

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
2500 NORTH LINCOLN BOULEVARD  
STATE BOARD ROOM, SUITE 1-20  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA**

**April 9, 2021**

The State Board of Education met in special session at 9:33 a.m. on Friday, April 9, 2021, conducted via a virtual platform only. The final agenda was posted at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 8, 2021.

The following were present at remote locations:

Mr. Brad Clark, General Counsel, via Zoom videoconference  
Ms. Terrie Cheadle, Chief Executive Secretary, via Zoom videoconference

Members of the State Board of Education present at remote locations appearing via teleconference and Zoom videoconference:

State Superintendent Joy Hofmeister, Chairperson of the Board  
Mrs. Estela Hernandez, Oklahoma City  
Mr. Trent Smith, Yukon  
Mrs. Carlisha Williams Bradley, Tulsa  
Mr. William "Bill" Flanagan, Claremore  
Mr. Brian Bobek, Oklahoma City  
Mrs. Jennifer Monies, Oklahoma City

**CALL TO ORDER  
AND  
ROLL CALL**

State Superintendent Joy Hofmeister called the State Board of Education special meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. Ms. Cheadle called the roll and ascertained there was a quorum.

Superintendent Hofmeister welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting of the State Board of Education.

**STATE SUPERINTENDENT**

**Information from the State Superintendent**

Superintendent Hofmeister advised on the order of agenda item 4 (a) and 4 (b) and said Sovereign Community School would come after Western Heights Independent School District. Western Heights representatives were notified to be prepared to appear at 9:30 a.m.

**LEGAL SERVICES/STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION OFFICE**

**Performance Review and Accreditation status of  
Western Heights Independent School District required at the  
March 25, 2021, meeting of the State Board of Education - Approved**

Brad Clark, General Counsel addressed the March 25, 2021, State Board of Education (SBE) decision and actions pursuant to statutory and constitutional authority as Honorable Board Members and the State Board of Education. The March 25, 2021 actions included conducting a performance review of Western Heights Independent School District (District) and to appear on April 9, 2021 to discuss concerns regarding the district's operations, decisions and outcomes. Notice of the March 25, 2021 actions were provided to Western Heights on March 30, 2021, and correspondence and communications were had among the parties since that time, including opportunities to meet and discuss the matters presented at this meeting.

Mr. Clark presented the performance review and board members discussed and asked questions regarding concerns and complaints on the school district operations, decisions and outcomes; concerns and District performance were addressed relating to federal programs and laws, Oklahoma laws, including those relating to finance, governance and compliance; OSDE district notifications, district responses, community concerns; district accreditation regulations and status, deficiencies, corrective actions and noncompliance; OSDE accreditation recommendations, timelines and community notifications.

Corrective actions included offering student opportunities for in-person instruction, provide nutrition services to students, fund employee insurance and benefit plans, special education services compliances and requirements for students with disabilities pursuant IDEA and alternative education program services, FY19 and FY 20 audits, establish trust and respect with the District community (parents, students, staff and civic) act on disharmony in the community, and more, including providing updated reports identifying corrective action plans at the April 22, 2021 SBE meeting.

Superintendent Hofmeister said the department recommends Western Heights Independent Schools District be accredited with probation for corrective action, close monitoring and regular compliance to occur to bring them back into compliance within 90 days.

Board member Williams Bradley moved to place Western Heights on probation for corrective action within the next 90 days. Superintendent Hofmeister seconded the motion.

Board members asked questions and discussion about the different levels of accreditation and affects; OSDE notice to school district and expectations, responsibilities, compliance necessities and directives; request to appear at the April 22, 2021 meeting; failure to comply consequences and non-accrediting status/process, community notice and student needs.

Board member Williams Bradley clarified the motion is inclusive of the recommended corrective action (special education, staff, benefits, audit, leadership and opportunity to provide a plan and course of correction) and progress to the State Board of Education.

Board members concurred and requested OSDE send notice to provide a progress report, current financial and appear at the April 22, 2021, State Board of Education meeting.

The motion carried with the following votes: Ms. Williams Bradley, yes; Mr. Flanagan, yes; Ms. Hernandez, yes; Ms. Monies, yes; Mr. Bobek, yes; Mr. Smith, yes; and Superintendent Hofmeister, yes.

(Superintendent Hofmeister called a break at 11:01 -11:30 a.m.)

**Charter Contract between the State Board of Education and  
Sovereign Community School, including possible termination  
of the charter contract**

Mr. Clark reviewed the Sovereign Community School proposed charter school application to Oklahoma City Public Schools and denials; August 23, 2018 SBE appeal, sponsorship request, and November 27, 2018 contract approval. The July 1, 2019-June 30, 2024 sponsorship application and contract terms presentation and review included finances, enrollment, education programming and leadership; three (3) performance frameworks (governance, finance and educational outcomes), review of contract termination noncompliance in academic, governance and organizational performance, timelines, and contract breach/dissolution recommendation to terminate effective June 30, 2021 and provide notice and opportunity to the families in order to seek options for next year that are available to them. Presentation and discussion included repeated violations of the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, insolvency of the school, violations of the terms of sponsorship contract and requirements in applicable laws for the operations of public schools and questions regarding the loan transaction entered into with SFS Development, Inc.

(Superintendent Hofmeister called a break at 12:10-12:20 due to technical issues)

Sovereign Community School (SCS) representatives Kyla Molina, Interim School Board President, and Stacie Thrasher, Interim Superintendent, reviewed background of SCS mission to create an indigenous space for the native community and vision to meet student wellness needs for academic success, rigorous and culturally relevant content, and elevating student consciousness and justice for the community. The SCS request is to allow SCS ability to have sovereignty of the school and determine best actions for student moving forward.

Board members asked questions and discussed the SCS presentation that included vision clarification, goals, core values, student enrollment/recruitment updates; staff and board resignations, financial stability and sustainability, tribal affiliation/support, additional board members and staff; audit findings and carryover, projections pre-COVID, grants, loans, school personnel reporting requirements and 2021-2022 budget; enrollment challenges, recruitment forecast; 2020 corrective actions/changes of audit corrections, offering online courses, assistance preparing 2021 projected budget; current partnerships, utilizing OPRC consulting services, building lease terms and obligations; hiring new superintendent and timeline; TRS retirement payment obligations, future Santa Fe South Corporation loan payment, ending school year carryover; and SCS community impact.

**(Superintendent Hofmeister called for a break at 12:55-1:10 p.m.)**

Bill Hickman, legal counsel representing SCS, questioned the existence of a SBE written letter setting out the violations and proposed actions to be taken. It was his understanding there was none.

Superintendent Hofmeister and Mr. Clark advised numerous notifications, including those in writing and identified non-compliances were provided to SCS in Spring, Summer and Winter in 2020, and in 2021 in early March as well as January and February 1.

Board member Bobek moved to not terminate and remain in probation status and to move forward. Board member Smith seconded.

Board members asked questions and discussed progress, solvency, financial liability deficiencies, final decisions timeline and measure progress; probation continuance recommended, provide 5-year financial forecast, and enrollment, loan payoffs, and finance projections and report at the April SBE meeting.

Board member Bobek amended the motion to reflect Sovereign Community School present a 5-year plan and P&R with the scheduled April 22, 2021 SBE meeting; or at least have an update. The motion carried with the following votes: Ms. Williams Bradley, yes; Mr. Flanagan, yes; Ms. Hernandez, yes; Ms. Monies, yes; Mr. Bobek, yes; Mr. Smith, yes; and Superintendent Hofmeister, yes.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Board member Smith moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:33 p.m. Board member Monies seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following votes: Ms. Williams Bradley, yes; Ms. Hernandez, yes; Mr. Flanagan, yes; Ms. Monies, yes; Mr. Bobek, yes; Mr. Smith, yes; and Superintendent Hofmeister, yes.

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Education will be held on Thursday, April 22, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will convene at the State Department of Education-State Board Room, 2500 North Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

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Joy Hofmeister, Chairperson of the Board

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Terrie Cheadle, Chief Executive Secretary