

**West Carroll Board of Education  
Regular Meeting  
November 10, 2010**

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of West Carroll Community Unit School District No. 314, was held in the WC Intermediate School Library/Media Center, 801 South Street, Thomson, Illinois. The meeting was called to order by Vice President, Bill Sweeney at 6:30 p.m.

Members present: Bill Sweeney; Mike Highland; Tim Atherton; John Brigham; Bev Kilpatrick; and Deb Klein.

Members Absent: David Boyd (arrived at 6:35 p.m. and departed the meeting at 8:55 p.m.)

Administration present: Superintendent Craig Mathers; Principals Bob Lamb; Monica Burkholder; Julie Katzenberger; Jeanette Ashby; and Pam Delp, Special Education/Pre-school Director.

Others present: Brad Field, LaMoine Aude, Judy Mathers, Don Mathey, Salina Baltierra, Ieshia Larson, Chloe Carson, Clare O'Connor, Janelle Dykstra, Collin Wilkinson, Media (Bill Gengenbach, Michael Miller, Samantha Pidde, Bob Watson), Peg Haffey, Bill Robinson, Michael Moon, Ron Carson, Stacy Carson, Paul Tobin, Paul Seymour, Tyler Vandendooren, Travis Hartman, Tammy Schneider, Tim Schneider, Larry Stebbins, Scott Sullivan, Pam Brown, Dennis Bowman, Richard Frey, J. C. Carey, Tim James, Phillip Remrey, Mark Klein, and Robert David.

**Consent Agenda**

- Minutes from the October 21, 2010; Regular Meeting
- Minutes from the October 21, 2010; Regular Meeting, closed session
- Financial reports, payment of bills, and activity accounts
- Destruction of closed session tape from January 15, 2009, Regular Meeting.

Motion by Highland to approve the items of the consent agenda as presented. Second by Klein. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

**Public Comments**

Larry Stebbins stated that the county lost sales tax revenue when an unknown company (at that time) that buys and sells oil left Lanark. Palatine Oil Company and the City of Savanna worked out an agreement regarding rebates to entice the company to bring its office back to Savanna. The agreement is currently in the third year of a ten year contract. The City of Savanna can not depend on the sales tax from Palatine Oil Company long term because they could be gone at any time. Savanna received \$206,000 in sales tax this last year that has been used to repair streets. They hope to build a new waste treatment plant with money received from sales tax. He has been informed by Palatine Oil Company that if sales tax increased by one percent they would leave the area. Stebbins stated that the county would lose more than it would gain. Scott Sullivan stated that the area will lose sales. The community must try to keep people coming to Savanna. If the sales tax is increased they will shop somewhere else. We must compete with Clinton. People will not shop locally with the sales tax increase. Sullivan is talking with another company trying to get them to come to Savanna. Increased sales tax would hinder that process. He asked the Board of Education to consider voting no on the one percent sales tax initiative. Richard Frey stated that an increase in sales tax would affect his convenience store a lot. He hopes that the Board of Education seriously thinks over their decision on the one percent sales tax. He feels the additional money will not be there because the additional tax will drive people away from buying. Dennis Bowman states he does not bring in a lot of money from the tourist trade. Ninety-nine percent of his business is not from tourists. Several restaurants in Savanna are closing. If the tourists are coming why are these businesses closing? The additional sales tax will not be coming from outside of the county. Paul Seymour stated it is necessary to let the voters decide the issue. The Board of Education only puts the question on the ballot. The one percent sales tax is a swap for property taxes. In Iowa the sales tax is a trade-off for property tax by holding it in check or reducing the property tax. This sales tax will not cure everything but it helps to defray some of the costs. Galena uses the sales tax to rebate bond and interest costs for the tax payers. The sales tax initiative passed in three of the six counties that had it

on the ballot November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The high school is going to need a new roof before long. You will have to increase the property taxes to put on a new roof. The sales tax will take care of part of your building needs. I just purchased a new refrigerator and I would have gladly paid the additional tax on this new appliance purchase to reduce West Carroll's reliance on the property taxes. Paul Tobin understands the comments and concerns of the businessmen but if the sales tax is passed it will abate property tax by 5%. While working in Iowa he never saw the adverse side to the businesses. Just look and see what the money has done for their school buildings. All the districts worked well together. It gives tax payers a chance to vote upon the sales tax. Michael Moon does not feel there would be any savings on the property tax. He feels that the Board of Education would not hold to abating taxes with the sales tax because they did not honor what they had promised about taxes at consolidation. If Palatine Oil Company leaves, Savanna may have to raise additional taxes to fix the roads. President Boyd asked if everyone who wished to speak had done so. J. C. Carey asked what the other Boards of Education were doing regarding sales tax. Superintendent Mathers stated that Chadwick/Milledgeville is planning to vote in support of the tax but Eastland is staying neutral on the proposition. Carey asked why and Boyd and Mathers said that is what you would need to ask them. Frey stated the difference with Iowa's gas cost is that they do not pay fuel tax. Sullivan asked if the Board can guarantee that the sales tax will be used to abate property tax. Boyd stated that there is no guarantee from the Board at this time. Sullivan said that 80% of the sales tax is generated in the west side of the county. Almost 50% of that tax would go to the other side of the county and they do little if no business in our area. It is hard to swallow that fact. Why would the other Boards not support free money? It seems unfair to have to give them free money. Boyd asked if one-half of a percent in sales tax would be acceptable. Sullivan stated any tax would be hard to take. Boyd asked if it could be worked out that what sales tax was generated within the district would stay in the district would that be more palatable to the businessmen. Sullivan said yes it would. Boyd stated that the Board represents everyone and it does not want to alienate any of the businesses. The Boards goal is to give a return back to businesses as well as the tax payers. We are trying to do the best possible. If the board felt there was no interest in the tax why would we do all the leg work to try and bring more money into the district? Boyd thanked everyone for their comments and time.

### **Correspondence**

Superintendent Mathers received an email that he felt the Board should be aware of. The email was from Dee Eissens regarding the fact that West Carroll students have been involved in 14 fundraisers since school started. The fundraisers have not all been school sponsored but a combination involving Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, and PTO. The district has a master calendar that includes the dates of school and organization fundraisers and with the use of Board Policy form 7:325-E it is hoped the district can cut down on so many at one time. The administration will be addressing this issue.

### **Administrative Reports**

Jeanette Ashby, Primary and Intermediate School principal, reported the Primary was holding a Family Reading Night, November 10. This activity was put together by the first grade and reading teachers. Several fifth grade students will be attending the IMEA on November 13. Mr. Highland complimented the Intermediate School on the Veteran's Program held earlier in the day. He stated that Mr. Bressler did a great job.

Julie Katzenberger, Middle School principal, reported that there will be 250 teachers attending the county institute at the Middle School on November 12. She thanked the Education Foundation for the grants awarded to the Middle School. There were seven grants totaling approximately \$10,000. One hundred and thirty six students received recognition for academic achievement for the first quarter. The Academic Fair is scheduled for November 24. The boys' basketball season has begun. Four Middle School students will be attending the IMEA District Festival on November 20 and the Fall into Winter Concert is scheduled for November 30.

Pam Delp, Special Education and Pre-school Director, reported that she had attended an administrative academy regarding autism spectrum disorders. The workshop was provided by the Regional Office of Education and was very informative and helpful. Mrs. Delp and Patricia Laughlin conducted an in-service for special education teacher aides. Mrs. Delp thanked Mrs. Laughlin for her assistance. Many positive comments were received regarding the in-service. Mrs. Delp highlighted the Illinois Benchmarks for pre-school students. Pre-school helps students with socialization but also prepares students for reading and math readiness. The over-all goal of the pre-school program is to provide information, support, and activities for families so every child can start school ready to learn.

Robert Lamb, High School principal, reported that the Freshman Parent Meeting is scheduled for December 8. This is part of the Freshman Transition Plan. Discussion with parents will include what is going on, what to look for, and the semester test schedule. Diane Hoover, English teacher, wrote and received a \$2,000 grant for SADD from the Illinois Department of Transportation, Operation Teen Safe Drive. Lamb thanked the Education Foundation for awarding grants to the different school buildings in the amount of over \$28,000. The high school received \$11,000. Lamb extended condolences to the family of Melissa Castro. An action plan for grief counseling was ready in case it was needed.

Monica Burkholder, assistant High School principal, reported that a Parent/Student Handbook Committee meeting is scheduled for December 8. Kilpatrick stated she would be on the committee. Mrs. Burkholder extended an invitation to the audience if anyone would like to participate on the committee. Mrs. Burkholder, Jack Roemer, and Dave Baisden (counselors) are putting together a bullying/harassment prevention program to be implemented at the High School. The program will emphasize positive behavior, positive decisions, zero tolerance of bullying and harassment, and parent education.

Brad Field, Technology Director, reported that he attended the annual Skyward Users Conference. It was very educational and informative. He is working on collecting information for the three-year Technology Implementation Plan that is due at the end of the school year. He will attend the Illinois Education and Technology Conference later in November and during the holiday break will install equipment that was approved for purchase through grants from the Education Foundation.

Craig Mathers, superintendent, reported that student attendance for October was 95.43%. This is a 0.6% increase over last year at this time. The state continues to send general state aide to the districts on a timely manner but all other funds are delayed. The County Institute is November 12 with programs on student engagement and technology; piecing the two together. Mathers highlighted information from Mrs. Ashby's building newsletter informing teachers that assessment materials should be taught every day and not crammed into the students prior to the testing. If the testing standards are a solid part of the district's daily curriculum the students will do much better. Boyd asked how far behind the State of Illinois is with district funds. Mathers reported the district is owed over \$2,000,000. Boyd stated the money doesn't disappear, it just doesn't show-up. It is necessary to use tax dollars to educate kids.

### **Board Committee Reports**

There are no committee reports. Another Board Policy "PRESS" update packet has been received. Mathers will contact the committee to set-up a meeting time.

### **Old Business**

#### **Worker's Compensation Bids**

Workman compensation bids were opened on October 28, 2010. Six bid quotes were received from four agencies. Due to the districts' past claim history the modification factor applied to the quotes was .92. This created an 8% decrease in the premium quote. The premium for 2009-2010 was \$78,139

from Accident Fund. The low bid quote for 2010-2011 is \$79,075 from Selective Insurance. Selective also has the highest rating at A+.

Motion by Kikpatrick to approve the low bid for workers' compensation insurance from Selective Insurance (Lockhart & Law) in the amount of \$79,075 for coverage from December 1, 2010 to December 1, 2011. Second by Brigham. Roll call vote: 7 yes. Motion carried. Attachment.

## **New Business**

### **Consideration of a Resolution requesting the Carroll County Board to Submit to the Voters of the County at the April 5, 2010 Consolidated Election the Question of Imposing Retailers' and Service Occupation Taxes to be Used Exclusively for School Facility Purposes**

Superintendent Mathers has made five different presentations within the school district regarding the one percent sales tax. Some people have the perception that the school board will be voting on a resolution that will enforce the sales tax. The resolution is only a recommendation to the County Board asking that the question be put on the ballot. If the question is successful the County Board will make the final decision on the amount of the sales tax. Boyd thanked Mr. Mathers for doing all the leg work and making sure that people understand the proposition question. Highland stated this is a way the State gives districts an opportunity to bring in additional revenue. He feels the Board has an obligation to the students and the taxpayers to look for every source of revenue possible. It is a practical source of revenue. Every businessman would take every advantage to better their business. The district should be able to do the same. The question needs to be put before the voters. Kilpatrick appreciates the concerns expressed. The sales tax is such a small amount of money she does not see it as a problem. Brigham appreciates everyone coming and understands it is a big deal for everyone but it is another revenue option for the schools and it should be put up for a vote. Klein also thanked everyone for coming and feels the Board does need to consider the businesses and Savanna. But she also feels the voters should have a say in the matter. Klein stated maybe the Board should consider 0.5 percent instead of one percent. Klein asked do we not have some control on setting the rate to 0.5 percent. Mathers stated yes. Brigham asked Sullivan if 0.5 percent would drive Palatine out. Sullivan said yes. Highland asked if 0.5 percent was raised in only West Carroll under a different option would that work. Sweeney asked what other options there are. Mathers explained with enough resources and help with political figures home rule legislation could benefit West Carroll only. Sweeney asked if this could be done within the timeframe of the election. With community drive and support fundamentally a 0.5 percent sales tax could be generated in West Carroll and come back to West Carroll. Stebbins stated 0.5 percent or one percent, his business would be okay but the City of Savanna he could not say and he could not say what Palatine Oil would do. Carey would rather see a 0.5 percent tax than a one percent. Tim Schneider said it would be impossible to say what either rate would do to his business. Boyd asked what is the best course and method, what way do you go. Sullivan wants to help the schools. He is already working with Senator Jacobs. He said 0.25 percent would help with home rule. Boyd said this is what the state has given us can we do something with it. We have a responsibility to the tax payers and the businesses. Sweeney says he understands the financial part of it. Will waiting to put on the sales tax help? Maybe more cuts can be made. As a Board have we done everything we can do? Boyd said times are hard for everyone. Is this a good time, in my heart I do not feel so but when is it a good time? Over the years we have been building trust with the tax payers and we do not want to jeopardize that but we are still obligated to do the best we can in these financial rough times for everyone. It is hard to look at any increases. We may not all agree at this time but we must come to a consolidated effort. Highland asked Sullivan if he had discussed with Senator Jacobs any other options available. Sullivan stated he had planted a seed – could it happen anytime soon – he is not certain. The community needs a good school district to grow and succeed and this goes for all of us just not one of us. Boyd said you would be voting to control your own destiny. Sullivan stated if you put it on the ballot the other side gets to vote, why would they not vote yes? Highland said if it is possible to

develop some legislation that designated West Carroll School District as home rule; the sales tax would be generated only in West Carroll; and the money would come back to West Carroll at a 0.5 percent rate would this be a viable option you could support? Sullivan would support a 0.25 percent rate. Highland stated we need an atmosphere of compromise and the Board is trying to compromise. Stebbins asked if a 0.25 percent sales tax without tax abatement would come out to about the same amount of funds as a 0.5 percent. He feels that would be more doable and it would work to make it better for everyone. Atherton asked Sullivan if you were not a businessman and only a tax payer what would you think. Would you support the tax rate? Sullivan said West Carroll has the highest tax rate, high energy cost, and a high unemployment rate. I am thinking about people coming into the area. Atherton said I do not own a business but the sales tax is a good source of income. I do not trust political people and do not want to jeopardize the school. Boyd asked Highland and Atherton if their questions had been answered. They said no. Board members continued with more discussion. Highland suggested creating a committee of businessmen to discuss the issue with Senator Jacobs and Superintendent Mathers to develop legislation and tabling action until next month. Boyd stated we need support right now and we need to hustle to get the proposition on the April ballot. Kilpatrick asked what are the chances to get this done before the next meeting. Boyd stated it could be done but you will have the same risk with Senator Jacobs if the motion is approved or the County Board approves. Mathers stated the Board was mixing a couple of topics. The Board will vote to put the proposition on the ballot and the County Board will decide the sales tax percentage. Home rule legislation will take a democrat to get that passed and the Board will still need to come back to the voters. The County Board would have no say on this option only the tax payers. Klein feels we need to table the action for this month and take it to the legislators. Highland feels we need to seek legislative help and also find out what would be taxed. With home rule whatever rate is on the ballot is what the rate would be set at. Boyd asked what 0.25 percent sales tax would equal in revenue.

Motion by Highland to table the consideration of a resolution requesting the Carroll County Board to submit to the voters of the County at the April 5, 2010 Consolidated Election the question of imposing retailers' and service occupation taxes to be used exclusively for school facility purposes until the December 16, 2010 meeting. And to authorize Superintendent Mathers to organize a committee to seek legislative help to create home rule for West Carroll allowing sales tax to be generated in the district of West Carroll and staying in West Carroll to be used for facility purposes. Second by Klein. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Atherton no. Motion carried. Boyd thanked everyone for coming and participating and they are welcome to come again.

### **FFA National Convention Presentation**

Mr. Mathey and FFA members Salina Baltierra, Ieshia Larson, Chloe Carson, Clare O'Connor, Janelle Dykstra, and Collin Wilkinson provided a picture presentation for the Board about their trip to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. Each student highlighted parts of the trip and the Chapter received the National Chapter Award. They had a great time and thanked the Board for allowing them to attend. Boyd thanked them for coming and giving their presentation. Kilpatrick stated that they did a nice job.

### **Presentation on Annual School Achievement (AYP)**

The principals presented the results from the 2010 ISAT and PSAE assessments. Students are assessed every year to measure how well they are meeting or exceeding the State Standards and NCLB requirements. The target number for 2010 was 77.5%. Over-all students are doing well with the exception of one group of students which is being addressed. The Primary School made AYP for 2010; the Intermediate School made AYP in "all" categories for math and a subgroup in reading but did not make AYP in reading in the "all" category; the Middle School made AYP in "all" categories for reading and math and in two subgroups for math but did not make AYP within two subgroups for reading; and the High School made AYP in subgroup "white" through safe harbor, but did make AYP in reading or math in the "all" category. The alignment of curriculum is making a difference in test scores by putting things in place for the students and allowing them to make great strides. Other

things that are helping test scores is the new reading and math series, universal screening procedures, staff development, using volunteers and continuous test prep practice from day one of the school year. In a list of fourteen area schools West Carroll has the highest PSAE scores in reading and is sixth highest in math scores. Another positive for the High School is the AYP Club. It is an incentive or reward system for the students. The administration and staff will use the following guidelines to continue to strive for academic improvement: annual review of assessment data; annual comparison of assessment data to school improvement plan; data driven curriculum articulation; increase in attendance district wide; and special education students are exposed to grade level concepts and curriculum. The AYP target for 2011 is 85% to meet or exceed state standard or safe harbor. Boyd congratulated the administrators on their presentation and results. The district has a high rate of economically disadvantaged and a high mobility rate making it more difficult to achieve AYP. It is necessary to inspire the teachers by allowing them to achieve themselves and get a masters degree. It makes a difference in the scores because the teachers are staying current in the curriculum and learning themselves. This is a help and an aide to the district.

### **School Report Card Presentations**

School report cards are generated for each building and the district. The report cards provides all information on the district; finances, students, instructional setting, and education. Next year the reports will be different due to changes to the national core standards. The district curriculum will need to be aligned to these changes. In the year 2013 or 2014 all tests in grades 3 - 11 will have to be taken electronically. This will be a challenge for the technology department. This is part of the "Race to the Top" initiative. Illinois got all the laws from "Race to the Top" but no funding.

### **WCIS School Improvement Plan**

WC Intermediate School has not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for the last two years; they are now a choice school. That designation puts in place new school improvement requirements: letters sent to parents notifying them of the option of choice school and a two year school improvement plan on how to raise achievement scores. The plan addresses the weaknesses indicated and what strategies will be used, or are being used, to improve student. The Intermediate School has a high number of economically disadvantaged students with high mobility. The test data is being studied to align standards, create common teaching terminology, and if necessary add additional curriculum. Professional development and parent involvement are also tools being used. Board members asked if because the school only has two grades if that makes it more of a target. There are many factors and with more hurdles the harder it is to make AYP. It is necessary to get more parents involved. The use of Skyward by parents and sending newsletters will help.

Motion by Klein to approve the School Improvement Plan for West Carroll Intermediate School as presented. Second by Brigham. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried. Attachment.

### **Tentative Tax Levy; 2010**

Preliminary work has begun on the 2010 tax levy. The levy must be filed with the Carroll County and Jo Daviess County Clerks by December 28, 2010. Most fund rates are set to the maximum rate by law but three of fund rates have been lowered or flat lined allowing the district to spend down some of the fund balance. Superintendent Mathers is projecting a rate that is down \$0.04 from last year's rate to show the tax payers that the district is trying to keep property taxes in check. But the district will be in the first year of an inflated tax rate for bond and interest. The rate will go from \$0.88 to \$1.01. When the bonds were sold the EAV was to make a difference in the cost of the tax rate but the EAV has not grown as was anticipated. The tax abatement of bond and interest from the one percent sales tax was the plan to help keep the tax rate down. Traditionally, the district has done a balloon levy but this year the levy projection is below 105%. Even though it is not necessary Mathers suggests the Board hold a Truth in Taxation Hearing to allow the tax payers to discuss the levy if they so wish. Key areas of the levy: a lower levy in IMRF and Social Security due to fund balances; a flat levy in tort due to fund balances; the EAV is expected to be flat or decrease (residential property has

decreased while farmland increased); the bond & interest payment increases \$150,000 this year resulting in a 13 cent increase in that rate.

Motion by Atherton to approve the 2010-2011 tax levy as a first reading and set a Truth in Taxation hearing before the December 16, 2010, Board of Education meeting. Second by Sweeney. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

### **West Carroll High School Prom**

The Junior Class has completed preliminary plans to host Prom 2011 on Friday, April 29, 2011 but the topic must be tabled due to the fact that a venue has not been procured for the event. If at all possible the date will be moved back to Saturday.

### **West Carroll High School Graduation**

The date for the WC High School graduation has been scheduled for Sunday, May 15, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. An outdoor ceremony is planned depending on the weather. Based on the district calendar, the last full day of school is to be Monday, May 16, unless all five (5) snow days are used, the last full day of student attendance would be Monday, May 23, 2011.

Motion by Highland to approve May 15, 2011 as the date for West Carroll High School graduation. Second by Brigham. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

### **Closed Session**

Motion by Kilpatrick to move the regular meeting into closed session at 9:12 p.m. for the discussion of items (A) appointment, employment, discipline, performance or dismissal or removal of specific employees; (B) collective bargaining matters or consideration of salary schedules for one or more classes of employees; and (E) student discipline cases. Second by Atherton. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

The regular November meeting returned to open session at 9:45 p.m.

### **Action Resulting from Closed Session**

Motion by Brigham to uphold the administrative decisions regarding out of school and transportation suspensions for students from West Carroll High School (3), Middle School (5), Intermediate School (4), and Primary School (1) as discussed in closed session. Second by Highland. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Motion by Sweeney to accept, with regret, the resignation of Nancy Hakes as district speech and language pathologist. Second by Kilpatrick. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Motion by Highland to accept, with regret, the resignation for retirement of Helen V. Aude as a cafeteria cook assistant at the WC Primary School. Second by Sweeney. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Motion by Klein to accept, with regret, the resignation of Harold Wilkinson as a district bus driver. Second by Brigham. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Motion by Atherton to accept the transfer of Carla Mallow's duties to include the afternoon Early Step pre-school bus route. Second by Kilpatrick. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Motion by Brigham to accept the recommendation to employ Chris Mason as a part-time cafeteria cook assistant at the WC High School. Second by Atherton. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Motion by Sweeney to approve the recommendation to employ Jessica Sauser (Hillcrest) as a one on one tutor for a West Carroll special education student (one hour per day). Second by Brigham. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Motion by Kilpatrick to approve the recommendation to employ Ami Cramer (Hillcrest) as a one on one aide for a West Carroll special education student (one hour per day). Second by Sweeney. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Motion by Kilpatrick to approve the request of Bill Timm, WC Middle School, to purchase a fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) personal day per Article IX, Section 9.01 B of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Second by Highland. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Motion by Highland to approve transferring Betty Hartman from WC Intermediate School secretary to the secretarial position at WC Primary School to include some duties from WC Intermediate School. Second by Klein. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

**Adjournment**

Motion by Klein to adjourn the regular November meeting of the West Carroll Board of Education at 9:55 p.m. Second by Atherton. Roll call vote: 6 yes; Boyd absent. Motion carried.

Sandra Aude  
Recording Secretary

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Michael D. Highland, Secretary  
West Carroll Board of Education

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David W. Boyd, President  
West Carroll Board of Education