

John Rex Charter School

Board of Directors Meeting Highlights

March 19, 2018



Board Directors

Present

Joe Clytus

David Greenwell

Phil Horning

Kirk Humphreys

Robin Johnson

Gary Jones

Charifa Smith

Gail Vines

*This highlights newsletter is created for our families, staff, and the community in order to offer timely information related to recent JRCES board actions, discussions, or reports given at the most recent meeting. The following notes are highlights from the meeting listed above and should **not** be considered official/approved minutes of the meeting. Additional information about the Board of Directors, links to board policies & bylaws, as well as minutes from previous meetings may be found on our website at www.johnrexschool.org.*

Report from Head of School

Dr. Joe Pierce outlined John Rex's unique circumstances as a charter school with a public-private partnership model. Dr. Pierce strongly emphasized the open dialogue and positive relationship between the board, administration, teachers and staff. The primary reason JRCES teachers are advocating for a walkout is better education funding for their students and in solidarity with their profession. Funding for all Oklahoma public schools is severely lacking, in addition to the insufficient teacher pay. Based on the number of teachers who have demonstrated interest in participating in the walkout, JRCES will not have a sufficient number of staff to remain open. Dr. Pierce says school administrators remain hopeful the Legislature will find a funding solution before April 2 so a walkout will not be necessary. [Read more in Dr. Pierce's letter to parents.](#)

Presentation from Teachers

Second grade teacher Traci Jackson spoke on behalf of over a dozen teachers during the board meeting. She outlined how thankful they are to work for an innovative school with better pay and supportive parents and administration. She described JRCES as a healthy branch on a rotting tree of public education in Oklahoma. Ms. Jackson eloquently described how devalued the teaching profession has become and how action must be taken to ensure quality educators are retained in Oklahoma for the most important business in the world: the education of our future. She described how counterintuitive it is for teachers to consider walking out instead of being in the classroom with their students. She used the metaphor of how parents are instructed when flying to put an oxygen mask on themselves first before putting one on their child. Ms. Jackson said, "But who will be here to take care of and teach our children if we do not seize this opportunity and do what we can to protect our profession? We are forced to put the oxygen mask on ourselves first we can fight for our children." [Read the open letter from JRCES teachers here.](#)

Board Discussion

Members of the board of directors shared their concerns about the chronic underfunding of education and demonstrated their appreciation for JRCES teachers and the sacrifices they've made for the students. Board Chair Phil Horning outlined several alarming statistics about the status of education in Oklahoma:

- State funding for education is down \$180 million from 10 years ago, but there are 50,000 more students in Oklahoma public schools

Public Comments

All meetings of the Board of Education shall be open to the public, and any regular meeting shall include an opportunity for the public to address the Board. Presentations under "Public Comments" are limited to three (3) minutes. Where several people wish to address the same subject, a spokesperson must be selected. The Board Chairman may interrupt and terminate any presentation that is not in accordance with any of these criteria. Board members may not respond to speakers' comments.

- There are over 1,800 alternatively certified teachers now working in Oklahoma public schools because we've lost so many teachers; Oklahoma had only 31 alternatively certified teachers five years ago
- Oklahoma has 700 fewer teachers than in 2013-2014, while student enrollment has grown by 15,000 students

The board is acutely aware change is needed and made clear it stands with teachers in demanding more from the Oklahoma Legislature. However, the board is concerned about the impact on students' education if the Legislature does not act and the walkout continues beyond a week.

Board Resolution

The board unanimously passed a resolution in support of the teacher walkout and increased funding for public education. The resolution says if the walkout extends beyond five days, the board will meet again to discuss the situation. The motion to approve was made by Kirk Humphreys and seconded by Gary Jones. [Click here to read the resolution.](#)

2018 Meeting Dates

- April 19, 2018
- June 21, 2018
- July 19, 2018
- September 20, 2018
- November 15, 2018

Important Links

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