

Ronn H Johnson Ed D
Superintendent
856 546 4850
FAX 856,310 0901

Karen Willis
Business Administrator Brd Sec
856 547 2585
FAX 856 547 3865

Lawnside Board of Education Meeting Minutes

September 26, 2024
CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Lawnside Board of Education was called to order at 7:06 p.m. in-person by the Board President, Ms. Forrest. After repeating the Pledge of Allegiance and after observing a moment of silence, the following members answered present to the roll call.

Forrest -Y	Hayes - Y	Arterbridge Y	Catlett Y
Cauthorne - Y	Harper - Y	Kittles Y	Still - Y

Present- 8
Vacant - 1

Also present were Dr. Ronn Johnson, Superintendent; Mark Gordon, ABA; and Darryl Rhone, Board Solicitor.

OPENING STATEMENT

Public notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act Chapter 231 PL 1975 has been given by the Board Secretary in the following manner:

- a Posting written notice on the official school bulletin board at the Lawnside Public School and District website
- b Sending notice to the Courier Post and the Retrospect newspapers
- c Position on the district website

SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT SUBMISSION FOR COUNTY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Motion: Ms. Cauthorne
Second: Ms. Kittles

PUBLIC COMMENTS: -

Marsharee Wright: Submitted comments for the record.

Read Hawkens: President of the South Jersey Chapter of the Links Inc. expressed her strong support for Dr. Ronn Johnson to continue as Superintendent of the Lawnside School District. She noted his unwavering dedication to Lawnside students and the community over the past 20 years, contributing to the district's growth, stability, and success. Ms. Hawkins highlighted Dr. Johnson's history with the district, including his partnership with South Jersey Links in 2013, and reaffirmed her commitment to his leadership.

Mark Pease: Interim Superintendent with the Palmyra School District expressed his support for Dr. Johnson, crediting him as a personal mentor in his educational career. He mentioned the challenge of finding an interim superintendent and emphasized Dr. Johnson's positive representation of the district in meetings statewide. He urged the board to carefully consider this process before deciding on Dr. Johnson's contract renewal.

Melva Higgs: Commended Dr. Johnson's efforts in extracurricular activities for Lawnside students but expressed concern that students have not met state standards for a decade, with only 20% achieving state benchmarks in reading, ELA, and math. She questioned the district's leadership in fostering a culture of learning and asked for data on student improvement. Ms. Higgs mentioned being informed by Ms. Miller of 70% growth but noted that no data supported this figure. She also expressed interest in seeing students' reading levels on report cards.

Marti Hill-Parker: A current school administrator in a district of color and originally from Lawnside, Marti appreciated community engagement in the superintendent selection process. She emphasized that while seeking solutions is valuable, it does not imply the current administration lacks them. She encouraged ongoing community communication to build trust and ensure students receive the support they need.

Mary Ann Wardlow: A 55-year Lawnside resident, Mary Ann shared her observations of the district's positive reputation within the community and beyond. She noted that the majority of the community supports the current superintendent and emphasized that success starts at home, mentioning that her family members who attended Lawnside schools have been successful.

Sharon Hopson: President of the Morgan State South Jersey Alumni Association, Sharon voiced her support for Dr. Johnson, attesting to his deep commitment to students and stating that ending his contract would harm the community.

Lavita Muhammad: Recalled knowing Dr. Johnson as a classroom teacher who supported her son and many other African American families. She expressed her wholehearted support for his contract renewal.

Tyrone Taylor: A district parent and husband of the PTA president, Tyrone expressed his support for Dr. Johnson and questioned why the contract was under discussion. He noted how the district staff, particularly Dr. Johnson, has warmly embraced his family, reaffirming his support for Dr. Johnson.

Celeste Brown: Shared her support for Dr. Johnson, explaining how the school helped her child, who entered the district with special needs, to succeed without classification upon leaving. She emphasized that learning begins at home and encouraged the community to work together.

Mini Johnson: A former student, Mini questioned the relevance of test scores to Dr. Johnson's role, noting that while he is in the office, teachers work directly with students. She believes teacher performance, rather than Dr. Johnson's, should be assessed based on test scores.

Robert Horne: Discussed his mentorship work with male students in the district and voiced support for Dr. Johnson's contract renewal. He highlighted the positive environment within the school and praised Dr. Johnson as an inspiring role model who challenges students to think critically.

Fatima Hayes: Explained that state law mandates a hearing for the superintendent's contract. She expressed uncertainty regarding the urgency of community attendance for Dr. Johnson's support, considering the board's prior vote. She read from an August 12 email regarding the renewal process and shared her concerns about transparency and legal compliance. She stated that she wants the board to make an informed decision for the well-being of students and the overall school climate, with accountability for district success.

Lavina Taylor: Ms. Taylor suggested that the QR code for the lunch survey should be made available to students during lunch periods and posted around the cafeteria.

Forrest -Y	Hayes - N	Arterbridge N	Catlett Y
Cauthorne - Y	Harper - Abstain	Kittles Y	Still - Y

Vot: Yes
Motion Carried

Motion for adjournment: 8:07 pm

Motion - Ms. Still

Second by Ms. Kittles

Vote - Yes
Motion Carried

Forrest -Y	Hayes - Y	Arterbridge Y	Catlett Y
Cauthorne - Y	Harper - Y	Kittles Y	Still - Y

I, Karen Willis, Business Administrator/Board Secretary of the Board of Education of the Borough of Lawnside in the County of Camden, New Jersey Hereby Certify that the foregoing extract from the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Education duly called and held on September 26, 2024 has been compared by me with the original minutes as officially recorded in the Minute Book of the Board of Education and is true complete and correct copy thereof and of the whole of the original minutes so far as they relate to the subject matters referred to in the extract

Respectfully submitted


Karen Willis
Business Administration/ Board Secretary