

**TUPELO PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
October 16, 2015
7:00 p.m.**

The Board of Trustees of the Tupelo Public School District convened in a regular meeting of the Board held in Open Session at 7 p.m. on Friday, October 16, 2015, at the Administrative Office, 72 South Green Street, Tupelo, Mississippi.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Kenneth Wheeler who welcomed guests attending the meeting.

ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Board members present during roll call were: Mr. Joe Babb, Mrs. Sherry Davis, Mr. Rob Hudson, and Mr. Kenneth Wheeler. Mr. Kenneth Wheeler announced a quorum and stated that the meeting was lawfully in session. Attorney Otis Tims and members of the press were also present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion by Mr. Babb, seconded by Mr. Hudson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda for the October 16, 2015, Special Called Meeting as presented. The Board President declared the motion passed.

A copy of the agenda is marked **EXHIBIT 1** and held in the Exhibit Book of this meeting date and incorporated herein.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Wheeler suggested that the Board consider entering temporary executive session to consider whether to go into executive session to discuss specific student discipline matters as well as school security policies. Mr. Hudson made a motion that the Board enter temporary executive session to discuss specific student discipline matters as well as matters related to school security and discipline policies. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babb and adopted unanimously. The room was cleared except for members of the Board, Dr. Loden, Ms. Shumpert, Ms. Tate and Mr. Tims.

Mr. Wheeler declared the temporary executive session to order for the purpose of determining whether to enter executive session. Thereupon Mr. Hudson made a motion that the Board enter executive session to discuss specific student discipline matters as well as matters related to school security and discipline policies. The motion was seconded by Mr. Babb and adopted unanimously. Mr. Wheeler then left the room and announced to those waiting that the Board had voted to enter executive session to discuss specific student discipline matters as well as matters related to school security and discipline policies.

Mr. Wheeler returned to the room and declared the executive session to order. The Board then discussed the District's experiences regarding the "Non-negotiable" discipline procedures set out in Exhibits 3 and 4 to Board Policy JD as well as related policies. The Board limited its discussion to the application of such policies to possession of weapons or look-alike weapons. The Board discussed the effectiveness of such procedures at deterring the targeted behaviors, whether the procedures as applied resulted in unintended consequences when there was no evidence of threat to the immediate safety of students or staff, and whether the procedures would cause the imposition, in certain narrowly defined circumstances, of penalties that are not proportionate to the type of conduct involved. The Board reviewed circumstances involved in the recent appeals of Case #30-2015-2016 and Case #31-2015-2016 both of which involved discovery of knives in unoccupied vehicles brought to school by students. The board considered whether in such circumstances there were more appropriate alternative penalties to removal of the student from the educational environment. The Board explored whether more frequent random searches of vehicles coupled with amending Policy JD to institute a tiered approach to penalties for knives in vehicles would have a better deterrent effect while reducing the likelihood of removing students from the educational environment for inadvertent misconduct. The Board further discussed whether an amendment to Policy JD should be applied retroactively for this school year for the purpose of promoting consistency in discipline. Following such discussion, Mr. Hudson made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Babb that the Board return to open session. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Mr. Wheeler then left the room to announce that the Board had returned to open session. Upon Mr. Wheeler's return, Mr. Babb made a motion that Policy JD be amended to remove from the automatic expulsion discipline category situations in which knives are discovered in unoccupied cars on school property and there is no evidence of a threat to safety and to replace automatic expulsion with a progressive discipline approach for such circumstances in which the student in control of the vehicle receives a 10-day suspension for the first occurrence, 45 days at the alternative school for the second incidence and expulsion for the third such event, and to direct the District's administration and counsel to make the appropriate changes to the District's written policies to carry out this decision. Mr. Hudson seconded the motion, and all Board members present voted to adopt the motion.

Mr. Hudson then made a motion that the just-adopted revision to Policy JD be made retroactive for the 2015-16 school year and that the Board's prior discipline decisions in Case #30-2015-2016 and Case #31-2015-2016 be rescinded and a ten-day suspension be imposed on the students in each case. Mr. Babb seconded the motion, and all Board members present voted to adopt the motion.

Mr. Babb then moved that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Davis seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously. Mr. Wheeler announced that the Board stood adjourned at 8:25 p.m.