Her principal, Mrs. Michelle Henry said: Yocum loves all of our students but we are especially pleased to have students like Kyerra. We are so proud to have her represent Yocum as the Student of the Month for El Dorado School District. Mr. Gibson presented Kyerra Bridges with a certificate from the board. 6:29 p.m.

Mr. Gibson said Teacher of the Month from Yocum Elementary School is Ashley Johnson. Mrs. Johnson received her Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and her Master of Arts in Teaching at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. She also has a doctorate in plant medicine from the University of Florida. Mrs. Johnson has four years teaching experience – all at Yocum where she teaches third grade and S.T.E.M. Mrs. Johnson has been married to Matthew for 18 years and has a son Hollis, a sixth grader at Washington and daughter, Amelia, a fourth grader at Yocum.

Multiple co-workers nominated Mrs. Johnson with the following words: Ashley Johnson is the prime example of a role model. She is always ready to help where needed. She goes above and beyond for her students and her co-workers. She always has a smile and such a positive attitude. She is an awesome teacher and makes learning fun for her students.

I have witnessed her be an instructor as well as a mother to the students, even if they are not assigned to her homeroom. She is fair, cordial with her co-workers, she can be funny but stern if need be. She is just an all-around pleasant person. She teaches with a great energy and has an excellent rapport with our students. She goes the extra mile! Mrs. Johnson goes above and beyond to help in any way she can. She goes the extra mile to ensure a quality, fun and memorable education experience for all of Yocum's students.

Her principal Mrs. Michelle Henry said: Mrs. Johnson decided she wanted to teach after volunteering at our Yocum Math and Science Fun Day. Already having multiple degrees, Mrs. Johnson decided to obtain her Master of Arts in teaching degree. Yocum was lucky to snag her to teach S.T.E.M. She is a natural teacher. I have watched her persevere and grow into a leader among her co-workers. Ashley is very professional, intelligent, dedicated and a driven teacher – as well as an excellent mother and wife. Her attitude stays positive even in the midst of struggle. In the last month and a half, Mrs. Johnson and her family have welcomed two Yocum students into their home as foster children. This shows the heart that Ashley Johnson has for children. Mrs. Johnson is an exceptional teacher and person! We are proud to have her as part of our Yocum family! Mr. Gibson presented her with a certificate from the board. 6:32 p.m.

Michelle Henry gave a principal's report from Yocum Primary and Elementary School. She first thanked the school board directors for their commitment to the students and staff. In her power point presentation, she showed pictures of students with title of each section stating: This Is What It's All About...Whatever it takes for EVERY student EVERY DAY! She noted they work on student achievement every day. She covered all subjects and showed what makes learning fun.

Mrs. Henry said she asked the Yocum staff, "What do you think makes Yocum great?" The answers were: The amazing hard working classroom teachers that work hard every day with students that need so much more than just mastering skills. They nurture and expect the best from their students. Consistency – we all know what is expected of us and what it will take to help our students succeed in the years to come. The school is a family. The library is an awesome place. The exploration lab – Mrs. Simpson providing hands-on science learning. The love that our teachers have for our students. That love is what drives the teaching, hard work and connections to the students, that help to complete and mold together our classroom families. Teachers are doing everything we know to do to make sure our students learn at high levels. The teachers take care of each other and the students like family. The administrators never ask us to do a job that they wouldn't do. Leaders are helpful, professional, and are dedicated to their jobs. This encourages the faculty and staff to work hard every day. The amazing teachers and their commitment to the precious students, not just academically, but emotionally and physically. They truly care about the whole child. The teacher's dedication and camaraderie. Last year's growth and this year's continued growth. The movement into PLCS and teacher collaboration. The lessons the counselors do in the classrooms. The way the teachers work together to meet their goals and keep upbeat attitudes – like a big family raising lots of kids. The last comment was, Our school building is filled with love and I feel it every day.

Mrs. Henry explained about the learning but fun time they have at Yocum math and literacy night. She showed pictures of the Yocum Freedom Parade. There were pictures and an explanation of Yocum's exploration lab with greenhouse and garden boxes and student harvesting carrots and then examining the parts of the carrot plant. She said the Yocum counselors celebrate birthday month with the students. Students with a birthday that month get to eat their lunch on the stage and enjoy a birthday cupcake. She also showed pictures of the counselors working with students on kindness lessons and how to spread kindness like confetti. Mrs. Henry said one thing that really touches her heart is a group of ladies – community prayer warriors – that come to the school every few weeks and pray outside the school for the school's students and staff. Other community support includes policemen and school administrators that come to Yocum to have lunch with students. Science chair, Carolyn Smith meets students in the drop off line each morning with a smile and handshake. Some of the world's best volunteers are Vicki and Mark Harmon and their group of mentors to the students. She thanked the community donations from Delek, Simmons Bank, Young's Funeral Home, local churches, Master Gardeners, Entergy and many others. At the start of the school year the staff was treated to lunch by Wyatt Baptist Church and Immanuel Baptist Church. The El Dorado Education Foundation awarded a grant to Yocum for digital microscopes and Murphy Oil Corporation matched a donor's contribution for swings at the primary school. Yocum also promotes a culture of celebration with monthly attendance awards, principal behavior awards, student recognition, and staff recognition, Mrs. Henry said.

In one photo of STEM teacher Ashley Johnson, Mrs. Henry explained it showed Mrs. Johnson preparing for a meeting with co-workers on S.T.E.M. projects. Mrs. Henry said she is proud of how Yocum's staff is great about sharing ideas with each other daily and in staff meetings. Teachers are constantly in training with: Science of Reading, Response to Intervention and Professional Learning Community which bring them back to the classroom with learning, collaboration and results. She said Arkansas schools are monitored by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Grade Rating Scale. As a result of Yocum's focus they have experienced the most growth in their area with a score that jumped from a 56.25 to 62.44, which is just 2 ½ points short of the next level up. Staff was elated with that achievement and celebrated the success with an Amazing Things Happen Here event for the student's hard work. Mrs. Henry said this encompasses the school's mission of Whatever It Takes for Every Student...Everyday at Yocum Math & Science Academy. 6:46 p.m.

Autumn Parker, secretary with the E.H.S. Student Council visited with the board about the upcoming Mr. E.H.S. pageant. In the past they have had about fourteen guys enter but this year there are thirty. The student council members are excited about the pageant and proceeds will go to the Arkansas Children's Hospital and the high school's theatre. Mr. Gibson ask August several questions about the high school and her future plans. She is a senior and said her counselors and teachers are great about getting them ready for college. She plans to major in engineering and attend Mississippi State University. 6:50 p.m.

The board approved a Petition for Transfer Request for one student from Smackover district to attend in El Dorado. 6:52 p.m.

Mrs. Skinner said the upcoming 2020 Arkansas School Boards Association's School Law Seminar will be February 13 at the Wyndham Hotel in North Little Rock. 6:53 p.m.

The meeting adjourned to an executive session to discuss personnel matters, then reconvened to an open meeting. President Renee Skinner's recommendation was made to renew the superintendent's contract and revisit his salary at a later date. On a motion by Vicky Dobson, seconded by Keith Smith, and carried on a 7-0 vote 7:35 p.m., it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the superintendent's recommendations concerning the acceptance of resignations and the employment of new personnel. The contract of Superintendent Jim Tucker was renewed and the board will revisit his salary at a later date.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.