

**Minutes of Regular Meeting of the El Dorado School Board  
March 9, 2020**

The directors of the board met on the above date at 6:03 p.m. in the Board Room, School Administration Building, 200 West Oak Street, with Renee Skinner presiding. Other directors present were Kenneth Clemons, Vicky Dobson, Wayne Gibson, Keith Smith, and Todd Whatley. Susan Turbeville was absent. Also attending was Supt. Jim Tucker, Rhonda Simmons, Katie Sandifer, Bonnie Haynie, Shelley Pruitt, and Lou Ann Voris.

Mrs. Skinner welcomed Kenneth Clemons to the school board and congratulated Keith Smith for his re-election to Zone 4. She noted the need for the board to elect a vice president. On a motion by Todd Whatley, seconded by Wayne Gibson and carried on a 6-0 vote 6:05 p.m., it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves Susan Turbeville as vice president of the school board.

Mrs. Skinner said there is also a need to also elect an alternate disbursing officer for the district. On a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Vicky Dobson and carried on a 6-0 vote at 6:05 p.m., it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves Susan Turbeville to serve as alternate disbursing officer for the district.

Mrs. Skinner asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting held February 10. On a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Todd Whatley and carried on a 6-0 vote, the minutes were approved at 6:06 p.m.

The board reviewed the monthly bills with Shelley Pruitt. After some discussion and on a motion by Keith Smith, seconded by Wayne Gibson, and carried on a 6-0 vote, the bills were approved for payment at 6:06 p.m. A list of bills paid and monthly financial statement are on file in the business office.

Jason Holsclaw with Stephens, Inc. updated the board on the refunding of the bonds that was presented in the February board meeting. He explained the refinancing of the 2012 bonds at 1.92% interest, down from 3.49% interest should see savings of up to \$1.6 million from that refinancing. After a time of discussion and on a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Vicky Dobson and carried on a 6-0 vote at 6:16 p.m., it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the refinancing of the 2012 bonds at 1.92% interest.

Mr. Holsclaw offered to put out bids to refinance the 2017 bonds as well, with potential savings of up to \$330,000 for the district. He spent time explaining the details of the bids, related information, and presented the refunding resolution to be sent to the Arkansas Department of Education in order to pursue and expedite the refinancing.

**RESOLUTION TO REFUND OUSTANDING BONDS  
IN ORDER TO PRODUCE DEBT SERVICE SAVINGS**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of El Dorado School District No. 15 of Union County, Arkansas (the "District") that:

1. The District recognizes that debt service savings may be achieved by refunding the District's outstanding bond issue dated June 7, 2017 (the "Prior Bonds").
2. The District retains Stephens Inc. as municipal advisor and approves the attached agreements.

3. The District authorizes Stephens Inc. to file an application with the State Board of Education to issue refunding bonds (the “Bonds”) in order to refund the Prior Bonds.
4. The District hereby expresses its intent to retain Friday, Eldredge & Clark, LLP, Little Rock, Arkansas as Bond Counsel for the Bonds (“Bond Counsel”).
5. The Superintendent of School is authorized to offer the bonds for public sale.

signed/Renee B. Skinner  
President  
El Dorado School Board

signed/Lou Ann Voris  
Secretary  
El Dorado School Board

Mr. Holsclaw stated he would return to the April board meeting with an update on the Arkansas Department of Education’s approval status on refinancing the 2017 bonds. After some discussion and on a motion by Vicky Dobson, seconded by Todd Whatley and carried on a 6-0 vote at 6:19 p.m.

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the resolution to the Arkansas Department of education to pursue refinancing the 2017 bonds with Stephens, Inc. Should the interest rate change, the board approves Stephens, Inc. to work with the superintendent on the change.

School nurse, Janet Scarlett reported to the board regarding prevention of the coronavirus and the flu. She said COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) virus. She said it can spread from person to person. Health officials are currently taking steps to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 into communities and schools in the United States, which can play an important role in this effort.

She said the El Dorado School District, working together with the local health department, has an important role in slowing the spread of this disease to help ensure that students have a safe and healthy learning environment. This includes the following:

- If a student or staff member has traveled outside the United States in the last 14 days and has symptoms - fever, cough, shortness of breath - they should immediately be placed in a single room and have a mask placed on them. Others in the room should wear a mask. If physical contact is required, then gown, gloves, and mask should be worn. Any suspected case of COVID-19 (with symptoms) should be reported to the Arkansas Department of Health immediately at (501) 537-8969 or 1 (800) 554-5738.
- The District is emphasizing common preventive actions for students and staff:
  - Stay at home when sick,
  - Cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing. If tissues are not available cough or sneeze into your upper arm or sleeve,
  - Wash hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Ensure students and staff who become sick at school or arrive at school sick are sent home as soon as possible.
- Keep sick students and staff separate from well students and staff until they can leave.
- Share resources with the school community to help families understand when to keep children home.
- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, light switches, countertops) with a cleaner that kills 99.9% bacteria and viruses. Use all products according to the directions on the label.
- Educate the staff on any updates on the COVID-19 virus and disinfecting techniques for the safety of the students and staff.
- If a student or staff member has been identified with COVID-19, school and administrators will seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students and staff should return to school and what additional steps are needed for the school community.

- The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will update this guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available.  
6:26 p.m.

Sherry Hill recognized three of her El Dorado High School students that are National Merit Finalists: Scott Ratchford, Aidan Price and Lorin Utsch. She noted that Lorin graduated early and was represented by her mother, Shelly Utsch.

Mrs. Hill said the National Merit Scholarship Program is an academic competition for recognition and scholarships that began in 1955. Approximately 1.6 million high school students enter the program each year. The mission of National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) is to recognize and honor the academically talented students of the United States. NMSC accomplishes its mission by conducting nationwide academic scholarship programs. The enduring goals of NMSC's scholarship programs are:

- To promote a wider and deeper respect for learning in general and for exceptionally talented individuals in particular
- To shine a spotlight on brilliant students and encourage the pursuit of academic excellence at all levels of education
- To stimulate increased support from individuals and organizations that wish to sponsor scholarships for outstanding scholastic talent

Of the 1.6 million entrants, some 50,000 with the highest PSAT/NMSQT Selection Index scores (calculated by doubling the sum of the reading, writing, and language, and math test scores) qualify for recognition in the National Merit Scholarship Program. In September, these high scorers are notified through their schools that they have qualified as either a Commended Student or Semifinalist.

In February, some 15,000 Semifinalists are notified by mail at their home addresses that they have advanced to Finalist standing. High school principals are notified and provided with a Certificate of Merit to present to each Finalist. Finally, winners of scholarships are selected. Mrs. Hill stated how proud she is of these students and presented each with a certificate. One student, Scott Ratchford thanked the school district for providing the Advanced Placement classes and study help sessions with the SAT and ACT tests. He noted that he has enjoyed his years at the high school and feels prepared for his future.  
6:30 p.m.

Mr. Gibson introduced the Student of the Month from Washington Middle School, London Willis. London is the daughter of Stephanie Jones and a Washington sixth grader. Mr. Gibson said teachers nominating her stated: London is an amazing student who works hard every single day. She goes out of her way to help teachers and make other students feel involved.

According to her principal, Mrs. Jody Vines: Seeing London brings me joy each day. She always has a pleasant smile and a pleasant greeting. The way she has performed in our Great American Shake Class this year has been so very impressive and people throughout the community have complimented her social skills. I am hoping that she will qualify for our trip to Atlanta this year to participate in the national competition because I know she will do well. There is no doubt that London will achieve great things in the future! Washington Middle School is so very pleased to be represented by London Willis as the El Dorado School District Student of the Month. 6:32 p.m.

Classified Employee of the Month from Washington Middle School is Denise Allgood. Mr. Gibson said Ms. Allgood serves as a paraprofessional helping in our R.T.I. program and does so much to help struggling learners. Fellow co-workers nominating her stated she is patient and kind, while keeping high expectations for the students she serves. Ms. Allgood is always willing to lend a helping hand, no matter what we ask.

Angela Moore, who works in our office said, "Denise Allgood is so deserving. Each morning she comes in and asks if there is anything she needs to do in addition to her daily routine to help out. She then sets out to do whatever is needed with a smile on her face."

Her principal, Mrs. Jody Vines said “Denise worked over the summer to be trained in strategies for intervention and keeps very detailed records on the student she serves. She is such a valuable employee. She is happy, kind, caring and motivated to help struggling learners. We are so blessed to have her working at our school.” Without a doubt, Washington Middle School is thrilled to have Denise Allgood recognized as the El Dorado School District Classified Employee of the Month. 6:33 p.m.

Mr. Gibson introduced Teacher of the Month from Washington Middle School, Kari Carelock. Mrs. Carelock received her degree in elementary education from Southern Arkansas University and this is her nineteenth year of teaching. She currently teaches sixth grade English/Language Arts at Washington.

Fellow co-workers nominating her stated: Kari Carelock is a joy to work with. She is always willing to help or give advice so her colleagues can become better teachers. You can tell when you watch her interact with her students that she truly loves her content area and what she does. She is so talented when it comes to teaching! When students have her, they leave their sixth grade year with a love of reading they didn’t have before.

Her principal, Mrs. Jody Vines stated: Mrs. Carelock cares deeply about her students. Each afternoon she stays after school to help students safely cross the street. She watches for the elementary students to get off their buses and helps ensure they get across our busy street safely. She stays long after her supervision time is over to help with this.

This year, Mrs. Carelock served as a mentor for new teachers. She stays with new teachers when they need it and she does it with such a kind spirit. She has also worked diligently to help her co-workers create common formative assessments and other materials that will help our students succeed. Her love for reading is so infectious, she even brings me books that she knows will have special meaning to me! Her calm demeanor and love for teaching is a true asset to our school. Mrs. Carelock cares for students, fellow teachers and her school and it shows. We are blessed to have her as a teacher at Washington Middle School and so proud she is being recognized as El Dorado School District Teacher of the Month. 6:37 p.m.

Camille Terry, treasurer of the El Dorado High School Student Council reported to the board. She noted the council recently held the Mr. E.H.S contest which proved to be a profitable fundraiser, clubs at the high school recently had pictures made, and the student council will soon be electing officers for next school year. Mr. Gibson asked her plans for the future. Camille said she is currently a junior at EHS but hopes to go into occupational therapy following graduation. When asked her likes and dislikes at EHS, she said the ACT practice sessions they have for students is very helpful and she recently started soccer and really likes that. Her only dislike is the need for showers following her strength and conditioning class which happens to be during fourth period. She said the class has been very helpful but showers would certainly help that sweaty feeling that most students experience during the rest of the day. 6:41 p.m.

Phillip Lansdell visited with the board about consideration of a wrestling team at El Dorado High School. Every school in our conference has a team except El Dorado and Texarkana, he said. He said the football coaches actually like having this sport. It is very organized and done by weight classification. Mr. Lansdell said it is strictly monitored and if you do not meet the weight classification, then you don’t compete. It builds confidence, mental toughness, speed and agility and would be an asset to other sports as well.

He noted that Greg Hatcher started it in the state and offered to order and pay for the mats. Mr. Lansdell said the uniforms, shoes and head gear are a minimal cost. He added that boys and girls can compete in matches but not on the state level. It has to be boy versus boy and girl versus girl on the state level and you really don’t have them competing against each other often, he’s been told. One girl from another district told him that she like wrestling a boy because it helps her compete well on the state level.

Texarkana athletic director told Mr. Lansdell if we started a wrestling team, they would. He noted he already has two coaches that worked with wrestling teams when they taught

in previous school districts and are looking forward to coaching teams here, if approved by the board. Mr. Tucker said he sees this as a real opportunity for the district and students normally do not compete in other sports. He recommended this to the board. On a motion by Todd Whatley, seconded by Keith Smith and carried on a 6-0 vote at 6:51 p.m., it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves adding a wrestling team to the El Dorado High School athletic schedule.

Grace George explained to the board that over the past three years the school district has provided free summer meals through the Seamless Summer meal program. Each year the participation has increased at the sites providing these meals. Our community has several areas, including apartment complexes and mobile home parks, where it is not convenient or easily accessible for children 18 and under to participate due to location and distance.

With the purchase of a food trailer, Child Nutrition would be able to provide meals and meet even more needs. During the school year, the trailer will be used to promote special menu items at schools to increase daily participation, provide meals off site to field day participants, and promote El Dorado Child Nutrition in our community.

Mrs. George has been diligent in finding a company to build a food trailer and has received permission, from the Arkansas Department of Education's Food Nutrition Unit, to proceed. She will use nutrition funds to pay for half and the district will pay for the other half. She showed several slides of the trailer she has gone and looked at in Houston and would like to purchase. It was also the best priced trailer from Custom Made Trailers. It is 18ft. long and fully equipped with a price of \$35,912.00. Mr. Tucker said he is recommending this food trailer to the board. After a time of discussion and on a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Vicky Dobson and carried on a 6-0 vote at 7:01 p.m., it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves purchase of the 18 ft. food service trailer from Custom Made Trailers, Houston, Texas for \$35,912.00. Nutrition funds will pay for half and the district will pay half.

The meeting adjourned to an executive session to discuss personnel matters, then reconvened to an open meeting. On a motion by Vicky Dobson, seconded by Todd Whatley, and carried on a 6-0 vote at 8:41 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.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.