

Iberville Parish School Board
Plaquemine, Louisiana
November 3, 2008, November 11, 2008
6:00 p.m.

SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

ROLL CALL:

Present: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Paul Distefano, Albertha Hasten, Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie Molden, III, Darlene Ourso, Dorothy Sansoni, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Absent: Nancy Broussard

Presiding: Melvin Lodge, President

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Lodge led the School Board in a moment of silent reflection, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING – MR. WILLIE ZANDERS

An Administrative Hearing was conducted and testimony presented November 3, 2008, and reconvened on November 11, 2008. Mr. Distefano was present for testimony heard on November 3, 2008, but was absent for testimony and tabulated voting on November 11, 2008.

Mr. Lodge reported that Mr. Lou Delahaye, board attorney, had agreed to serve as hearing officer for the Willie Zanders Tenure Hearing.

Mr. Delahaye asked Mr. Zanders if he wanted the hearing to be public or private as per R.S. 17:493. He stated that he wished to have a public hearing.

(All testimony and comments on file recorded verbatim by court reporter).

Mr. Delahaye read each of the charges and conducted a roll call vote thereon.

CHARGE NO. 1: INCOMPETENCY, INEFFICIENCY, AND/OR FAILURE TO FULFILL TERMS AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES OF THE CONTRACT

In accordance with his contract of employment with the Iberville Parish School Board, Mr. Willie Zanders is required to fully, efficiently, and timely achieve the specific performance objectives of his position as assistant principal. Those performance objectives are spelled out in

his job description. One requirement contained in the job description is that he perform such tasks and responsibilities as the principal may assign from time to time. Another requirement is that he communicate in a professional manner with other employees and with parents.

On December 13, 2006, Mr. Zanders was placed on a Level I Professional Assistance Schedule/Intensive Assistance Program for failure to act professionally, failure to communicate effectively with school employees, and failure to follow school board policy.

On June 11, 2007, Mr. Zanders' overall performance was evaluated by his immediate supervisor, Principal Delores Thibodeaux, for the 2006/2007 school year. Mr. Zanders was rated unsatisfactory in the areas of interpersonal communication with school employees and his behavior with staff, parents, and immediate supervisor. Rather than seek his removal as an administrator at that time, it was decided that Mr. Zanders would remain in his position and his performance would be reviewed quarterly during the 2007/2008 school year.

On October 10, 2007, Principal Thibodeaux was compelled to counsel Mr. Zanders regarding two separate complaints she received against him from school employees. Those complaints alleged that, in separate incidents, Mr. Zanders raised his voice angrily at employees in the presence of parents and others.

On December 13, 2007, Principal Thibodeaux again counseled Mr. Zanders as a result of an employee complaint she received concerning Mr. Zanders' continued disrespect towards him and his recurring tendency to undermine his authority. On subsequent occasions, Principal Thibodeaux received additional complaints from school employees about the manner in which Mr. Zanders spoke to them.

On or about March 12, 2008, Mr. Zanders began to treat an employee in an unprofessional manner by refusing to speak to her or even acknowledge her presence. When confronted about his conduct, Mr. Zanders expressed his displeasure with the manner in which the employee had handled an incident by placing a certain student in ISS. Mr. Zanders referred to the employee as a "racist who was taking up for the white man." Mr. Zanders was again counseled by Principal Thibodeaux about the manner in which he communicated with school employees.

On April 18, 2008, Principal Thibodeaux counseled Mr. Zanders yet again about the manner in which he communicated with school employees. On that morning, Mr. Zanders approached an employee in her office in a very aggressive and unprofessional manner, interrupted her as she assisted several parents with pre-kindergarten registration, and demanded that she immediately explain the registration process to him.

On May 13, 2008, Principal Thibodeaux issued Mr. Zanders a verbal and written warning. On that morning, Principal Thibodeaux summoned Mr. Zanders into her office to discuss an incident involving a staff member that had occurred in her office earlier that day. With an aggressive and disrespectful tone of voice, Mr. Zanders refused to come to her office and expressed his desire not to be with her alone.

On June 4, 2008, Principal Thibodeaux again evaluated Mr. Zanders and again concluded that his performance was less than satisfactory in the areas of professionalism, communication with employees and others, and adherence to School Board policy. She recommended that his employment as assistant principal not be continued.

Based upon the foregoing documented events, Mr. Zanders has consistently failed to demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively with staff, parents, and his immediate supervisor as required by his School Board-approved job description. Such inability on his part constitutes incompetency, inefficiency, and/or a failure to comply with the performance objectives of his contract.

Upon roll call, the following voted:

ALLEGATION:

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten, Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie Molden, III, Darlene Ourso, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Dorothy Sansoni

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

INCOMPETENCY:

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten, Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie Molden, III, Darlene Ourso, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Dorothy Sansoni

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

INEFFICIENCY:

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten, Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Darlene Ourso, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Freddie Molden, III, Dorothy Sansoni

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

FAILURE TO FULFILL TERMS AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Melvin Lodge, Darlene Ourso,
Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Yolanda Laws, Freddie Molden, III, Dorothy Sansoni, Stanley Washington

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

CHARGE NO. 2: INEFFICIENCY AND/OR FAILURE TO FULFILL TERMS AND
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES OF THE CONTRACT

On May 14, 2008 and May 15, 2008, Principal Thibodeaux received a complaint from Ms. Shandrika Mitchell and Ms. Crystal Greavis-Hemmings, respectively. They each complained about an incident whereby Mr. Zanders made inappropriate comments about Ms. Mitchell's son, who is a student at Iberville Elementary School. As they viewed and discussed a magazine that featured a picture of the student on the front cover, Mr. Zanders approached them and said, "Austin even looks good from behind." On several prior occasions, Mr. Zanders made comments in the presence of Ms. Mitchell about how attractive her son was. Such comments, and the manner in which they were made, were not appropriate and demonstrated inefficiency and/or a failure to comply with the performance objectives of his contract by Mr. Zanders.

Upon roll call, the following voted:

ALLEGATION:

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie
Molden, III, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Darlene Ourso, Dorothy Sansoni

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

INEFFICIENCY:

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie
Molden, III, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Darlene Ourso, Dorothy Sansoni

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

FAILURE TO FULFILL TERMS AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Melvin Lodge, Stanley Washington,
Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Yolanda Laws, Freddie Molden, III, Darlene Ourso, Dorothy Sansoni,

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

CHARGE NO. 3: INEFFICIENCY AND/OR FAILURE TO FULFILL TERMS AND
PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES OF THE CONTRACT

On December 6, 2007, Mr. Zanders did not report to work. On December 14, 2007, he completed and signed an employee's leave request form certifying that he was absent on December 6, 2007 due to illness. Subsequently, it was learned that Mr. Zanders was not ill on December 6, 2007 as he claimed but was actually in court in the 10th Judicial District as a defendant in a criminal case brought against him by the State of Louisiana. The intentional falsification of leave documents by Mr. Zanders constituted inefficiency and/or failure by him to fulfill the terms and performance objectives of his contract.

Upon roll call, the following voted:

ALLEGATION:

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie
Molden, III, Darlene Ourso, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Dorothy Sansoni

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

INEFFICIENCY:

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie
Molden, III, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Darlene Ourso, Dorothy Sansoni

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

FAILURE TO FULFILL TERMS AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten, Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Melvin Lodge, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Yolanda Laws, Freddie Molden, III, Darlene Ourso, Dorothy Sansoni,

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

CHARGE NO. 4: INEFFICIENCY AND/OR FAILURE TO FULFILL TERMS AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES OF THE CONTRACT

In accordance with his School Board approved job description, Mr. Willie Zanders has a contractual obligation to perform such tasks and responsibilities as the principal may from time to time assign.

On December 13, 2006, Mr. Zanders was placed on a Level I Intensive Assistance Program for failing to act in a professional manner, demonstrating an inability to effectively communicate with school employees, and failing to follow School Board policy. On December 18, 2006, he signed the plan acknowledging certain deadlines within which he was to perform certain tasks assigned to him by Principal Delores Thibodeaux in accordance with his Level I Intensive Assistance Program.

Specifically, Mr. Zanders was given written instructions to perform the following tasks:

- (1) Attend a conference entitled "Managing Emotions Under Pressure" on December 20, 2006 and provide documentation of his attendance;
- (2) Maintain a professional journal reflecting on positive actions learned from the scheduled conference and discuss his journal reflections with his immediate supervisor;
- (3) Develop a plan by January 8, 2007 on how he will effectively communicate with his immediate supervisor, staff, and parents; and
- (4) Review the student handbook and create a checklist on which procedures should be followed when handling daily student discipline.

As of the end of the 2006/2007 school year, Mr. Zanders had completed only two of the four tasks he was assigned. In particular, he had failed to maintain and discuss with his immediate supervisor professional journal entries reflecting positive actions learned from the "Managing Emotions Under Pressure" conference, and he had failed to develop and submit a plan on how he will effectively communicate with his immediate supervisor, staff, and parents.

Based upon the foregoing events, Mr. Zanders failed to fulfill his professional responsibilities by neglecting to perform specific written tasks imposed on him by his immediate

supervisor. Such failure by Mr. Zanders constituted inefficiency and/or failure on his part to fulfill the performance objectives of his contract.

Upon roll call, the following voted:

ALLEGATION:

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Darlene Ourso,
Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Freddie Molden, III, Dorothy Sansoni

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

INEFFICIENCY:

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie
Molden, III, Darlene Ourso, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Dorothy Sansoni

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

FAILURE TO FULFILL TERMS AND PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Guilty: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie
Molden, III, Darlene Ourso, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Not Guilty: Dorothy Sansoni,

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

The hearing officer then conducted a roll call vote on the Superintendents' recommendation that Willie Zanders be removed from his position as Assistant Principal and returned to his last position held as a tenured employee of the Iberville Parish School System.

Yeas: Michael Barbee, David Daigle, Tom Delahaye, Albertha Hasten,
Michael Hebert, Jr., Glyna Kelley, Yolanda Laws, Melvin Lodge, Freddie
Molden, III, Darlene Ourso, Stanley Washington, Brian Willis

Nays: Dorothy Sansoni,

Absent: Nancy Broussard, Paul Distefano

Note: Any qualifications of voting are recorded verbatim in the transcript of the meeting.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was offered by Ms. Hasten and was unanimously approved by the School Board members present.

IBERVILLE PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

MELVIN LODGE, PRESIDENT

ATTEST:

P. EDWARD CANCIENNE, JR., SECRETARY