

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER ONE
OF TULSA COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 14, 2023

A special meeting of the Board of Education of Independent School District Number One of Tulsa County, Oklahoma was held on November 14, 2023, commencing at 6:04 p.m. in the Cheryl Selman Room, at the Charles C. Mason Education Service Center, 3027 S. New Haven Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Notice of the meeting was given by service of written notice of the meeting to the office of the County Clerk of Tulsa County, Oklahoma, as required by Title 25, O.S., § 311.(A)(5) and (A)(5), and by posting the attached agenda and recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools in prominent public view at tulsaschools.org and in the inside of the clear glass display case outside the main door of said Charles C. Mason Education Service Center on November 13, 2023, at 5:15 p.m., pursuant to the provisions of Title 25, O.S., § 311. (A)(12).

PRESENT: E'Lena Ashley
John Croisant
Jerry Griffin
Susan Lamkin
Jennettie Marshall
Stacey Woolley

ABSENT: Diamond Marshall

OPENING EXERCISES

Ms. Stacey Woolley, president of the Board of Education, called the meeting to order and declared that a quorum of the board was present; therefore, the meeting was qualified to consider the agenda items. Board Member John Croisant led the flag salute.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

President Stacey Woolley acknowledged the Native American nations and the history of the land upon which the district of Tulsa Public schools' sits. She then welcomed the board members in attendance.

C. Discussion regarding the search process for the position of Superintendent of Schools, and possible motion, second, discussion and vote on motion to approve a search process consistent with the Board's desires and objectives.

Dr. Jerry Griffin made a **motion** to consider the agenda item C., and Mr. John Croisant **seconded** the motion.

Board President Woolley asked for Mr. Eric Wade, legal counsel, to share the language from Policy 1401. Mr. Wade read the policy and answered questions of the board.

Dr. Griffin asked if a superintendent search is optional. Mr. Wade stated that a superintendent search process is optional upon the approval of the majority of the Tulsa Board of Education.

Dr. Jennettie Marshall recommended "making a strong statement of support for Dr. Johnson as interim superintendent for a year and then embark upon a search at the end of that year."

Board Member Croisant said that he wanted to hear more of Dr. Marshall's thoughts. He said he agreed with support of Dr. Johnson but due to the issues with the Oklahoma State Department of Education he had concerns and felt there was a need for continuity in district leadership and a need to give Dr. Johnson time to implement some of the changes she is proposing.

Dr. Marshall said that the Board of Education has full authority to issue a statement or a resolution making clear the Board's support of Dr. Johnson as an interim superintendent, so that employees and the public would understand that the Tulsa Board of Education stands behind Dr. Johnson. She stated, "Dr. Johnson is free to have the tough discussions, make hard decisions and implement with full authority." Dr. Marshall shared that she believed placing Dr. Johnson as the actual superintendent before all is clear would be placing the issues in her lap. She was supportive of putting off the decision to make her the permanent superintendent in order to give the state auditor time to bring forth the completed investigation.

Dr. Marshall also stated she had full confidence in Dr. Johnson's, and that the full support of the Board will give Dr. Johnson the opportunity to implement her plan. She also shared that the board's full support sends a direct message to the State Department of Education that the Tulsa Board recognizes Dr. Johnson's capabilities.

Board President Woolley asked a clarifying question of Dr. Marshall. "When you say for the year and then start the search. Are you saying, at this point, wait to define what that looks like until

we have given her some time and we see what is happening? Or do we go ahead and define what everything looks like now and just postpone it? “

Board Member Jennettie Marshall stated that, “For me I have no problem waiting to define it at a later date and I think that further exemplifies our support and belief that Dr. Johnson can execute the position in a way that will ensure academic excellence in this district. As well as the development of cohesiveness with the employees of the district. I would say that in the 55-60 days she has been in this position we can feel there has been a change in the atmosphere, to her credit coming in being a communicator. We really don’t need to go any further with this. This is something we can come back and revisit as we approach midyear.”

Board President Woolley asked Mr. Wade, who also works with other school boards, how long national superintendent searches are currently taking.

Mr. Wade responded that a full national search will take about a year.

Dr. Griffin shared that interim has no meaning and related the comparison of interim football coaches that rarely make it to becoming the football coach. He stated, “interim means that you do not have any value in that person, it means the State Superintendent of Education and the State Auditor look at her as a weak person. If this board truly has confidence in her, we will give her a contract as superintendent. If we do not give her a contract, then it is a vote of no confidence. I don’t care what kind of resolution you give her.” He also shared the board should be worried that she is recruited away from Tulsa Public Schools to another district.

Dr. Marshall said she felt that interim carries a lot of weight in this district and gave examples of past interim superintendents. She also went on to say, “I believe she was purposed to lead. I just believe doing something now is premature.”

Additionally, Dr. Marshall shared, “I do not believe that Superintendent Walters and the State Board is going to look at Dr. Johnson any differently. Everything they have stated in discussions we have had with them they have expressed complete confidence in her capabilities and in the direction that she is going. All I ask is that we allow her the opportunity to fine tune the things she has expressed that she wants to do.”

Board Member Ashley asked legal counsel, “What authority does Dr. Johnson have as interim?”

Mr. Wade shared that her current interim contract ends June 30, 2024, and that as interim superintendent she has the same authority as a permanent superintendent of schools would have from a legal perspective. He also shared that if there was a belief that there were limitations on her authority, in his opinion, that belief is driven solely by the short duration of her interim superintendency and the perception that some people may have that it is a temporary assignment and therefore doesn’t carry the same authority.

Dr. Griffin shared his view that her perceived limitations had nothing to do with legal authority, but rather perception and that he felt she needed full authority.

Board President Woolley asked Mr. Wade if there was an option to table this discussion, dismiss to executive session, and then resume this item upon return to open session. Mr. Wade confirmed that a motion to table could be made.

Board Member Lamkin highlighted that none of the current board members had been through the hiring of a new superintendent before and asked if a national search is an involved and lengthy process, and if so, was there any process in between appointment and a full national search that could be considered. Board President Woolley shared that after speaking with Mr. Wade it was clear that it was a board decision and what options they choose; whether to vote at the current meeting to appoint Dr. Johnson as superintendent, to seek feedback and return in three months for a vote, or to do a national search.

Board Member Croisant shared his questions and thoughts regarding the timing of a superintendent search to get optimum results if that was the course chosen by the board.

Board Member Croisant made a motion to table agenda item C, and Board Member Susan Lamkin seconded the motion to table. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYE: E'Lena Ashley, John Croisant, Susan Lamkin, Jennettie Marshall, and Stacey Woolley;
NAY: Jerry Griffin, ABSTAIN: None; ABSENT: Diamond Marshall.

EXECUTIVE SESSION D. Motion, second, discussion and vote on motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing the employment of Dr. Ebony Johnson, an individual salaried public officer or employee, as Superintendent of Schools, where disclosure of the information discussed would violate confidentiality requirements of state or federal law, as authorized by Title 25, Section 307.B.1 and B.7 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

Mr. Croisant made a **motion** to go into executive session. The motion was **seconded** by Ms. Susan Lamkin, and the motion **passed** by the following vote:

AYE: Jennettie Marshall, Susan Lamkin, John Croisant, E'Lena Ashley, and Stacey Woolley;
NAY: Jerry Griffin; ABSTAIN: None; ABSENT: Diamond Marshall.

The Board of Education with the exception of Board Member Jerry Griffin, legal counsel, and the clerk of the board entered executive session at 6:45pm.

Motion, second, discussion and vote on motion to acknowledge return to open session.

Board Member John Croisant made a **motion** to return to open session. Dr. Jerry Griffin **seconded** the motion, and the motion **passed** by the following vote:

AYE: E'Lena Ashley, John Croisant, Jerry Griffin, Susan Lamkin, Jennettie Marshall, and Stacey Woolley; NAY: None; ABSTAIN: None; ABSENT: Diamond Marshall.

Open session began at 7:49 p.m.

Board President's statement of minutes of executive session.

Board President Woolley stated that during the executive session, the board discussed the employment of Dr. Ebony Johnson, an individual salaried public officer or employee, where disclosure of the information discussed would violate confidentiality requirements of state or federal law, as authorized by Title 25, Section 307.B.1 and B.7 of the Oklahoma Statutes. This

constitutes the minutes of the executive session. Nothing else was discussed or occurred in the executive session.

Dr. Jennettie Marshall made a motion to table agenda item C and bring it back to revisit before January 31, 2024. Dr. Jerry Griffin seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYE: E'Lena Ashley, John Croisant, Susan Lamkin, Jennettie Marshall, and Stacey Woolley;
NAY: Jerry Griffin; ABSTAIN: None; ABSENT: Diamond Marshall.

E. Motion, second, discussion and vote on motion to take any action determined to be appropriate by the Board regarding the employment of Dr. Ebony Johnson as Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Jennettie Marshall made a **motion** to issue a resolution signifying their confidence and support of Dr. Ebony Johnson. Mr. John Croisant **seconded** the motion to issue a resolution of support for Dr. Johnson, and the motion **passed** by the following vote:

AYE: Jennettie Marshall, Susan Lamkin, John Croisant, E'Lena Ashley; NAY: Jerry Griffin;
ABSTAIN: None; ABSENT: Diamond Marshall.

(Attachment Exhibit A)

Board President's statement of minutes of executive session.

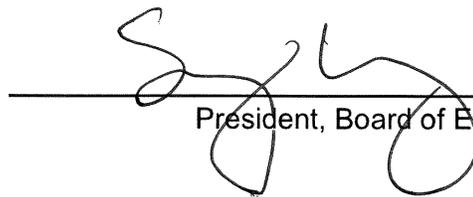
During the executive session, the board discussed confidential communications with its attorneys concerning pending claims or actions against Devin Fletcher and other individuals/organizations who may be connected to him in the diversion of funds from the district, the Board having been advised by its attorneys that disclosure will seriously impair the ability of the Board to process the claims or conduct the actions in the public interest, and where disclosure of the information discussed would violate confidentiality requirements of state or federal law, as authorized by Title 25, Section 307.B.4. and B.7 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Nothing else was discussed or occurred in the executive session.

G. ANNOUNCEMENTS The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Monday, November 27, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cheryl Selman Room, at the Education Service Center, 3027 South New Haven Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 p.m.



Attorney for the School District



President, Board of Education


Superintendent of Schools


Clerk, Board of Education



RESOLUTION

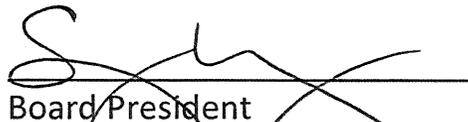
WHEREAS, we as the Board of Education express our unwavering support of Dr. Ebony Johnson as our Interim Superintendent.

WHEREAS, she is fully empowered by the Board of Education to carry out the duties of the office of superintendent as established by law and district policy.

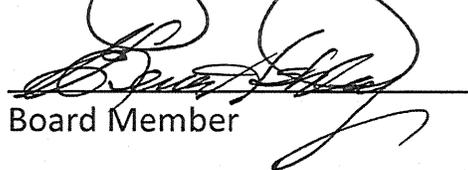
WHEREAS, we as the Board of Education have great trust in her ability to make decisions in the best interests of Tulsa Public Schools and its students.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Tulsa Public Schools Board of Education hereby confirm our full confidence and humbly express our greatest appreciation for Dr. Ebony Johnson, Interim Superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools.

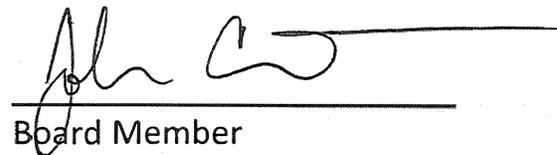
ADOPTED this 14th day of November 2023.


Board President


Board Member


Board Member


Board Member


Board Member

Attest:


Board Clerk



