

**OROVILLE UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
November 29, 2023**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Board President, Mr. Damon, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday November 29, 2023, at the Transportation Conference Room

ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Scott Damon, Amber Englund, Ray Sehorn and Tyler Smith
Bonnie King Arrived at 5:31 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

HEARING OF INDIVIDUALS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Damon informed the public who were in attendance that there will be a 15 minutes time limit for each non-agenda topic.

Topic #1- Public Concern with regard to Mr. William Brown being placed on Administrative Leave.

Kevin Thompson- Pastor/CEO of the Oroville Southside Community Center

Mr. Thompson took the podium to express his concerns about Will Brown's leave and called for honest answers from the OUHSD board of trustees. He noted the community's support for Mr. Brown and the positive impact he had as superintendent. Mr. Thompson also expressed that many of the children and the community of OHS are traumatized by this decision.

Bruce Spangler- Oroville Rotary Club / Manager of Oroville Holiday Inn

Mr. Spangler expressed to the Board of Trustees that he feels William Brown has a heart for Oroville, and he can see the positive impacts that Mr. Brown is making on the community.

Teresa Verzello- Parent of an Adult Transition Student

Mrs. Verzello approached the board to relay her positive encounters with Mr. Brown. She feels like after many years of her son's autistic needs being unheard, she finally had a ray of hope for his future with OUHSD. She reports that Mr. Brown made it a point to visit her child's classroom regularly and kept in constant contact with his teachers. She expressed that the previous superintendent, Corey Willenberg, made her feel as though he did not have time for her, and the one time she requested to meet with Mr. Brown, he was able to see her within 5 minutes of showing up to his office. Mrs. Verzello feels that Mr. Brown is not only great for the special needs department but also a good start for the minority students in the district. She believes discrimination in the Oroville area has been ongoing for decades, and Mr. Brown is paving the way for long-term changes to ensure everyone is heard and welcomed. Mrs. Verzello reports that her family has suffered from discrimination within the Oroville School Districts back when her child was in the first through fourth grades. At that time, she pulled him and did not return to the Oroville School Districts until high school. It was then again that she reported feeling discriminated against when her son's IEP was not followed regularly and speech times were not followed. She states there was also a situation in which she felt his IEP was intentionally changed during a time when she was not able to be present. Mrs. Verzello states that during that time, Dr. Willenberg could not make time to see her; however, Mr. Brown could see her to settle a simple transportation issue.

Yenghua Xiong- Oroville High School Student

Yenghua spoke to the board to explain why he participated in the OHS walkout on November 17, 2023, in support of Mr. Brown. Yenghua states he walked out due to the devastating loss of a very involved

superintendent, Will Brown, who, Yenghua reports, attended school activities and supported the school's ideas. Yenghua reports that he witnessed Will Brown making changes that would benefit the school, such as a bell schedule change to include more electives. He also states that he witnessed Will Brown buying pizza for a group of students who needed an intervention to create a safe space for open communication. Yenghua believes that the current administration has not reached the level of connection with their students that Will Brown achieved and that the current situation is racially motivated, similar to the situation with Dr. Nerissa Wallace. He walked out because Will Brown had done more in six months than the previous superintendent had done in six years. The author loves Will Brown for his service to the school and asks the board members to reinstate him.

Janet Goodson- NAACP President

Mrs. Goodson is asking the board for an impartial and just investigation. The administrative leave status came as a surprise to the community and staff, resulting in a student walkout at Oroville High School on November 17, 2023. She feels that Mr. Brown was developing a formative educational ecosystem that was working in unison to reach attainable educational goals. Mrs. Goodson stated that Mr. Brown accepts constructive suggestions, and his presence and contributions are being felt in the community. Mrs. Goodson reports that she will continue to monitor the investigation and hold the board accountable, and that they need to place the students before politics.

David Goodson- Pastor/ 1st Vice President NAACP

Pastor Goodson expressed to the board that William Brown improved the morale of students, staff, and the community. He states that he feels the differences between the board and Will Brown can be resolved. Pastor Goodson is asking for transparent answers to the cause of the placement of administrative leave and reminding the board that William Brown was the most qualified candidate for this position, which should result in his reinstatement as the superintendent of OUHSD.

Ray Leno- Community Member / Activist

Mr. Leno reports to the board tonight with his concerns about racism. Mr. Leno states that it should not take all of the people in the room to express these concerns, and he reminds the board that social media does exist outside of Oroville and that this issue of racism in the district is starting to get outside of the community. He states that he has 1 million social media followers who care and are concerned as well. Mr. Leno reports that there are kids talking about racism, which is a serious issue. He expresses that the board now has their backs against the wall and feels that there is no concern or compassion from the board of trustees. Mr. Leno states that if the board cannot figure out a solution, they will not have a line to call, there will no longer be calls into the school, and they, as a community, will figure out the solution themselves. Mr. Leno promises that if all the people in attendance have to keep coming back and begging, he will be back.

Ed Hall- Pastor

Pastor Ed Hall is here to express to the board the outpouring of students who are concerned. He states that he was seeing some positive traction with Superintendent Will Brown. He feels that the kids are watching this and are starting to react to the response. He reports that he has never seen kids this involved in school.

Topic #2- Student Health and Special Education Discrimination

Judy Tatom- Adult Transition Center Teacher

Ms. Tatom comes to the board tonight with a shared concern about the recent changes in administration and special education discrimination. Ms. Tatom reports, according to the California Department of Education, that we have over 2,300 students in five schools who are at-risk and vulnerable, with half identifying as Native American, African American, Asian, Latino, or mixed race. Over 80% report economic disadvantage, and nearly 15% have disabilities. She feels, as a special education teacher, that the district's direction is concerning for a mother, a community member, and a professional. Ms. Tatom states that in 2020, OUHSD identified a need for improved processes and compliance with laws to ensure equal access to learning for students of color and those with disabilities. This required significant change, but progress is slow and requires collaboration among educators and parents. Despite residual or new

bias, positive change is essential for student improvement. The recruitment of a new superintendent and the retention of William Brown at OUHSD were seen as positive steps towards addressing past discrimination issues and providing equal education opportunities. However, six months into his tenure, we are faced with the same administration that was in place when all of the concerning practices were in place. She states that this decision has made many feel demoralized, hopeless, and concerned about retaliation for bringing issues to light and supporting change in the new administration, as well as fear that students may not receive necessary support. Ms. Tatom reports to the board some examples of discrimination that have been reported to her and experienced in her own classroom, which she feels has a direct and immediate impact on student safety and has led to discrimination against students with disabilities. She states that the school sites with disabled students often lack functioning bells or intercoms, causing confusion for staff and students during emergencies. Inadequate heating and air conditioning in classrooms and district vehicles, which can lead to seizures. Lack of medical supplies such as first aid kits, inadequate training to support students with disabilities, student discipline that results in the denial of free and appropriate public education, and special education funds for ineligible students. She also reports that many times vulnerable students are often dropped off without supervision, as well as special education students not being picked up at school dismissal, leaving them unsupervised. Support services are unwilling to collaborate with teachers and parents to meet the unique needs of the disabled population. Work orders to address safety concerns are often closed without being resolved. Ms. Tatom reports that the confidentiality of protected individuals is also being breached. Another concern about discrimination, Ms. Tatom reports, is the lack of access to curriculum. During the COVID-19 pandemic, general education students were provided with chromebooks and hotspots in March of 2020, after schools closed for in-person instruction. During this time, there were 25 students who were enrolled in the ATC program. After 7 months of waiting and multiple requests, only 15 Chromebooks and 8 hotspots were received. Ms. Tatom reports that when these items were requested, we were asked, "Why do your students need chromebooks and hotspots?" With no support from the IT department in helping our students and families gain access to the curriculum, Ms. Tatom's response to the question was, "We believe in our OUHSD Core Values, providing equitable educational opportunities to every student."

Randi Branistareau- Adult Transition Center Para-Educator

Ms. Branistareau came to the board to discuss her concerns about the safety of the district vehicles. She starts by reading the Core Beliefs of OUSD. Ms. Branistareau reports that she has experienced numerous unsafe situations while operating unsafe vans. She describes two incidents during the 22/23 school year. Once, the heat in her wheelchair-accessible van failed to work. When she reported the issue to the Transportation Department manager, she was told to cover the kids with a blanket. She also experienced a van with a check engine light on, which was cleared by transportation and returned to service. One time, she lost all acceleration and had to pull over. The time spent waiting for repairs has reduced the amount of vocational training in students' IEPs, resulting in unmet services. Ms. Branistareau has expressed her transportation concerns to the administration and Mr. Jim Lagrone, but no resolution has been reached. She believes Mr. Brown is making a positive impact by listening to her concerns and fixing the issues.

Topic #3- Staff Moral

Sam Muntifering- Oroville High School Art Teacher / Yearbook Advisor

Mrs. Muntifering reports to the board to express her point of view on staff morale in the district. She states that the past three school years have been challenging for students, parents, staff, and teachers worldwide due to COVID-19 and the transition to remote learning. However, the community has experienced more trauma than many, with fires, dam emergencies, and untimely deaths causing a significant drop in morale at OUHSD. Mrs. Muntifering expresses that the Board hired Mr. William Brown, who aimed to make Oroville the jewel of Butte County with its river and lake. He believed that excellent education was key to making this a reality for Oroville. Mr. Brown's vision for change was contagious, and people began to believe Oroville could be the jewel. She feels that since June 2023, there has been a notable shift in morale, with the entire community moving towards something. Sam states Mr. Brown was selected as "the overwhelming number one choice" by both the board and the advisory panel who interviewed candidates, and he aimed to connect and engage with as many members of the community

as possible, aiming to understand their hopes and expectations of the schools and the district. His placement on leave threatens to undermine all the important progress made by the district. Mrs. Muntiferer expresses that the board invested in Mr. Brown's vision by hiring him, and it is important not to lose sight of that decision.

Diana Castillo- Oroville High School Teacher / ASB Advisor

Mrs. Castillo discusses the morale in the district and the impact of the superintendent, Mr. Brown. She reports that she served on the advisory panel that interviewed candidates for the superintendent position in May 2023. She states that Mr. Brown was the overwhelming number one choice for the superintendent position, as he had the experience and personality that best fit the district and community. Mrs. Castillo states Mr. Brown has made OUHSD a better place for students, their families, and staff since June. His encouragement, positivity, and collaborative leadership have changed the morale on the campuses and have made students feel valued and cared for. His vision for the future of the district and community has made many hopeful for the district's future. She expresses that the board members were elected to put students' interests first, and Mr. Brown has boosted morale and brought hope for the district and schools to thrive. However, with Mr. Brown gone, morale has dropped, and Mrs. Castillo states she fears that OUHSD will lose many teachers and staff who were holding onto that hope. She reports that in the last two years, 27 teachers and 7 administrators took pay cuts and left OUHSD, and she expresses concern that if Mr. Brown is not reinstated, many will continue to leave, which would be devastating to the schools. Mrs. Castillo states she is counting on board members to recognize that Superintendent Brown needs to be put back on the job.

Alisha Weliver- Oroville High School Teacher

Mrs. Weliver reports that she is a 16-year veteran teacher in the district and is deeply concerned for the future of OUHSD and the community it serves. She feels the district is facing a crisis of great magnitude, with an unprecedented turnover rate and talent loss. She states that in the last two years, 31 new teachers have been hired, many of whom need guidance and support. The situation is worsened by the fact that nearly every administrator is also new to the district and has little experience. Mrs. Weliver expresses that the staff members are holding on, but the weight is heavy and is taking its toll. Many staff members feel frustrated, helpless, outraged, or simply don't want to "go down on this sinking ship." The stability of the community relies on the teachers, and it is their duty to build the "City of Gold" that Mr. Brown speaks of.

Mrs. Weliver states that to achieve this vision, the district needs to act quickly and keep at it. It won't be built in a day or even a year, but it can be built with team effort, innovation, and buy-in. She feels the right leadership from the top is necessary for this vision to be possible. Mrs. Weliver urges the board of trustees to be part of the classrooms, build relationships with kids, listen, and work with staff. Mrs. Weliver encourages the inspiration of one another to be the best they possibly can by providing extraordinary opportunities to students. She states that there is so much at stake and so much to gain, and together we can do great things as the OUHSD family.

TJ Jensen- Community Member

Mr. Jensen approaches the board tonight to express his concerns about the recent changes in the district. He explains that while growing up and attending school, he was fortunate enough to have parents who were involved and supported him. He explains that high school was very difficult; there were five stabbings his freshman year, and the morale was very low. Mr. Jensen states he was seeing the changes in the community with Mr. William Brown, and he is just asking the board to be transparent, get the information out to the public, respond to the community, and fix the problems that are being presented.

Topic #4 Family Engagement Dinner/Latin Heritage Night

Delilah Xiong & Aleigh Lee – OHS Dance Club Students

Delilah and Aleigh wish to express gratitude to the board for supporting the Family Engagement and Latin

Heritage night dinner, where the OHS Dance Club performed Latin Heritage dances, highlighting the special moment of unity and celebration.

CLOSED SESSION

- **Personnel-Gov't. Code 54957** [Public employee employment/discipline/dismissal/release]

The board convened to closed session at 6:16 p.m.

RESULTS OF CLOSED SESSION

At 7:48 p.m., the board reconvened to open session. No action was taken.

Amended Personnel Assignment Order

~~#52-22/23~~ **#55-23/24**

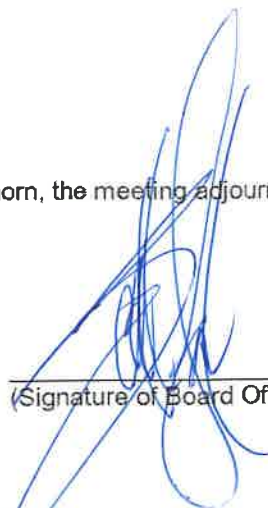
On a motion by Mr. Sehorn to approve the Personnel Assignment Order, seconded by Mr. Smith, the amended Personnel Assignment Order was approved by the following vote:

Ayes:	Damon, Englund, King, Sehorn, Smith
Noes:	None
Abstentions:	None
Absent:	None

Certificated	Classified
Elisa Pendergraft SPED teacher- OHS Class I/ Step 1 \$55,883 Correction to start date	Pa Houa Yang Ed Services Technician 8.0hrs p/day; 240 days p/yr EST/7 (F8) \$27.47/hr Correction to start date 11/27/2023 Nichella Atterberry Resignation from Supplemental Ed Tech Effective 11/29/2023 Administrative Secretary-Attendance LPHS 8.0 hrs p/day; 240 days p/yr Step/Column 18/C \$22.75 Effective 11/30/2023 Raquel Farias Transportation Lead 260/8.0 hrs STEP 24/E \$29.13/hr Effective 11/30 Lia Lo Administrative Secretary-Counseling LPHS 8.0hrs p/day; 260 days p/yr Step/Column 18/A \$20.65 Effective date

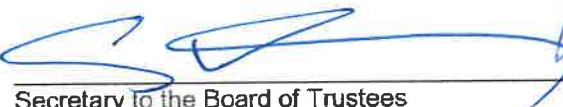
ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mrs. King, seconded by Mr. Sehorn, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.



(Signature of Board Official)

ATTEST:



Secretary to the Board of Trustees

11.29.23 SP