

Minutes of Regular Meeting of the El Dorado School Board December 11, 2023

The directors of the board met on the above date at 6:30 p.m. in the Central Office Board Room, 200 West Oak St, El Dorado, Arkansas with Susan Turbeville presiding. Other directors present were Renee Skinner, Kenneth Clemons, Wayne Gibson, Keith Smith and Todd Whatley. Director Vicky Dobson was absent. Also in attendance were Jim Tucker, Melissa Powell, Sherry Floss, Shelley Pruitt, Scarlett Gully and Missy Passmore.

Mrs. Turbeville brought the meeting to order and explained that we would begin the evening by recognizing the 11 EHS students as several of them had other

ESD's Science Chair, Carolyn Smith stated that she was very proud to be recognizing and celebrating eleven students from EHS who have earned academic honors from the College Board National Recognition Programs. These programs celebrate students' hard work in high school and showcase their strong academic performance. There were 72,000 students from across the country who earned academic honors from College Board's National Recognition Programs! The academic honors for rural area, Black, Indigenous, and/or Latino students are an opportunity for students to share their strong academic achievements with colleges and scholarship programs that are seeking to recruit diverse talent.

- Aidan Johnson: NRSTA
- Diana Obiozo: NAARA, NRSTA
- Emmalou Parker: NRSTA
- Jacob Webster-Moore: NRSTA
- Jill Stone: NRSTA
- Kayden Rucks: NAARA
- Mackenzie Kennebeck: NRSTA
- Matilyn Nash: NRSTA
- Peyton Howard: NRSTA
- Rebecca Upchurch: NRSTA
- Riley Wilson: NRSTA

Award Key:

National African American Recognition Award (NAARA)
National Rural and Small Town Award (NRSTA)

She said we are thrilled to celebrate our students and recognize them for the great work they've been doing. We're proud of their strong academic performance in the classroom and on College Board assessments like the PSAT/NMSQT®, PSAT™ 10, and AP® exams," said Carolyn Smith, AP Coordinator. "There's so much that makes our students unique, and receiving this honor reinforces this as an asset for their future."

The criteria for eligible students include:

- GPA of 3.5 or higher.
- PSAT/NMSQT or PSAT 10 assessment scores that are within the top 10% of assessment takers in each state for each award program or earned a score of 3 or higher on 2 or more AP Exams in 9th and 10th grade.
- Attend school in a rural area or small town, or identify as African American/Black, Hispanic American/Latino, or Indigenous/Native.

Eligible students are invited to apply on [BigFuture](#) during their sophomore or junior year and are awarded at the start of the next school year in time to share their achievements in high school as they plan for the future. At the same time, colleges and organizations using College Board's [Student Search Service™](#) can connect directly with awardees during the recruitment process.

"It's becoming increasingly hard for students to be 'seen' during the college recruitment process. We're exceptionally proud of the National Recognition Programs for celebrating students who are at times overlooked but have shown their outstanding academic abilities," said Tarlin Ray, senior vice president of BigFuture® at College Board. "This is a benefit not only for students but also for colleges and universities committed to recruiting diverse and talented students."

Next Mr. Gibson recognized the WMS Student of the Month Faith Lowery. She is in the 6th grade and is the daughter of Huey and Teresa Lowery.

Her teacher Allison Applegate said "Faith Lowry is a wonderful student, she is one of those students who show up to class everyday with a smile on her face. She will also always put a smile on your face. She has the heart of gold, I watch her in class working with her peers and make sure everyone is included. She will do anything you ask of her and more. She has such a positive attitude, I see her

future's so bright and I can not wait to see what she accomplishes in her life. Keep up the great amazing work Faith. Mrs. Applegate loves you and is so proud of you.”

Her teacher Destiny Island said “Faith is always respectful and well mannered. She is a great leader for the body of students, and she loves to give teachers some of her nice work she does with pens and bracelets. She always greets you with a smile on her face.”

Principal, Bethanie Hale, stated that “Faith Lowery lights up a room! She has such a positive energy and a smile that is contagious. I am so proud of Faith. She is a dedicated student who goes above and beyond each and every day. She is kind to everyone she comes into contact with and she models the code of ARMOR daily. Faith is extremely deserving of this recognition and she will be missed next year as she moves on to Barton. I know that she has a bright future ahead of her and she will accomplish anything she sets her mind to!

Washington Middle School’s Classified Employee of the Month is Tayna Vines. Mrs. Vines is the WMS Cafeteria Manager and has 15 ½ years of experience.

Child Nutrition Director, Kim Newman, stated that “Tayna’s dedication goes beyond the kitchen. She’s always eager to hear feedback, constantly striving to enhance the dining experience for everyone. Whether you’re a fan of her signature sauces or a newcomer exploring the menu, Tayna’s passion for food is contagious. In addition to her culinary skills, Tayna is a master organizer. She orchestrates the daily cafeteria operations with ease, ensuring everything runs like clockwork. It’s no small feat, but Tayna handles it all with grace and a can-do attitude. Her dedication to creating a welcoming and tasty atmosphere has truly made the Washington cafeteria a place of culinary creativity and positivity.”

WMS Music Teacher, Angula Davis, said “Tayna epitomizes tenacity and grit. While facing numerous health challenges, she always goes above and beyond to ensure that our cafeteria maintains top quality food and friendly service for students and staff. We are blessed to have her in the WMS family.”

Principal, Bethanie Hale stated that Tayna is such a blessing to everyone at Washington. She has such a big heart and creates an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome. Her hard work and dedication does not go unnoticed. She strives for excellence in everything that she does. She goes above and beyond the call of duty each and every day. Tayna is very observant and receptive to our students’ needs. She knows most of them by name and she is intentional about building relationships with them. I am so thankful to have Tayna at Washington and I can’t imagine Washington without Tayna. She is truly a blessing to everyone she comes in contact with.

Washington Middle School’s Teacher of the Month is Mydeana Bridges. She is the 6th grade Science teacher and Competition Shake Leader. She received her Technical Certificate in General Studies in December 2007 and her Associate of Arts in May 2008 from South Arkansas Community College. In May of 2010 she received her Bachelor of Social Work from SAU and in August of 2023 she received her Masters of Arts in Teaching from SAU. She has been teaching in the El Dorado School District for three years.

Co-worker Allison Applegate said “Mrs. Bridges is a wonderful teacher and co-worker, but also a friend. Mrs. Bridges is always doing wonderful things in the classroom to promote a more inclusive learning environment. She has great relationships with not only her students, but co-workers as well. She is also there for you no matter what and just makes the day brighter. Congratulations Mrs. Bridges, I could not think of any one better deserving of this honor.”

Co-worker Nakita Artis-Chatman said “I am thrilled to take a moment to express my profound gratitude for the incredible support and guidance provided by Mrs. Bridges as we prepared for the start of the school year. Mrs. Bridges went above and beyond, generously sharing her time and expertise to ensure that every detail of the classroom was thoughtfully considered. From helping me clean out my closet to organizing materials, her meticulous attention to detail and commitment to creating an engaging space for learning truly stood out. Her enthusiasm for education and genuine care for both students and colleagues have created an atmosphere of collaboration and support that extends far beyond the initial preparations. I am particularly impressed by Mrs. Bridges ability to foster a sense of community within the school. She consistently demonstrates leadership qualities that inspire those around her, making her an invaluable asset to our educational community. Her positive influence extends well beyond the classroom, creating a ripple effect of motivation and enthusiasm for teaching and learning. In light of her exceptional contributions and unwavering commitment to our school community. Her passion for education, coupled with her selfless dedication to the success of both students and fellow educators, truly makes her deserving of this recognition.

Principal Bethanie Hale stated Mrs. Bridges is an excellent educator. She is able to connect with her students in amazing ways. She has such an amazing ability to build relationships with her students and she sets high expectations for all of her students. Mrs. Bridges has worked for me over the past three years. She is always willing to lend a helping hand whenever it is needed. She strives for excellence and motivates others to do the same. This year she has taken over teaching the Competition Shake class and she is doing a fantastic job. She pushes these students to step out of their comfort zones and really become leaders at WMS. I am so thankful to have Mydeana on our team. Washington wouldn't be the same without her!

WMS principal, Bethanie Hale stated that she was very excited to share what has been happening at Washington Middle School. She stated that they started the year with a House sorting ceremony and the students were so excited to see which house they got. Students received a lanyard and when the countdown ended the lanyard lit up with their house color. Students continue to participate in House Color Wars and other events to attain House points.

This year they held a Passport Day. Students traveled to all locations on campus to review the WMS ARMOR. Each location informed students about the behavior expectations for that specific location in order to be a successful Knight at WMS.

They were very excited to receive a Delek Grant Donation from Delek US & Delek Logistics LLC for \$2000. This grant was for STEM exploration in Ms. Braswell and Mr. Rynder's STEM and Coding classes.

There were pictures of students in Mrs. Canady's AO class practicing problem solving and effective communication. They had to work with a partner to tie several twizzlers together using only one hand each. It was a challenge but they had several successes and unique ways of tying them all together.

Mrs. Norris' 3rd period class was pictured for their Cowbell Celebration! They were the first class to have 100% of the class master their cowbell target of multiplying fractions. So far there have been 100 Cowbell Celebrations this year!

National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from September 15 to October 15 in the United States for recognizing the contributions and influence of Hispanic Americans to the history, culture, and achievements for the United States.

Students in Ms. Escamilla's Spanish class participated by eating traditional dishes from Spanish-speaking countries, decorating flags, and creating decorative flowers from tissue paper. In the past week they worked hard to research & create a poster over influential Hispanic figures.

There was Collaboration in reading with Mrs. G and Ms. Beever's class worked hard on their gallery walk to review central idea and supporting details. There were also various pictures of students participating in Hands on learning throughout the school. WMS teachers do a great job of keeping students engaged in learning!

WASHINGTON COMES TO WASHINGTON as Sarah Elizabeth Guevara recently with ABC News and now with MSNBC from Washington D.C. visited with the Journalism class and the Competition Shake class.

Guevara fielded multiple questions from the young journalist as well as shared stories about being a political journalist in Washington D.C. She emphasized getting a good education, the importance of being a good writer and communicating well.

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They were very excited to have a Parent/Guardian Appreciation day on October 11. They were able to do coffee and donuts to celebrate their parents. They were very thankful to Ziggi's coffee for supplying coffee and cups to serve 100 people for the event. They were also excited to host the second annual House-Party Family Night. They had 847 people in attendance! She credited the Assistant Principals and teachers for making it happen!

Mrs. Hale stated that attendance has been a struggle this year, and in an effort to improve that she did a WMS Perfect Attendance Challenge from October 30- December 15. Each week students with perfect attendance, which means no tardies, no sick days, no early checkouts, had their name put in a drawing. The winner will receive a \$200 gift certificate to Retro City Sneakers here in El Dorado! She stated that she can not wait to draw and see who wins this prize!

They were able to have the WMS House elections! Students who were running were able to give a speech to the entire school. It is such a great opportunity for students!

Mrs. Hale was very excited to announce that WMS was recognized by the University of Arkansas and the Office for Education Policy for their ELA growth scores on the ACT ASpire.

They were also honored to be named a Model PLC @ Work School! Top Three Priorities Based Upon Needs Assessment and Current School Goals. 1. Collaborative teams will build capacity in developing common assessments that are aligned and rigorous and have team-determined proficiency and common scoring agreements. 2. Collaborative teams will use a data protocol to determine student misconceptions. 3. Teams will monitor the effectiveness of interventions. Specific targeted data is: 1. While working with Amy Clark our Solution Tree Consultant, we are working to help teachers track individual students. 2. Each collaborative team knows how many students we need to move from In Need of Support to Close and Close to Ready to meet our School wide SMART goal of increasing our ACT Aspire scores 20% in both Reading and Math at the end of the year. 3. AO-Tier 2: Targeted interventions for both academic and behavior are being provided for students in need 4 days a week.

They have also been able to include the WMS ARMOR matrix/Don't Suspend Me Pilot as part of the PLC Behavior program. ARMOR stands for Achievement, Respect, Motivated, On Task, and Resilient. This has helped to significantly decrease discipline issues.

- 22-23 School Year (Aug.-Nov.) (approximately 540 students total)
 - 30 out of school suspension incidents (25 students); Suspensions ranged from ½ day to 3 days
 - 22 different ISS incidents (Retta Brown) (16 students); Suspensions ranged from 1-3 days
- 23-24 School Year (Aug.-Nov.) (approximately 580 students total)
 - 2 out of school suspensions (extenuating circumstances)
 - 11 other means of correction incidents (10 students) all of these in school suspensions occurred on WMS campus
 - 3 ISS incidents (3 students-assigned to Retta Brown)
- We started the year by creating behavior plans for 23 students to be proactive. Of these 23 students:
 - 4 students had 0 disciplinary issues the first nine week
 - 7 students have been sent to AE (1 has transitioned back)
 - 12 students have seen improvement, and we are still working

Mrs. Hale shared a video of students who have benefited from this program. She stated that she is so proud of the progress that they have made and is also proud of her staff for helping make WMS what it is.

Mrs. Turbeville asked if there were corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting held November 6, and Special Called Meeting held on November 9. On a motion by Rene Skinner, a second by Todd Whatley, and carried on a 6-0 vote the minutes were approved and are on file in the superintendent's office.

The board reviewed the monthly bills. After a time of discussion and on a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Kenneth Clemons, and carried on a 6-0 vote, the minutes were approved and are on file in the superintendent's office.

Shelley Pruitt stated that the board would need to approve the Proposed Budget of Expenditures with Tax Levy for the fiscal year Beginning July 1, 2025 and including June 30, 2026. She stated that this is a general guideline and will be adjusted to more accurately reflect the actual expected budget closer to that fiscal year. After a time of discussion, on a motion by Todd Whatley, a second by Kenneth Clemons and carried on a 6-0 vote it was

RESOLVED that the board hereby approves the Proposed Budget of Expenditures with Tax Levy for the fiscal year Beginning July 1, 2025 and including June 30, 2026 as presented. A copy of the Proposed Budget will be on file in the Superintendent's Office.

Mrs. Debbie McAdams then presented the report for the School Based Health Center. She stated that they finished last school year, 2022-2023, with a total enrollment of 1,152 in the Wildcat Wellness Center. They had 124 in dental and 1028 for physical. They logged 998 adult encounters for physical health services and 617 student encounters with a total of 1,165 encounters. They performed 210 annual well child visits for students, gave 173 vaccines and screened 81 students for sports physicals. They saw 66 students for oral health services. The mental health agencies ported 166 students enrolled district wide and reported 1,272 encounters for the year.

They were recently able to add a third Mental Health Provider, Kelsey Jones, with Living Well Counseling located at First Baptist Church in El Dorado. Mrs. Jones is able to see students with Medicaid or private insurance and she can see students in schools as well.

Through September this school year, 2023-2024, they have done 65 vaccines and 60 sports physicals. The Union County Health Department reported giving 541 flu vaccines to El Dorado School District students and staff along with 9 vaccines to the Retta Brown Preschool. The UCHD gave 590 flu shots last school year.

They have also started offering a new weight loss program at the Wellness Center. They can offer injectables or pills. The program can be tailored to each individual's needs. They have approximately a dozen enrolled at this time.

They will be organizing a mass sports physical screening event for all athletes late April or early may of 2024 at EHS and BJH. These physicals will be FREE to the student. If a student misses the mass screenings then the sports physical will cost \$15 according to CABUN's new guidelines. They will pull 6th graders for free sports physicals to align with team tryouts.

She was able to write a grant this past spring for \$2000 to the Blue and You Foundation to purchase a new AED device and storage cabinet for the Wellness Center. She also purchased response kits and narcan bags for the additional AED devices purchased throughout the district.

The Arkansas Department of Education granted the wellness center \$13,500 to support ongoing expenses and to allow for educational travel. The dental program is part of a special grant initiative program collaborating with the Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation, Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Department of Education, The School Based Health Alliance of Arkansas and the Virginia Health Catalyst. The funds will be used to increase oral health services in schools.

She also stated that everyone at the Wellness Center is excited about the opportunity to relocate to the new intermediate school. She said it has been very exciting to be in on the redesign process of the clinic. She was also able to pick up a FREE exam table for the new clinic which was valued at \$5000. It was from a school based clinic in Yellville, AR that lost their medical provider due to closure.

She ended by saying that they are so thankful to Mr. Tucker and the board are always supporting services that enrich the whole child model of school health and the team at The Wildcat Wellness Center!

Mr. Tucker then presented the Retention and Recruitment Incentive. He stated that they would like to provide a Retention and Recruitment Incentive for contracted employees with some of our remaining ESSER Funday. Total cost of \$671,369.40 all out of ESSER. The calculations were made using the same parameters as the other ESSER payments to staff. We plan to payout this incentive on Wednesday, December 13.

- \$1,200 - Licenced/Exempt
- \$600 - Classified/Non-exempt
- \$300 - Bus Drivers/Aides
- \$150 - Half Route Drivers

After a time of discussion, on a motion by Kenneth Clemons, a second by Todd Whatley and carried on a 6-0 vote it was

RESOLVED that the board hereby approves the Retention and Recruitment plan to be paid to contracted employees as presented.

Mrs. Turbeville stated that we had received the following transfer requests. Mr Tucker stated that each of these are legal transfers and it is his recommendation we approve the following:

- A parent resides in the El Dorado School District and would like to transfer her student, age 12, to the Smackover-Norphlet School District. On a motion by Wayne Gibson, a second by Todd Whatley and carried on a 6-0 vote it was approved;
- A parent resides in the Strong Huttig School District and would like to transfer her student, age 4, to the El Dorado School District. Beginning in the 24/25 school year. On a motion by Kenneth Clemons, a second by Todd Whatley and carried on a 6-0 vote it was approved;
- A parent resides in the Parkers Chapel School District and would like to transfer her student, age 9, to the El Dorado School District. On a motion by Todd Whatley, a second by Kenneth Clemons and carried on a 6-0 vote it was approved; and so

RESOLVED, that the board hereby approves these legal transfers as presented by the superintendent.

Mrs. Turbeville made the following announcements:

- **Navigating Freedom of Information for School Board Members & Administrators**
“Virtual”: Wednesday, December 13 from 5:30-6:30
- **WMS School Board Lunch:** Thursday, December 14 at 12:00
- **BJH School Board Lunch:** Thursday, January 11 at 12:00
- **ASBA School Law Conference:** Thursday, February 8 from 8:30-3:30
- **MEC School Board Lunch:** Thursday, February 8 at 12:00
- **NW School Board Lunch:** Thursday, March 7 at 12:00
- **YO ELEMENTARY School Board Lunch:** Thursday, April 4 at 12:00
- **AAEA & ASBA Joint Leadership Conference:** Tuesday, May 7 from 8:00-4:00
- **YO PRIMARY School Board Lunch:** Thursday, May 9 at 12:00
- **New Board Member Institute:** Thursday, June 20 from 8:00-4:00

Mr. Gibson stated that he would like to publicly congratulate Director Kenneth Clemons for already attaining 50 hours of ASBA Credit and being recognized at the Annual ASBA conference last week. Mr. Tucker and the other directors also shared their congratulations.

They also recognized Director Renee Skinner for officially being a Region 13 Director and asked if she had any words of wisdom to share. Mrs. Skinner stated that although she didn't currently have any words of wisdom, she has found this position to be very interesting and has helped her be more aware. She believes it will be a great benefit to our district as well. She was congratulated and thanked for serving as Region 13 Director.

Director Todd Whatley encouraged everyone to go support the Wildcat Wrestlers! He stated that it is the real deal and students and adults of all ages will greatly enjoy it!

The meeting recessed to an executive session to discuss personnel matters at 6:56 pm. The board reconvened to an open meeting and on a motion by Renee Skinner, a second by Todd Whatley, and carried on a 6-0 vote at 8:41 p.m. it was:

RESOLVED that the board hereby approves the superintendent's recommendation concerning the acceptance of resignations and the employment of new personnel.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.