

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CALLED FEBRUARY 15, 2022 BOARD OF EDUCATION
CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board President Joe Trusty called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Those in attendance were school board members Pam Clem, Marvin Jones, Corey Williams, Sarah Owen, Dr. James Hertzog, and Kevin Tipton. Also in attendance were Dr. Tony Thurman, Michael Byrd, directors, media, and community members.

Mr. Trusty explained that the meeting was called in response to a verified petition of at least 50 qualified electors certified by the county clerk. The petitioners were requested to submit a one page response for each agenda item to be read during the meeting. He then read the following four agenda items as listed on the official petition:

- (1) "School Curriculum, including but not limited to, pornographic and sexually aggressive books available in our district libraries
- (2) School Handbook Policies, included but not limited to, allowing disparity between male and female dress code
- (3) School Board Policy change that does not allow for time each meeting to allow parents and/or students to air their grievances according to Amendment 1, of the US Constitution
- (4) Request for a letter from Cabot School Board condemning the letter written by US AG claiming parents who question the school board are "criminals" for voicing their opinions through emails or person. Opposing views is not violent. Raised voices is not violent. It is protected under the 1st Amendment."

The petitioners submitted one statement that addressed agenda item number 3. Mr. Trusty called on Leila Seigrist, Director of Human Resources and Legal Affairs, to read the petitioners' statement verbatim:

School Board Policy change that does not allow for time each meeting to allow parents and/or students to air their grievances according to Amendment 1, of the US Constitution.

After requesting an open dialogue at a special called school board meeting, it is obvious we are being silenced. Not only has the board stifled our voices, they will only read one of our concerns out loud. That is going against what our petition asked for. According to Atty General opinion 2017-112, School boards are defined as Civil Offices and such offices, by law have to have public meetings, which then falls under Ark code 14-14-109 and states that you must enable the public the opportunity to participate. Atty general opinion 2000-106

After reviewing dozens of policies of school districts in the state of Arkansas, we found that Cabot School District is going against state consensus and not allowing parents to speak at each monthly board meeting.

Cabot school board refuses to allow open comment and has zero transparency to the public. All parents want is transparency and open dialogue between parents, students and

administration that way we can actually see and hear what the largest concerns are among the stakeholders. Stakeholders are those who pay local taxes, those who elected you and parents of the students attending the district school. Don't you want to know what their concerns are?

During the school board's one required annual "open to the public" school board meeting, public questions were not even allowed, even when people raised their hands to speak during "Any Questions" slide was presented. Transparency means open and public discussion, not forcing parents to meet 1 on 1 with a superintendent, then not having any feedback or accountability that the issue was resolved. Furthermore, emailing the board is not "public accountability" when the president himself said, "I am retired and I barely read my emails anymore". Why is Mr. Trusty the President of the School board if he doesn't want to do the job? We want actively involved board members, not people who just want to look good to the public and then ask irrelevant questions at each meeting, never mentioning the declining scores of our students. Never spending 3 hours discussing curriculum instead of increasing the district.

It is absurd that other districts in the state of Arkansas allow for time during and after school board meetings for parents to ask questions and to be heard before policies are implemented. ESSER and the Ark state code require parental involvement in all aspects of public education, yet why are you afraid to hear what the parents have to say? There are huge issues happening in this school district that either you are ignoring or the superintendent is hiding from you. Where is the accountability of our elected officials that we voted to speak for US in our district? Your number one job is to produce educated kids and ours are failing nationally.

Even after garnering over 50 signatures from Lonoke county voters to petition specifically to speak and have our voices heard, parents were still silenced and not able to ask questions openly or discuss the few issues that they see are a problem. Pulaski Special School District and Pine Bluff recently petitioned and the school board handed the entire meeting and agenda to the parents.

We are requesting you follow the law and update to policy 1:14 Meeting Agenda. We do not care that this is being ignored in other school districts or "this is just how it has always been". There should be at least 30 minutes at every meeting for public, open and transparent discussion on issues concerning our children. Saying that Cabot School board and admin are open and transparent is publicly lying if not one parent can ask for clarification on issues that concern not only their child but the whole school.

Mr. Trusty asked the board for any questions or discussion regarding the four agenda items. Mr. Trusty then provided his closing statement.

First, in response to the agenda item regarding curriculum and books in the libraries, the district itself instituted a challenge to certain books that were brought to the attention of the administration and board last fall. The outcome of those reviews are posted on our website. As for concerns regarding curriculum, we value constructive feedback from staff and parents.

Second, the student handbook is reviewed every year. District administration recently met with student groups on our campuses to gather input specific to the dress code. Our administration has formed committees made up of administrators, parents, and students to

look at all of our student policies, including dress code. This committee is scheduled to meet later this month and will make recommendations to our district administration and board as we update our policies and procedures for the upcoming year.

Third, last fall, the board directed the administration to research the policies of other districts regarding public comment at board meetings to formulate a proposed policy for our school board. This will also be considered as part of our annual policy and procedure update for the upcoming year.

Fourth, regarding the petitioners' request that the board write a letter condemning the United States Attorney General's position on critics of school boards, the district issued a statement in a news story that was posted to our website on November 11, 2021. We do not believe that parents who question a school board are "criminals" for bringing concerns. In fact, quite the opposite is true: we encourage any student, staff member, parent, and community member to contact the district administration or a board member with concerns. Our email addresses and phone numbers are listed on the district website.

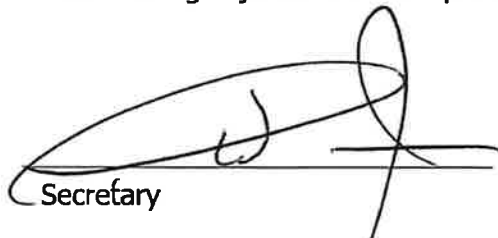
That last point leads me to my final remarks. If it is the goal to bring about positive change in our district, we absolutely welcome that input. We not only welcome it, we invite it. Our responsibilities as board members require us to refrain from making hasty, uninformed decisions. Therefore, we are grateful to have a community of knowledgeable stakeholders with a wide array of experience that we can draw on to generate ideas and help us affect change. We fully acknowledge that there are ways that we can improve.

We all have one goal: to continually improve education for the students in the Cabot School District. And how does that happen? Simply stated, it happens in dialogue between our patrons, our administration, and our school board in a manner that exemplifies the conduct and standards that we expect from our students and staff. In the spirit of doing what is best for kids, let's set aside agendas and differences and work together for the greater good of our students and staff.

Cabot has the best students you'll find anywhere and our staff are devoted to them. Regardless of challenges, we are blessed to be a part of this district and community, and we are excited about the future because, with all of us working together, it will only get better. Thank you for being here tonight.

The board voted to approve personnel as presented.
Motion by Sarah Owen, second by Kevin Tipton; passed 7-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.


Secretary



President

**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS
February 15, 2022**

CERTIFIED RETIREMENTS

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION	DATE
Kelly Bankston	Magness Creek Elementary	Elementary Principal	06/30/22

CERTIFIED TRANSFERS / REASSIGNMENTS

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION
Mikalaha Hanes	Middle School North	Guidance Counselor (2022-2023)
Christy Melder	Cabot High School	Testing Coordinator (2022-2023)
Kim Passini	ALE / Cabot Learning Academy	Guidance Counselor (2022-2023)

CERTIFIED NEW HIRES

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION
Kaitlin Alexander	District	Speech Language Pathologist (2022-2023)
Andy Arnold	District	Special Education Teacher (2022-2023)
Andrea Embrey	Cabot High School	Special Education Teacher (2022-2023)
Lindsey Goudeau	District	Special Education Teacher (2022-2023)
Laura Greenwood	District	Speech Language Pathologist (2022-2023)

All recommendations and hiring of licensed certified personnel are contingent on applicants completing all licensure requirements, as well as clearing their criminal background check and child maltreatment registry.

**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION
PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS
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CLASSIFIED RETIREMENTS

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION	DATE
Jeannie Hollingshead	CAO	Payroll Assistant / Receptionist	02/22/22

CLASSIFIED RESIGNATIONS

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION	DATE
Zachery Bolls	Magness Creek Elementary	Custodian	02/02/22
Robin Chambers	Eastside Elementary	Custodian	01/26/22
David Dropkin	Cabot High School	Custodian	01/18/22
Maria Mondragon	Cabot High School	Food Service	02/07/22
Kira Stowe	Freshman Academy	Special Education Paraprofessional	04/01/22

CLASSIFIED RESCISSION OF EMPLOYMENT

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION
Tina Havard	Stagecoach Elementary	Duty Paraprofessional

CLASSIFIED TRANSFERS / REASSIGNMENTS

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION
Amanda Barlow	Southside Elementary	Lead Custodian
Lennon Barnes	Cabot High School Athletic Fields	Lead Custodian
Jolly Baugh	Central Elementary	Food Service Manager

CLASSIFIED TRANSFERS / REASSIGNMENTS (Cont'd)

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION
Pamela Dropkin	Transportation	Bus Driver (Full Time)
Jimmie Foster	Eastside Elementary	Custodian
Lisa Hughes	Westside Elementary	Lead Custodian
Nathan McDaniel	Cabot High School Athletic Fields	Lead Custodian
Tammy Hobbs	Central Elementary	Custodian
LaDanna Mowry	CAO	Payroll Assistant / Receptionist
Lori Reinhardt	Mountain Springs Elementary	Lead Custodian
Aldena Roberts	Cabot High School Arena	Lead Custodian
Katie Titus	Central Elementary	Secretary
Brittany Yielding	Ward Central Elementary	Custodian

CLASSIFIED NEW HIRES

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION
Martha Bowien	District	Food Service Manager
Judy Caldwell	Middle School South	Custodian
LaVonne Curry	Transportation	Bus Driver (Part Time)
Bonnie Folts	Central Elementary	Custodian
Sarah Foote	Transportation	Bus Driver (Full Time)
Nathan Gaither	Junior High North	Custodian
Shauna Haslip	Transportation	Bus Aide (Full Time)

CLASSIFIED NEW HIRES (Cont'd)

NAME	LOCATION	POSITION
Glenna Hollis	Central Elementary	Special Education Paraprofessional
Roger Lapointe	Cabot High School	Custodian
Carol McCabe	Magness Creek Elementary	Custodian
Mary Murtishaw	Transportation	Bus Driver (Full Time)

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