

September 10, 2020
Franklin, Tennessee

The Franklin Special School District Board of Education met at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 10, 2020 in a Special Called Meeting remotely, Franklin, with the following members present:

Tim Stillings, Chair
Robert Blair, Vice Chair
Allena Bell
Kevin Townsel
Alicia Barker
Robin Newman

Others present were: Dr. David Snowden, Dr. David Esslinger and Carol Riordan.

This Special Called Meeting recording is available at <https://youtu.be/TeWmJw5m7T8> .

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Stillings called the meeting to order at 6:32 and took a roll call of the members. He introduced the items of this meeting before recognizing Mr. Kevin Townsel to facilitate the meeting. Mr. Townsel noted Board policy enables the Board to meet scheduling 48 hours notice to the public for matters that should be addressed before then next regularly scheduled meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF BOARD AGENDA

Allena Bell made a motion to approved the agenda, Alicia Barker seconded the motion, which carried 6-0.

III. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

1. Statements from Board Members -

Mr. Townsel read a statement collectively from the Board, also linked on our website homepage, issued on September 5, 2020 regarding a controversial post on social media by Mr. Stillings, of which a copy follows:

“September 5, 2020

Members of the Franklin Special School District Community:

We, the members of the Board of Education of the Franklin Special School District, are aware of a controversial posting on social media by Tim Stillings, who serves as an elected, at-large member of the Board of Education. The now-deleted posting does not bear any endorsement from the Board and does not represent or reflect the values and beliefs of the Franklin Special School District. The members of the Board, the Director of Schools and Mr. Stillings appreciate the many phone calls, personal remarks and emails we have received over the past two days about this posting. We agree with many others who found the posting inappropriate and offensive and we

have all expressed these sentiments to Mr. Stillings and to the Director of Schools. While it was posted on his personal account, there is no place in our society where comments such as those he posted, even in jest, are acceptable. As an elected public official and chairman of our school board, we hold Mr. Stillings – as well as ourselves – to a higher degree of accountability. Moving forward, the Board encourages Mr. Stillings to listen, learn and understand more about how such microaggressions can harm public trust and create divisiveness. Mr. Stillings has removed the offensive post and replaced it with an apology and a promise to speak directly to those who would like to share their thoughts with him.

The FSSD Board of Education has a diverse membership from many different walks of life. Our range of voices and perspectives enable us to have meaningful conversations around difficult topics. We are also proud of the extraordinary effort it takes to be a perennial Tennessee School Boards Association Board of Distinction. A large part of that honor is derived from the many hours of professional learning in which we all participate to become better public servants. This event, while unfortunate, shines a light on the need for more conversation and growth in the areas of racial sensitivity and awareness. The Board will continue to work together, alongside members of our community, district staff, and students, to strengthen the social emotional influences that we can provide to of all members of the Franklin Special School District family.

Alicia Barker
Robin Newman

Allena Bell
Kevin Townsel

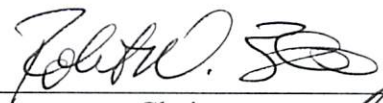

Robert Blair
Tim Stillings



Following the statement from the Board, Mr. Stillings and each other member made a statement regarding the error in judgement, the opportunity for professional development and how best to proceed for growth in this area, and/or steps that they will take together as a Board to serve the community and district in the future with takeaways from this incident. Mr. Stillings again apologized to the community and Board for “creating this controversy, this discussion, this unnecessary distraction,” recalling his day immediately before sharing and immediately after this reposting and avenues of reparation since that time, that he does not share the beliefs and values of the meme. He upholds the district’s vision statement of “Excellence in Teaching and Learning for All.” Mr. Stillings has served as Board Chair for the past six years; with the annual reorganization of the Board each September, pointed to the other members for leadership moving forward noting that all members are highly qualified for each position.

- 2. Discussion of Slate of Officers** – The Board briefly discussed interest in the upcoming reorganization of officers (Board Policy 1.200).

IV. ADJOURNMENT

With no action taken by the Board, Mr. Townsel adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

ATTEST:  Chair  Secretary

 9/14/20 Date
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