

# MINUTES



Kansas State Board of Education

Friday, February 25, 2022

## CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jim Porter called the special meeting of the Kansas State Board of Education to order at 10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 25, 2022, in the Board Room of the Landon State Office Building, 900 SW Jackson St., Topeka, Kansas.

(00:12:50)

## ROLL CALL

All Board members were present:

Betty Arnold	Ben Jones
Jean Clifford	Ann Mah
Michelle Dombrosky	Jim McNiece
Melanie Haas	Jim Porter
Deena Horst	Janet Waugh

## OPENING STATEMENT

Chairman Porter read an opening statement. His message included the purpose of the special meeting, the responsibility of the State Board, and structure of the agenda.

(00:13:00)

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Jones moved to approve the day's agenda. Mrs. Arnold seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

**MOTION**  
(00:17:56)

## EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR PERSONNEL MATTERS OF NON-ELECTED PERSONNEL AND CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY

Mrs. Waugh moved to recess into Executive Session to discuss the subject of an individual employee's performance, which is justified pursuant to the non-elected personnel exception under KOMA, in order to protect the privacy interest of the individual(s) to be discussed, and secondly to discuss the subject of legal matters with legal counsel, which is justified pursuant to the exception for matters which would be deemed privileged in the Attorney-Client relationship under KOMA, in order to protect the privilege and the Board's communications with an attorney on legal matters. The session would begin at 10:15 a.m. for 60 minutes in conference room 355; no action would be taken during the session; and the open meeting would resume upon members' return to the Board Room at approximately 11:20 a.m. Board Attorney Mark Ferguson was invited to join this Executive Session. Dr. Randy Watson would be invited in later, but not initially. Dr. Horst seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

**MOTION**  
(00:18:08)

## RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Open session resumed at 11:20 a.m. A series of three motions followed.

(01:32:59)

## ACTION TO REJECT RESIGNATION

Mr. Jones moved that the Kansas State Board of Education reject the resignation of Dr. Randy Watson as Education Commissioner. Mrs. Arnold seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

**MOTION**  
(01:33:47)

**ACTION TO SUSPEND COMMISSIONER**

Mrs. Mah moved that the Kansas State Board of Education suspend Dr. Randy Watson for a period of 30 days beginning Feb. 28 without pay. Mr. McNiece seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

**MOTION**  
(01:34:14)

**ACTION TO APPOINT ACTING COMMISSIONER**

Mrs. Haas moved that the Kansas State Board of Education appoint Dr. Craig Neuenswander to the position of Acting Commissioner with appropriate salary adjustments. Dr. Horst seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

**MOTION**  
(01:34:44)

**ADJOURNMENT**

In closing, Chair Porter stated that the process to address issues in schools related to diversity and discrimination would be an item on the next agenda. It is critical, he noted, that each student is valued, welcomed, and feels comfortable and honored in the school setting. He intends for the State Board to lead in that process.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 11:24 a.m.

**POST-MEETING ACTIVITY**

Board members responded to questions from members of the media.

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Jim Porter, Chair

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Peggy Hill, Secretary