

September 7, 2010

The **Executive Committee** of the Caddo Parish School Board (CPSB) met in regular session in its office at 1961 Midway Street, Shreveport, Louisiana, at approximately 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 7, 2010 with President Lillian Priest presiding and Eursla Hardy and Charlotte Crawley present being a quorum. Other school board members present were Steve Riall, Willie Burton, Curtis Hooks, Bonita Crawford, Barry Rachal, Larry Ramsey, Ginger Armstrong and Dottie Bell. Also present were Secretary Dr. Gerald Dawkins, Legal Counsel Reginald Abrams, staff and other visitors. Mrs. Armstrong led the prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

ESTABLISH THE AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA FOR THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2010 CPSB MEETING

The superintendent presented the proposed items for the agenda for the September 21, 2010 CPSB meeting and the following discussion ensued.

Bids. Mr. Rachal requested an explanation as to where the funds will come from for Blanchard? Mr. Rachal stated that he is assuming that Blanchard is not on the off-line list; and Dr. Dawkins confirmed that it is, but at this time community meetings have not been held and he is unsure about what the board will ultimately approve. Mr. Rachal asked about the time that it may be taken off-line and the cost of us doing this project? Mr. White explained this structure is an older wooden style structure and once leaks get in the building, it can promote decay; thus this is a protection of the district's assets. Mr. Rachal stated he understands taking care of our buildings. Mr. Riall asked if this has already been bid. Mr. White explained that the bids have been advertised; however, no bids have been accepted on this date and they will be brought to the board for approval.

Mrs. Crawford asked the board to remember that we cannot ask students to sit in classrooms or teachers to teach in rooms where there are leaks. Mrs. Crawley asked if since we do have a plan that has not been accepted; is it possible to, before we send out requests for bids, anything placed as off-line, vote on this and ask board?

Ms. Priest asked Caddo's administration if there is a list on the facilities that could potentially need improvement within the next year? The superintendent responded that staff looked at safety and health issues in all the buildings and prioritized requests and what is presented are those things that affect children and their health and safety.

2010-2011 School Calendar Revision. The superintendent stated that because November 2nd is an election day and there are 52 polling places located in the public schools, it is proposed that this date be used as a professional development day and students not report to school. He added that Caddo will still be in the range of the required number of instructional minutes and days. Mrs. Bell stated her concern is that in the past the district has more often than not closed school on these election days due to the traffic in and out of the campus, employees who work the polls and parking. She said she believes all these have to do with the safety of the employees also and she will be bringing a motion to that effect.

Mr. Riall asked if every school's graduation dates were changed? Dr. Dawkins responded that he is not certain if every one of them changed, but in reviewing the 2010 graduation schedule, and how graduation flowed, staff is recommending adjustments so the graduation schedule flows smoothly. Mr. Riall requested a copy of the proposed graduation dates as soon as possible, and the superintendent shared this information with members of the board.

Textbook Adoption Proposal. Mrs. Crawford referenced information from Mr. Rachal relative to students not having textbooks and students who are being tutored after school and do not have a copy of the textbook of the course they were being tutored in. She noted the importance of all students having access to textbooks and encouraged support of this item. Mr. Rachal referenced his email relative to the \$1.7 million allocated to purchase textbooks and he asked staff to look at very closely what textbooks are needed and determine if there is anything included that could be put aside and holding over that amount toward purchasing laptops. He added that he is not indicating that none of the money be spent on textbooks, and asked the superintendent to respond. Dr. Dawkins explained that with the new system we are open to the possibility of having eBooks, and staff has discussed, as was discussed last year, the possibility of this

happening. In the meantime, we must make sure that we have all pieces in place to make this happen, including providing all the training and infrastructure needed. In moving forward, Dr. Dawkins stated that this resource will look different and he and staff will continue to look at possible resources to accomplish this for our students. Mr. Rachal stated that he only wants the public to know that the administration is giving this project due diligence and that the superintendent is moving forward.

Mrs. Bell asked if these are the textbooks adopted this year or are they from the same textbooks adopted earlier this year and there is a need for more? Dr. Dawkins stated that it's a combination of both and staff will be looking internally to make necessary adjustments. Mrs. Bell asked if staff will be inventorying the schools to determine if there are extra books at any school that can be shared with those in need? Dr. Dawkins responded that staff is continually monitoring the numbers and movement will occur where possible. Mrs. Bell asked the superintendent to explain how a school can get two sets of books, one to keep in the classroom and one to take home? Dr. Dawkins responded that every school is a little different and Mrs. Gunn explained that each school gets a per pupil allotment for textbooks which is not enough money to buy even one textbook for all the students. Schools that have more books hold fundraisers at the school for purchasing additional books. Mrs. Bell asked about the cost for some of the books for schools, and Mrs. Gunn responded that the average is \$75 to \$100 per book.

Mr. Burton asked about the feasibility of having extra books and if there are any schools without books? The superintendent responded we have not heard that there are and there should not be; and while there have been some shortages in some places, we have been able to respond to those needs. Mr. Burton added that he believes this is another reason for moving toward electronic books and this would resolve the problem of textbook shortages.

Ms. Priest asked the superintendent how fast the district is moving toward e-textbooks, because \$1.7 million for textbooks is a lot when next year some of those books may be outdated. Dr. Dawkins referenced concerns expressed and that not only are most of the books moving toward e-textbooks, but it will take time. He added that in some instances, the district must buy the hard copy and the company will provide an e-version along with it; however, the key is to have the technology so students have access all the time.

Mr. Ramsey stated that when we first began talking about building the technology program, it was his perception that as we brought these items on line, the infrastructure would be done while we were looking at what textbooks were coming online (eBooks) in an effort to migrate to on-line textbooks. He asked if updates could be shared more frequently with the board on the cost of textbooks and computers as well as keeping some copies of textbooks, because he believes we could move too fast in accomplishing this goal. The superintendent stated his agreement with the comments made and also that we won't be able to do away with the hard copies of textbooks; but he believes there are opportunities to be more efficient with the resources than we have been in the past. Dr. Dawkins reported that staff will bring a report to the board on what has already been purchased relative to eBooks, since some have been purchased on a small scale.

Mr. Riall asked the superintendent about the two categories of textbooks of science and technical/computer and the criteria used by staff for selecting the textbooks we use? He said he knows the Governor has granted permission for districts in Louisiana to give equal value in teaching evolution and creationism, and asked if someone is looking at the textbooks being recommended to use to make certain that this is taking place and that it is not tainted on one side or the other? The superintendent responded that the district does follow the state guidelines and asked Mrs. Gunn to share additional information. He also stated that the reason some of these are coming to the board is because it is time for some of them to rotate by subject area. Mrs. Gunn explained that the state has a seven year cycle rotation for adoption of textbooks and this year it is science, computer education, and career and technical education. She further explained that these textbooks have not been adopted, but the first step is the state follows an adoption process and those approved by the state are looked at by the districts and the districts then follow an adoption process based upon the School Board's policy relative to textbook adoption. Dr. Dawkins added that on a national scale, the States of Texas, Florida and New York control textbook publishing nationwide and what Caddo has adopted is in accordance with our standards.

Mrs. Armstrong expressed her appreciation for the superintendent's remarks and her colleagues questions, because she desired to find out if we have adopted these textbooks. Having served on

the textbook committee in the past, she wants to know if these will be thoroughly screened before being recommended to the board for adoption and encouraged this to be a cautious process. She also asked the superintendent if we go to computers, will the eBooks require the district to pay a separate cost? The superintendent responded there is a cost associated with all of it and that is why we must be very careful in moving forward in this area as there are costs associated with all of it. Staff will be doing comparisons to determine where the best value is for Caddo Parish, keeping in mind that our students need the most current information that we can give them, and will present this information to the board. Mrs. Armstrong stated her concern over the financial aspect because we are looking at over \$1.7 million for these textbooks; however if this money or a portion of it was invested in computers, we would still have to pay a large portion to invest in e-textbooks.

Mr. Hooks stated that there was a time at Hollywood when they had an extra set of books and to do so depends on how the administration spends the money and how the books are treated.

Approval of Beverage Contract between Southwood and Pepsi Beverage Company. Mrs. Bell asked if the school receives money? Dr. Dawkins answered that the schools do receive money for these contracts, depending on the amount of money the vending machines take in, which can be a substantial amount for schools to use to do different things to support their programs. Mrs. Bell inquired about the recent information in the media about serving energy drinks in these vending machines, because there has been concern expressed in this area. Dr. Dawkins stated that for several years it has been the policy that during the day fruit juices, water, milk are made available, and carbonated beverages are available after school.

Request to Rehear Level IV Grievances. Attorney Abrams explained that this is a request from employees concerning an issue that came up last year and the board held a Level IV grievance hearing and requested that certain things be done. He further explained that the request now is to rehear this grievance because certain things were not done. He explained this does not fall under the grievance statute and it will be up to the board to determine whether or not it wishes to rehear it and if so, it will be at the following (October) meeting.

Mrs. Crawley stated that she doesn't believe this is a rehearing of the original grievance; but it is another grievance since the solution/board's directive was not done. Mr. Abrams explained that is not how the request is framed. Mrs. Crawley asked why is it framed in such an odd manner? Mr. Abrams responded that this is the way it was presented. Mrs. Crawley further asked if we are not going to rehear that we didn't do what they were to do? Mr. Abrams stated that is the request and he doesn't consider this a grievance. Mrs. Crawley asked if the board says to do something and it is not done, that is not a grievance? Mr. Abrams said it does not fall under the grievance policy that way, but the grievance policy states that it's between an individual relative to something that hasn't happened and you are saying that the superintendent did not follow through with what the board said and this is a totally different issue. Dr. Dawkins stated that if this is not a grievance, can staff address what did not happen? Mr. Abrams responded that staff can and he will provide some suggestions for doing so.

Anti-Bullying Policy. Mr. Hooks referenced the August 1st issue of the newspaper and the headlines noting "bullying" and the fact that before the day ended, a Shreveport teenager died as a result of bullying. He said in checking, he was surprised to learn that Caddo did not have a bullying policy and in working with the board's attorney, he is proposing a policy addressing this area, and for the board's support in protecting our students and our teachers. Mr. Abrams clarified that bullying has always been addressed in CPSB Policy JG as a violation for which one could be expelled; however there was not a definition of bullying in the policy. He also stated that the policy before the board is a modification of a policy that came before the Discipline Review Committee approximately three years ago when there was Federal Legislation with different language and never got passed. He said the proposed policy also follows the district's policy on harassment that must be published at every school, tracking the language of that policy, and the penalty for bullying. Mr. Burton echoed the comments made and that he believes this policy makes it more definitive. Mrs. Bell asked if it is possible to have signs at schools that bullying/harassment will not be tolerated. Dr. Dawkins responded that staff will follow up on implementing this to accompany the policy. Mrs. Crawley referenced a child saying to a teacher that if the teacher made the child mad, the child would hit the teacher and she believes this is a form of bullying and/or assault.

Rutherford House Funding/Truancy. Mr. Hooks stated he talked to Dr. Knowles and learned that he was paying two of our employees and at the end of the year, Caddo would reimburse them for salaries and benefits. He referenced truancy and his question when approving the \$180,000 if we could support both programs. Mr. Hooks said he was told that Dr. Knowles received his money from the state and the cuts the state has made. He believes it is fair for Caddo to pay for one of the employees and Rutherford House to pay for the second employee.

Truancy. Mrs. Crawley announced that Ms. Phelps shared with her that she will be making a motion, but backup would not be needed. Mr. Rachal asked if a motion is being made, what information is she making a motion on? Ms. Priest asked the superintendent if there was any information for this item and the superintendent responded that Ms. Phelps had requested some information on a program in Houston, Texas and this information was forwarded to her. Mr. Rachal stated that he thought the policy was information had to be at the work session. Mr. Burton stated that there is information on a Houston school. Mrs. Bell stated that without information, shouldn't it be pulled. Mrs. Crawley stated it is not about that information, but she will bring a motion. Mr. Rachal stated that he has been on the other side of the coin and had the information, and discussions have been held that we need to have the information. Ms. Priest announced that board members can place items on the agenda, but this item will not be on consent. Mr. Rachal reminded the Board President it was at a recent work session that he was told he had to have a motion and he presented the motion he would bring so the board would know what he was bringing and could discuss it. Mrs. Crawley said Ms. Phelps told her she had a motion about the truancy previously passed by the board and motions are made all the time where there was not information at the work session. She added that items are on the agenda at the work session and information is added. Mrs. Bell also noted that she has not been allowed to bring items without information. Mr. Burton stated that the board cannot debate this, but questions can be asked. Mrs. Bell asked when can board members debate, because she is told you can't debate at board meetings, she can't debate at work sessions, so when do you debate? Ms. Priest reminded the board that this is not a debate, but this is an item on the proposed agenda and it will not be on consent. Mrs. Bell stated that she understands that, but she wants it removed because there is nothing to go on; and as it relates to truancy, the board has addressed this. Ms. Priest asked the superintendent if Ms. Phelps provided any information to give to the board. Dr. Dawkins stated that he did get some information on an over-age school in Houston and he believes this was sent to the board members. Ms. Priest asked Mr. Abrams to respond and he reminded the board that at the work session last week, he explained the board's rule that during work sessions, all information should be available so board members can ask questions; however, it does not mean that a board member cannot have an item on the agenda. He said any board member can add an item to the agenda; however, in two weeks when it is time to vote on the item, the board has another rule that comes into play and that is if the information is not available by the date of the work session, then someone can raise a point of order and require a 2/3 vote to hear it on that day since the rule of having the information at the work session was not followed. He said it doesn't mean it takes a 2/3 vote to win, but it takes 2/3 vote to get it on the agenda when the board didn't get any information. He also advised the board that if no one raises a point of order, it will go by and be on the agenda as this point of order could be waived. Regarding the question on debate, debate is only good when there is a motion on the floor, and the work session is to allow for questions about the information presented and not whether it is good or bad. Mrs. Bell stated she understands so in the future when she gets ready to debate after a motion, she doesn't want to be told she is out of order.

Rahmberg Professional Services Regarding Compensation Study. Dr. Dawkins explained that these fees are for services above and beyond what was requested relative to the compensation study, i.e. special education department. He said at this time he has decided to stop Mr. Rahmberg's work in this area to seek someone who has additional expertise to assist in some of the organizational pieces for special ed.

ADDITIONS

Mr. Hooks asked that Stress Policy, a policy proposed by former Board Member Jerry Tim Brooks, be added to the agenda.

Mr. Burton asked for an update on Booker T. Washington's weight room and Barbering Program.

President Priest announced that Mr. Ramsey and Mrs. Armstrong are leaving (5:45 p.m.) as Southwood's back-to-school is being held tonight.

ESTABLISH THE CONSENT AGENDA FOR THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2010 CPSB MEETING

President Priest recommended the following items as the consent agenda: 6.01-6.04, 7.03, 8.02-8.05, 8.07, and 8.10. *Mrs. Crawley moved, seconded by Mrs. Hardy, to approve the agenda and consent agenda for the September 21, 2010 CPSB meeting as presented. Vote on the motion carried unanimously.*

POLL AUDIENCE

Jon Glover, employee, shared with the board her concerns regarding the compensation plan and her belief that there has not been any regard by the board to understand the significance this plan has brought to the employees. She said until there is a compromise or better understanding of what the goal was in instituting this plan, employees will continue to come forth with the concerns. Ms. Glover said she doesn't believe there was anything wrong with the Arthur Anderson study which was designed to bring all employees in line with the market place and there didn't appear to be any problems until such time that someone determined this issue needed to be addressed again. She said this compensation plan did away with any significant increase in salaries that the Arthur Anderson salary called for and using her salary as an example, she noted that under the Arthur Anderson plan she would have received a \$300 increase; but with the newly adopted increase, she received only a \$35 annual increase. She said it is her desire that the board reconsider the implementation of the newly adopted compensation plan and reinstate the Arthur Anderson salary schedule.

Jackie Lansdale, president of the Caddo Federation of Teachers and Support Personnel, addressed the grievance issues and the superintendent's comment that he is amenable to looking into these to determine what the grievants felt were deficiencies. She believes the grievants would be favorable to sitting down with administration to look at these in terms of bringing them to closure. Regarding the stress policy, Mrs. Lansdale said that one way she believes stress could be relieved is to look at Policy GBM which states that the executive committee will meet a minimum of two times a year with employees offering them the opportunity to bring concerns or offer suggestions and that this meeting will be held without supervisory personnel in attendance unless the committee so desired. Items that would possibly be brought could include textbooks, bullying, compensation, bumping (bus drivers) and JPAMS training. She reiterated the importance of a safe environment in the schools for the students and the employees.

Adjournment. *Mrs. Crawley moved, seconded by Mrs. Hardy, to adjourn. Vote on the motion to adjourn carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:57 p.m.*