

GEORGE-LITTLE ROCK COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

The George-Little Rock Board of Education met in special session on Thursday, June 6, 2019 in the Middle School Library in Little Rock. Board President Doug Krull called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. Board members present were Doug Krull, Wade Netten, Kristi Landis, and Curt Fiedler. Also in attendance were Board Secretary Cathy Bonestroo, Principal Steve Green, Principal Molly Schilling and guests Darcy Hansmann, Nyla Hellinga, Valecia West, and Andy Irwin.

A quorum was established. Citizens were invited to address the board with no public comment received. President Krull thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Fiedler, seconded by Landis, and carried 4-0

Krull shared he had met with the Harris-Lake Park (HLP) superintendent and board president on Monday to discuss the possible opportunity to operational share superintendents noting both districts were in a similar situation with enrollment and administration level. It is potentially a good opportunity to reduce expenses and get additional aid with the operational sharing funds. Krull shared he later received notification that HLP was interested in moving to the next step. Superintendent Andy Irwin, Harris-Lake Park Superintendent, was present as he felt it was important to attend the meeting to introduce himself and share his general education philosophy.

Irwin shared most of his teaching and administrative experience was in SW Iowa with some experience in Nebraska. He is just finishing his 2<sup>nd</sup> year as superintendent at HLP with the last year split as elementary principal and superintendent. Irwin shared HLP has been a good place and fit for his family which includes his wife, a teacher at HLP, and 4 daughters (3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders). He noted he is heavily involved in the district and is also serving as the basketball coach. Prior experience included secondary principal at a smaller and somewhat larger district, social studies teacher, industrial tech teacher, coach (football, track, basketball, baseball), and athletic director. Irwin noted that the majority of SW Iowa utilizes operational sharing in many aspects, and he has experience with cuts, mergers, and whole grade sharing as well.

Krull noted GLR currently shares the HR position of Pat O'Donnell with HLP already and the board is looking at where to go with administration and all avenues to create dollars for the district but not give up the educational piece. GLR has shared a superintendent previously for a couple years starting in 2009. It was noted that with a district between us there is no talk of consolidating or misinterpretation with the public, but a way to look at fine tuning for the financial health of the district. Krull had Principal Schilling share about the building make-ups and grade levels per building. She noted the history of the grades and the current make-up and expressed GLR has a great staff with some staff traveling between the two communities and buildings. She also noted the comprehensive status of both the George elementary and Little Rock elementary buildings.

Irwin expressed it is a tough balancing act with complications of the funding formulas, noting the basics of enrollment is that kids equal dollars. It is important to keep education up and remain fiscally viable and cognizant to provide both and have those not so easy discussions as needed. He noted in answering the big questions, it is important to think in terms of simplicity and instead of saying enrollments, look at staff and recognize they know the kids and can personalize their education. Staff must know kids to

personalize the learning which is a positive for districts with lower enrollments. HLP certified enrollment is 298 with the average class size of 25. Technology with a small district is reasonable. HLP has pushed technology and using it better, noting the importance of one-on-one education and understanding and knowing how to navigate it. Irwin noted small districts allow you to be swift with change and stressed the importance to move on what's important.

Initial sharing discussions were held regarding the possible sharing agreement at 50/50 or 60/40 with HLP more comfortable with the 60% HLP and 40% GLR split. HLP previously shared a buildings and grounds person and has gone back to a full-time position. HLP currently shares transportation with Sibley-Ocheyedan and it has worked very well, as has the HR position being shared with GLR. Irwin noted sharing a superintendent is more the norm in administrative careers. Each district will receive 8 students in aid for sharing a superintendent. GLR is currently at 15 students for operational sharing aid with the current sharing arrangements with a maximum allowed of 21 students for sharing aid. Board noted some internal things may need to be rearranged to adequately be able to do things in house and have the right people in place, recognizing more pressure will be on staff on site. GLR's transportation director sharing agreement has been renewed already. Netten asked Irwin how his dual role as principal and superintendent would fit with the role of a shared superintendent. Irwin stated the dual role would be rearranged at HLP.

Board expressed appreciation for Irwin attending the board meeting noting it was a good opportunity to hear from HLP and Irwin. HLP is currently putting together what it may look like and happy with the direction and quick cooperation in ensuring it is right for both districts to make it work. Irwin noted GLR and HLP are both small and the need to look out for each other and help each other when we can to keep all districts viable. Irwin left the meeting and was thanked by all for attending.

Krull shared that currently the GLR board is looking at the shared superintendent as an interim position for one year to see how it goes and then discuss more if all goes well. The quick turn-around needed was expressed and again appreciation to HLP for recognizing this. It was noted that the GLR and HLP districts are very similar in many ways which can help in many ways to assist in transition. The board is excited about the possibility. It was stressed to have clear expectations for all in the district and do what's best for everyone.

Krull noted Irwin understands the sharing part and was proactive in asking to come and present at the board meeting. Krull shared he also discussed sharing superintendents with Boyden-Hull, West Sioux, and Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn. Boyden-Hull has already begun looking at sharing with West Sioux. Timing for HMS will not work right now with their building project. Discussion was held if a search committee should be formed as a back-up for a part-time superintendent or if we wait and see what happens. Board all felt comfortable waiting a week and seeing what happens with the HLP superintendent sharing possibility. It was stressed to do the right thing for the district, teachers, and community and be proactive if there are any concerns. HLP was concerned with how their community will perceive sharing noting HLP had personnel concerns when previously looked at sharing. Rumors of consolidation should be avoided this time when not sharing with neighboring districts and should help the perception.

Irwin would like to move forward. HLP board needs to make the decision. Fiedler expressed it must be the right person and making sure everyone does their duties also noting concerns of leaving the district in a good position for board members who will not be returning after the election. Krull asked Bonestroo, Green, and Schilling if there were concerns with the 60/40 split. It was noted that a big difference is in the efficiencies and commitment to do the work needed. Buildings and grounds was expressed as a

concern needing to be addressed if proceed. Krull noted the building and grounds agreement has not been renewed. Bonestroo stated that the agreement is set to automatically renew if not notified by April 30 but there is a clause to possibly end in 30 days with cause. It was noted it may be something to discuss. HLP board president says Irwin will give 150% and is comfortable with the split of sharing salaries, benefits, and expenses. HLP will present a proposal to GLR if interested. Krull expressed appreciation for HLP's good response and being proactive at getting back to GLR in a timely manner. He will check to see if they will have a special board meeting for the decision to proceed. Krull requested the board to think about the possibility of sharing a superintendent with HLP.

A motion to hire Bryan Paulson, High School Special Ed Teacher, at \$30,750 was made by Landis, seconded by Netten and carried 4-0. Discussion was held that administration tried to move other teachers to fill the need, but struggled with coverage to prevent voids and get all the paperwork needed and use the Special Education and Title money with some weightings being increased.

The next regular board meeting will be held Thursday, June 13, 2019 in Little Rock at 7 pm.

Board vacancy appointment will not be completed at the June 13 meeting, but will have a special board meeting near the end of the month for the board member appointment.

A motion to adjourn at 7:45 pm was made by Netten, seconded by Fiedler, and carried 4-0.