



**LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT
810 WEST MARKHAM STREET
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201**

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
June 26, 2008**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 26, 2008, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Katherine Mitchell presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Katherine Mitchell
Charles Armstrong
Melanie Fox
Larry Berkley
Dianne Curry
Robert M. Daugherty
Baker Kurrus

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Linda Watson, Interim Superintendent
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Dr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call; Mr. Armstrong arrived at 6:07 p.m. Mary McDonald, teacher at Baseline Elementary School and Catherine Williams, student at Central High School, were present as ex officio members of the board for the month of June.

Dr. Mitchell welcomed members of the audience and asked Dr. Watson to proceed with the citations and commendations.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations

Citations were presented to the student and teacher ex officio representatives to the board, Catherine Williams, student from Central High School, and Mary McDonald, teacher at Baseline Elementary School. There were no other citations or commendations.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Dorie Love, teacher at Hamilton Academy, addressed the board briefly regarding staffing and funding issues at Hamilton. She reported that she had been at the alternative school for eight years and that appropriate funds were not being allocated for educating the students at Hamilton.

Thomas Reinhart, also a teacher at Hamilton, spoke in support of comments made by Ms. Love and he invited board members to call him with questions.

C. Just Communities of Central Arkansas

Ruth Shepherd, Executive Director of Just Communities of Central Arkansas, provided a report on *Unitown* participation in LRSD high schools. The program offers an opportunity for students to interact with other teens from diverse backgrounds and to work together to build positive relationships. JCCA works with the City of Little Rock's Racial & Cultural Diversity Commission to provide more opportunities for students to participate and be involved in diversity workshops and activities. Ingrid Castrillo and Chris Love, *Unitown* counselors, provided their personal perspective on *Unitown* experiences and asked the board to continue to support JCCA and *Unitown*.

D. Little Rock PTA Council

Patty Barker, president of the LR PTA Council, addressed the board and expressed support for the JCCA diversity projects. She reported that a Council planning meeting was held on June 10th for the upcoming school year to establish goals for the PTA council and individual units. She reported that PTA officers serve as ambassadors to the individual school units and are available to assist them in becoming more successful advocates for parents and teachers. She thanked the board and the administration for continuing the per membership allocations that assist with the operations of the council.

E. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

No report.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Remarks from Board Members

No remarks.

B. Legal Update

No report.

C. Budget Update

Jean Ring reported to the board regarding recent meetings with the Pulaski County tax collector, the assessors' offices and the ADE finance department. At this time there are no firm revenue projections to report and no way to complete the final budget documents without the additional revenue information.

She reported that no financial reports would be included with the July agenda and that the end-of-the-year reports would be compiled and presented for the board's review in August.

D. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's report was printed in the board's agenda.

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the board meeting held on May 22, 2008 and from a special meeting held on June 12, 2008 were presented for the board's review and approval. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW

A. First Reading Board Policy GBN: Reporting Child Abuse

The board was asked to approve Policy **GBN, Reporting Child Abuse** on first reading. A 2007 state law, ACA 12-12-507, requires that suspected child abuse and neglect be reported directly to the appropriate state agencies without an employee having to ask for permission to make such report. Supervisors may not require employees to ask permission or notify anyone before calling the hotline or other agency.

Mr. Berkley moved to approve the policy as submitted on first reading; Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. Policy GBN will be submitted for second reading in July.

B. First Reading Board Policy DIE: Audits / Financial Monitoring

Revised policy **DIE, Audits / Financial Monitoring**, was presented for first reading approval. This revision establishes an audit committee to enhance the district's auditing and financial monitoring procedures. The committee will represent the Board of Directors in oversight and internal controls and compliance. Dr. Daugherty made a motion to approve the policy on first reading; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried 6-1**, with Mr. Kurrus voting no. The policy will be presented for second reading in July.

VII. ADMINISTRATION

A. Recommendations for Organizational Realignment

Dr. Watson presented a plan for reorganizing the district's administration to realign staff and provide more comprehensive support for schools in meeting the requirements of the ADE and ACSIP plans. Ms. Curry and Ms. Fox expressed support for the recommendations but asked that the administration keep the board informed of the budgetary implications of the plan as the revenue projections are received. Dr. Daugherty also spoke in support of the plan.

Mr. Berkley expressed concern regarding accountability and how the new level of administration will be monitored for effectiveness. His concerns were that a "new bureaucratic level" will not be favored by principals or teachers at the school level. Mr. Kurrus concurred and stated that the principals should be held accountable for everyone in their building; removing that authority and providing another layer of administration will not resolve the achievement issues.

Dr. Watson responded to questions from the board regarding the upcoming planning for budgets in the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years. Mr. Glasgow responded to questions regarding accountability planning and discussed how the coaches will be used to support the teachers in the classrooms.

Dr. Daugherty made a motion to approve the realignment as presented; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion, and it **carried 4-3**, with Mr. Berkley, Ms. Fox & Mr. Kurrus voting no.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. 2008-2009 Evaluation Agenda

The annual administrative recommendation for program evaluation was provided for the board's review and approval. Policy IL and regulations IL-R provide guidelines for completing both internal and external review of programs by district evaluation staff and external evaluators.

The recommendation provided an estimated cost of \$239,000 to complete evaluations in three programs or areas:

- Continued evaluation of six literacy programs for pre-kindergarten through grade six – Pre-K, Reading Recovery, Comprehensive Literacy, Reading First, Success for All, and Accelerated Reader
- Continued evaluation of five Pre-Algebra / Algebra Programs – Middle School Math, Pre-Algebra, Algebra, SMART/THRIVE, and Math Journeys
- Informal assessments of READ 180, Compass Learning, A+, and class-size reduction efforts

Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the evaluation agenda as presented. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Grants Update

As requested by the board, a written summary report on the status of various grants received and pending was provided as part of the agenda. This report covered the period beginning in July 2006 through May 2008.

C. PRE Report on Standardized Test Scores

Dr. DeJarnette provided a brief overview of the results of standardized tests. Copies of the reports were included in the board's agenda.

IX. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. Dr. Daugherty made a motion to approve the personnel items as submitted. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

The recommendation to appoint Richard Mills as the principal of Geyer Springs Elementary School was also provided. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the appointment. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion, and it **carried 6-0**. (*Ms. Curry was absent at the recording of the vote.*)

B. Report: In-House Legal Counsel

David Hartz prepared a report at the request of the board regarding establishing an office of In-house legal counsel. The administration did not make a recommendation but provided the report for information only.

X. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Donations of Property

The Board was asked to approve the acceptance of recent donations to schools and departments within the District. The donations are listed in the following chart. Student ex officio, Catherine Williams, read the items listed in the Board's agenda. Ms. Fox made a motion to accept the donated items, Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Bale Elementary	\$500 cash deposited to the school's activity fund	Bale PYA
Central High School	Tiger painting valued at approx. \$200	Mary Jane Bond on behalf of Ralph Erwin, class of 1957
Chicot Elementary	\$300 cash toward rental of Fun-Dunk equipment for Field Day, May 30 \$100 cash for Field Day, May 30	Landers Chrysler / Jeep / Dodge Landscape Technologies & Assoc.
Wilson Elementary	\$300 cash for Field Day \$525 cash for Field Day	Affirmative Risk Management St. Andrew's Church
Woodruff Elementary	\$200 cash for incentives and materials for faculty & staff	DaySprings Behavioral Health Services of AR

B. GAAP Financial Statements and Audit Report for June 30, 2007 and Extension of Professional Services

Jean Ring presented information on the annual audit prepared by the accounting firm of Thomas & Thomas. Mr. Don Smith was present to respond to questions from the board. Ms. Fox moved to approve the audit as submitted. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried 6-0-1**, with Mr. Armstrong abstaining.

In addition to approving the audit, the superintendent requested an extension of the professional services contract currently in effect with Thomas & Thomas through 2008. Ms. Fox, moved to approve the recommendation; Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Issuance of Construction Bonds

A 5-mill tax increase was approved by Little Rock voters in May 2000 which provided \$190,000,000 in refunding and construction bonds. Since that time, \$176,805,000 in bonds have been issued and used to provide the funding for construction projects across the district. \$13,185,000 of these bonds remain unsold.

The board was asked to approve a resolution authorizing the issuance of the remaining \$13,195,000 in bonds to be used to fund construction of the new west Little Rock school. Approval of the resolution would grant authority to Stephens, Inc. to submit a competitive bid and conduct a public sale of the bonds. Ms. Fox moved to approve the resolution; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried 6 – 0.** (*Dr. Daugherty was absent at the time of the vote.*)

D. Proposed Budget for Annual School Election

The proposed budget of expenditures for the annual school election in 2009-2010 was provided as required by Arkansas Code Ann. 6-13-622. The board was asked to approve the budget and the resolution for publication as required. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the resolution; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

E. Request for Financial Audit to be Performed by the State

Information was provided as requested by Mr. Armstrong on the feasibility of requesting a financial audit by the state of Arkansas' Division of Legislative Audit. The agenda included the basic information required for requesting such an audit and the board briefly discussed the time requirements for making the request. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to table the issue for later consideration; Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

F. May 2008 Financial Statements

The May 2008 financial reports were included in the agenda. Ms. Ring previously reported that no reports would be provided at the July board meeting due to the end-of-year closing of the books.

XI. CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Watson reminded the board that summer school was in session. There was no additional information to report.

The board took a brief recess at 7:35 p.m. and returned to conduct employee hearings at 8:00 p.m. *Ms. Curry did not return.*

XII. EMPLOYEE HEARINGS

Kurvis Dunhoo, assistant head custodian at Central High School, was represented by Grainger Ledbetter, Executive Director of the Classroom Teachers Association. Mr. Dunhoo reported that he had been in the district for 18 years, 17 of those assigned to Central High. He had served as assistant head custodian for eight years, and he reported that during vacancies in the head custodian's position, he had served as interim head custodian until the position was filled. Mr. Dunhoo stated that he felt he had the qualifications to serve as the head custodian.

As a witness for the district, John Blaylock, custodial manager, reported that he participated in the hiring of custodians by serving on the interview team at the principals' request. He reported that he felt the applicant selected for the head custodian position at Central had more experience and was a better candidate for the full-time position.

Mr. Chestine Sanders, custodial supervisor, was also a witness for the district. He responded to questions regarding his role in making recommendations for staffing at the head custodial level. He reported that Mr. Dunhoo was a good worker, but that he didn't feel that he had the leadership and "people" skills needed to serve in a supervisory capacity. Mr. Sanders stated that he had recommended to Mr. Dunhoo that he apply for a head custodial position at a smaller school in order to build his level of communication and supervisory experience.

Nancy Rousseau, Central High School principal, reported that she had interviewed for the head custodial position with the assistance of Mr. Blaylock, and that she believed the applicants received a fair and impartial interview. She stated that Mr. Dunhoo performs satisfactorily when he is at work, but that regular attendance had been a problem, especially when he missed major events or important occasions. As an example, she reported that Mr. Dunhoo had taken his vacation the first week of school, had missed freshman orientation, and had missed open house. She reported that he did a satisfactory job as the assistant custodian, but that she had selected the other applicant because of his level of previous supervisory experience and his leadership abilities.

Mr. Ledbetter interviewed Mr. Dunhoo and provided information for the board's consideration. Mr. Dunhoo provided copies of his performance evaluations, all indicating "satisfactory" performance. Mr. Dunhoo stated that he felt that he had the necessary experience and that he should have been placed as head custodian due to his seniority and qualifications.

Mr. Ledbetter asked the board to find in favor of Mr. Dunhoo and to appoint him to the first head custodial position available at the high school level.

The board took a brief recess and returned from executive session at 9:13 p.m. Dr. Mitchell reported that there was no action taken.

Mr. Berkley made a motion to support the administration's position and the decision to place another more experienced applicant in the position of head custodian at Central High. Ms. Fox seconded the motion, and it failed 3-2-1. Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Daugherty voted no; Mr. Armstrong abstained.

The board questioned Mr. Hartz about the vote and the impact it would have on Mr. Dunhoo's current position at Central. Mr. Hartz will visit with legal counsel tomorrow regarding Mr. Dunhoo's future assignment and make a recommendation to the superintendent.

Mr. Berkley left the meeting prior to the beginning of the second hearing.

Bart Steadman, maintenance employee at Parkview High School, was also represented by Grainger Ledbetter.

David Hartz provided background information regarding Mr. Steadman's employment status. Mr. Steadman had applied for a building engineer's position at Parkview which had been reinstated after being eliminated by the 2005 reorganization. Mr. Steadman received the "soft landing" afforded all employees affected by the reorganization and was appointed to a custodial / building engineer position, splitting his time between Parkview and Henderson. When the building engineer's position at Parkview was reinstated in March 2007, Mr. Steadman asked to be reappointed; he applied for the position, but was not selected.

Jerry McClure, building engineer foreman, was a witness for the district. He reported that his responsibilities included supervising and assisting building engineers, and that he had served in this capacity for eight years. He had also participated in the interviews for the Parkview building engineer position. It was his belief that the candidate who was selected was more qualified and better suited for the position and that his references had provided highly favorable recommendations.

Linda Brown, principal at Parkview, reported that she had served approximately 34 years in the district. She discussed the high points of the resume of the applicant selected, noting that he had served in the Navy, that his resume included references from both full and part time positions, and that he had interviewed well. She reported that she had never evaluated Mr. Steadman when he was at Parkview because performance evaluations at that time were done by the custodial supervisors instead of the building principals. She reported that the building engineers' position was reinstated due to the high level of maintenance needs at the building; there were only two applicants interviewed. She stated that the candidate selected was dependable, trustworthy, and a team-player and that she felt she selected the right person for the position.

Mr. Ledbetter addressed the board, asking them to find that Mr. Steadman had been treated unfairly. He suffered a reduction in pay and an applicant from outside the district was selected for the position that Mr. Steadman had the qualifications to hold. He stated that Mr. Steadman's five years of experience in the job at Parkview should have given him preference. He asked the board to place Mr. Steadman in the first available building engineer position and to compensate him for the difference in the salary he had received since the other applicant was placed in the position.

The board convened an executive session to deliberate the issues. They returned from executive session at 10:30 p.m. and reported no action taken.

Mr. Kurrus made a motion to uphold Mr. Steadman's grievance to the extent that he be paid as if he were the building engineer and had been hired as the building engineer at Parkview. The motion further authorized the superintendent to administratively place Mr. Steadman in a suitable position at her discretion. Mr. Steadman was asked to apply and interview for any comparable jobs for which he is qualified, but that he be paid at the level of the building engineer at Parkview. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 10:34 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Kurrus seconded by Ms. Fox.

APPROVED: 07-24-08

Originals Signed by:
Katherine P. Mitchell, President
Melanie Fox, Secretary