



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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
September 27, 2012**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 27, 2012, in the boardroom of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Jody Carreiro presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jody Carreiro
Michael Nellums
Greg Adams
Dianne Curry
Melanie Fox
Norma Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Charles Armstrong

ALSO PRESENT:

Morris Holmes, Superintendent of Schools
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mr. Carreiro called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call, Mr. Armstrong was absent. The teacher and student representatives for the month of September were Nicholas Barnes, student body president at Parkview, and Donterio Porter, teacher at Dunbar.

At the agenda meeting on September 13, Ms. Fox presented information on the receipt of the national Red Ribbon Award by Forest Park Elementary School. She introduced Teresa Courtney-Ketcher and others from the Forest Park staff. It was noted that Ms. Ketcher had also been nominated for the prestigious Bell Award for school leadership.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Superintendent's Remarks

Dr. Holmes addressed the audience regarding recently publicized concerns about conduct in our schools, and the treatment of Latino students in particular in the LRSD. He assured listeners the administration was interested in learning about specific and general incidents, and promised there would be no denying or covering up of any

incidents if they have occurred. He guaranteed appropriate investigations would take place and swift actions would be taken to ensure all students are safe in school. Dr. Holmes congratulated Ms. Ketcher and the staff at Forest Park on the receipt of the Blue Ribbon Award.

The superintendent also presented certificates of appreciation to the ex officio representatives to the board, Nicholas Barnes, student at Parkview Magnet High School, and Donterio Porter, teacher at Dunbar Magnet Middle School.

At the agenda meeting, Mr. Carreiro presented plaques to Mr. Armstrong and Ms. Fox in recognition of their years of service on the LRSD board. Both of them served two terms, six years on the board. Each of them also served one year as president of the board.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Claudia Smith, Maria Marquez, Karen Swinton, Todd Ferguson, and Darryl Swinton, parents from Otter Creek Elementary, each took time to speak in support of their school and the needs they believe are not being met by the LRSD. Concerns included a lack of technology and a need for additional computers in the classrooms, upgrades to the Smartboard and wifi technology, the need for additional building and grounds security, a need for additional classroom space, playground renovation and additional parking. The speakers were very supportive of the principal and staff, and were proud of the high level of parental involvement. They invited the Board to visit their school to see firsthand what they believe are critical needs for the success of Otter Creek.

Drivers from First Student including Connie Lewis, Lashay Dixon, Willie Abson, and Retonia Miller, addressed the board regarding their concerns over the lack of leadership at First Student and their perception of a decline in safety practices in school bus transportation. They requested assistance from the board in ensuring safety both from the bus operations, and from the aspect of disciplining students who misbehave on the buses.

Tonya McMullen addressed the board regarding issues of bullying, which she reported had been ongoing since the first week of school. She reportedly had discussed the concerns with her elementary school principal and with Dr. Mitchell. Ms. McMullen accused the principal of allowing bullying and harassment, and she asked for the board's assistance.

C. Partners in Education

At the agenda meeting on September 13, Ms. Milam presented a partnership between **Baseline Elementary**, represented by *Shara Hampton*, and **St. Mark's Episcopal Church**, represented by *Cathy Roberts*, leader of the church partnership team.

Ms. Fox moved to approve the new partnership. Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

D. Donations of Property

Student representative Nicholas Barnes read the list of donations provided in the board's agenda. Ms. Curry moved to approve the donations presented. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Central High School	\$500.00 cash to the baseball team Four microwave ovens, valued at \$300.00 for the teachers' lounges	Edward H. Passini, Sr. Mr. & Mrs. Larry Alman
Hamilton Learning Academy	\$300.00 cash toward the purchase of a golf cart \$1,000 cash toward the purchase of a golf cart	Hamilton PTA Anonymous
LRSD Computers for Kids Program	81 computers with assorted mice, keyboards and power cords valued at approximately \$8,100.00 15 computers with flat screen monitors and accessories valued at approximately \$4,500.00 18 computers and 12 monitors with assorted mice, keyboards, and power cords valued at approximately \$3,600.00	Wright, Lindsey & Jennings, LLP Social Security Disability Determination Agency University of Phoenix
LRSD Gifted Programs	\$2,500.00 cash to the LRSD Quiz Bowl program to defer costs of competitions	Windstream Corporation

E. Little Rock PTA Council

Sarah Bernhardt addressed the board briefly, and encouraged them to follow up with the Otter Creek parents and to visit other schools across the district with similar needs. She thanked the LRSD administration for hosting the first PTA Council meeting.

F. Little Rock Education Association

Ms. Kohler directed a statement to the bus drivers, expressing her appreciation for the services they provide our students.

She thanked the Otter Creek parents for coming down and voicing their concerns, and complimented them on the professional manner in which they approached the issues. She thanked Connie Green at Forest Heights Middle School for her professionalism and made reference to concerns with the problems surrounding substitute teachers.

She thanked Dr. Holmes for including her in the varying factions of district operations, citing improvements in the level of collaboration through the discussions where the important decisions are being made.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Mr. Adams responded to some of the comments made earlier by Dr. Holmes regarding bullying and mistreatment of students in our schools. He assured listeners that he didn't want any child to feel unsafe in our schools, and he encouraged parents to be persistent and work up the line of authority until they reach a resolution when they have concerns. He also thanked the Otter Creek parents for expressing their concerns, and said it was his intent to begin working on a districtwide facilities plan. He thanked the administration for targeting the board's list of priorities, and he closed by thanking Ms. Fox for her service to the district.

Ms. Curry thanked Dr. Holmes for the manner in which he handled the discussion regarding the Latino students. She committed to working toward addressing all issues or concerns expressed by our students and parents, and promised she would endeavor to never leave anyone out of the equation. She also thanked the Otter Creek group for sharing their concerns and the bus drivers for the service they provide. She closed by thanking Ms. Fox and Mr. Armstrong for their years on the board.

Dr. Nellums acknowledged Ms. Fisker and Mr. Peterson, congratulating them on their successful run for the board. He asked parents to be involved by preparing their students, and encouraged them to watch academic progress as we near the end of the first grading period.

Ms. Johnson commented on an article recently published in the Arkansas Times, stating she had not read it and did not believe in some of the things she had heard. She encouraged the audience to get along with each other, and to teach children to get along with each other. She thanked the parents who spoke earlier, and she encouraged people in the schools to make sure invitations are sent to board members when there are activities in the schools.

Ms. Fox briefly thanked the board members for their comments, and expressed appreciation to Dr. Holmes for always being a child advocate. She thanked the bus drivers and said they were close to her heart for the job they do transporting the children safely every day. She commented on this being her last meeting, and thanked her fellow board members . . . "we might not always agree, but I have learned a lot and I have grown as a person," while serving on the board.

B. Presentation: ACT

Mr. Burton presented a Powerpoint overview of ACT test results for LRSD students. Comparisons were provided between LRSD students and results of students across the nation. The presentation was attached to the board's agenda.

C. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's report was provided in the board's agenda. He announced October 6, as the next Computer Power Day, to be held at Henderson Middle School. Information is available in the schools.

IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on August 23, 2012 and from special meetings held on September 13 and September 20, 2012 were presented for review and approval. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the minutes; Dr. Nellums seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

Ms. Fox made a motion to suspend the rules and reorder the agenda. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. Action on the resolution in support of the Forest Park pavilion was moved to this point in the meeting. It will be reported as it was printed in the agenda.

V. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW

A. Regulation – Minority Vendors

Board policy regulation DJF-R was presented for the board's review. No action was required. The regulation provides administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of board policy DJF Minority and Women Owned Enterprises, and includes procedures, budget goals for minority and women owned enterprises, reporting, outreach efforts and the formation of a business community panel.

B. Policy Revision – First Reading: JLCD Administering Medications to Students

Board policy JLCD, which regulates the administration of medications to students, was presented for first reading review and approval. The changes would specify the administration of Glucagon and Epipen injections and other narcotic pain medications.

Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the policy revisions on first reading; Dr. Nellums seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. ADMINISTRATION

A. Consideration of Charter School Applications

Mr. Carreiro requested a suspension of the rules to consider an item not previously placed on the agenda. Dr. Nellums moved to approve the suspension of the rules; Ms. Fox seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Attorney Chris Heller provided an overview of recently filed applications to the Arkansas Department of Education for the approval of new charter schools.

The Arkansas Leadership Academy proposed a Health Science School, and at this point had not specified a facility. The application had been submitted, but it was incomplete.

Dr. Holmes recommended the board oppose the application and file written notice to that effect. Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the superintendent's recommendation to oppose. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

A charter application from a management firm in Texas proposed a charter school on the campus of Arkansas Baptist College. The school would be a basic credit recovery and dropout prevention program, to be housed in a new building on the campus of ABC. There are plans for the building, but construction has not begun. There were favorable considerations based on the use of the college campus facilities. Cassandra Norman, the district's director of career and technical education, responded to questions. It was her opinion the proposal did not offer anything not already provided by the LRSD Accelerated Learning Center. The ALC has graduated approximately 100 students per year over their 12 years in operation using Nova Net and Plato for credit recovery and dropout prevention strategies.

Dr. Holmes recommended filing a letter of opposition based on duplication of services already provided by the LRSD. Dr. Nellums moved to approve the recommendation. Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

The third application proposed a bilingual school which was previously denied by the ADE. The school would be called the Kidsmart Cultural Arts Charter, and would be located on Baseline Road near Baseline Elementary School. Their proposal targeted students in grades K-8.

Again, the superintendent recommended the board file a notice of opposition based on a duplication of services provided by the public schools. Ms. Fox moved to approve the superintendent's recommendation, and Ms. Curry seconded the motion. It **carried unanimously**.

VII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Arkansas Department of Career Education Start Up Grant: McClellan High School

At the agenda meeting on September 13, Mr. Burton responded to questions from the board regarding the Arkansas Department of Education Start up grant application for McClellan High School. The grant would fund a STEM Works Initiative designed around hands-on learning, student teams, and projects centered around a pre-engineering program. ***Project Lead the Way*** will provide introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, and Biotechnical Engineering. The grant requests approximately \$75,000.00.

Ms. Fox made a motion to approve submission of the grant application; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. SCHOOL SERVICES

A. Resolution: Forest Park Elementary

There was a review and discussion at the September 13 agenda meeting regarding a proposed Resolution supporting construction of a recreational pavilion at Forest Park Elementary School. Principal Ketcher and the Forest Park PTA president were present to provide information and respond to questions.

The Forest Park PTA and the LRSD will establish a partnership to finance and construct a covered walkway and pavilion. Cromwell Architects created the renderings and have donated their services to the project. Ms. Fox moved to approve the Resolution supporting the project; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Arkansas College and Career Planning System

Arkansas Works is an initiative of Governor Mike Beebe, adopted by the Arkansas Workforce Cabinet. It is administered by the Arkansas Department of Career Education and targets 21 counties in Arkansas, including Pulaski County. The initiative will focus on increasing the ACT scores of students, reducing the remediation rates, improving the effectiveness of post secondary and career planning information, and providing high school students with career opportunities in Arkansas.

Mr. Burton responded to questions from the board and presented the administration's recommendation to approve participation and application. Ms. Fox moved to approve the recommendation. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

IX. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were provided in the board's agenda. Ms. Fox moved to approve; Dr. Nellums seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

X. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Right of Way Acquisition

The City of Little Rock requested an easement at the LRSD Metropolitan Career Technical Center located on Scott Hamilton Drive. A road widening project from Baseline Road to J. E. Davis Drive will begin in approximately three months. Traffic flow in and around Metropolitan will be improved and the district would receive approximately \$3,100 for the easement. The board was asked to approve the contract to sell the easement. The right of way contract agreement was attached to the agenda, and was provided for the board president and superintendent's signature. Mr. Bailey responded to questions.

Ms. Fox moved to approve the contract for granting the easement as recommended. Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

B. 2012-2013 Budget

Mr. Bailey reviewed the budget documents and highlighted the noteworthy aspects of the documents presented. By Arkansas law, the budget must be approved by the board and submitted to the ADE no later than September 30, 2012. The board had held previous worksessions to review the documents on May 31 and on August 30, 2012.

Ms. Fox moved to approve the budget as presented; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

XI. CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Curry thanked Dr. Holmes and staff for their visit to Southwest Little Rock to review and discuss the flexibility plan.

Ms. Fox reminded listeners of the Patriotic Assembly tomorrow morning at Forest Park Elementary School, at 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, October 6, is the next Computer Power Day.

The Central High School Band Booster Club is sponsoring a Pig Roast prior to their Friday night game, and Central will be featured on Daybreak in the morning 5:00 a.m.

The board took a brief recess at 8:12 p.m. Hearings resumed at approximately 8:30 p.m. Dr. Nellums left the meeting prior to convening the hearings.

EMPLOYEE HEARINGS

Attorney Khayyam Eddings represented the LRSD; CTA representative Michael Coleman represented the employee. <Employee> requested reconsideration of the superintendent's recommendation for termination.

Principal Donna Hall recommended termination based on concerns over the upkeep and cleaning of Otter Creek Elementary School. It was January 3, during the winter holiday, when Ms. Hall went to the building to do a walk through prior to students and staff returning to work after the break. She found the building had not been cleaned during the two week break. Trash had been left in the hallways and classrooms, bathrooms were dirty, and there was food left in the trash cans in the cafeteria.

Ms. Hall called <Employee> in to walk through the building with her and to discuss concerns. She didn't consider the request as disciplinary in nature, but wanted to ensure the building was cleaned and ready for the staff and students when they came back to school after the break. She stated <Employee> became frustrated during their conversation and left, announcing he no longer wanted to work at Otter Creek. He stated he would ask another administrator to assist him in getting a transfer to another location, and he began taking sick leave.

<Employee> was communicating his absences to Ms. Hall through text messages, beginning January 3, and he reported in sick January 5 – 17. His text messages stopped after that time, and Ms. Hall recommended he be terminated for his failure to return to work.

Mr. Eddings noted in his questioning of Ms. Hall that <Employee> had reportedly been under a doctor's care, but that he also attended a job interview on Friday, January 13, and had reported to Mr. Robinson in Human Resources that he was also working as a barber during the time he was calling in sick. <Employee> admitted that he was not a licensed barber, but that he did know how to cut hair.

Mr. Coleman addressed the board, stating <Employee> had been in the district for 3 years, and had been a good employee with no disciplinary infractions. He had worked as the conditional or temporary head custodian at Otter Creek since September 11 on a full time basis, and had trained substitute custodians to perform their job duties. He had been under a great deal of stress filling in as the head custodian while the permanent custodian was out on medical leave. <Employee> had completed tasks other custodians had left to be done, and had done a good job for Ms. Hall at Otter Creek. Mr. Coleman stated to the board it was his belief <Employee's> due process rights were violated in the process of recommending him for termination.

Dell Hendricks Custodial Supervisor for the LRSD was present at the hearing and responded to questions regarding the day she visited Otter Creek to inspect the building with Ms. Hall. Ms. Hendricks had spoken to <Employee> and questioned why he was angry about being called to look at the things in the building that had not been done. She tried to calm <Employee>, but she was unable to keep him from walking out in anger. She felt <Employee> was upset because he felt underpaid for the work he was doing as the conditional head custodian.

Robert Robinson was called to respond to questions regarding an email he sent to Dr. Holmes regarding <Employee's> assignment.

<Employee> testified regarding his absence, stating he was under a doctor's care and that he had turned in a doctor's statement and the keys to the school on January 8. He denied statements made by Ms. Hall regarding the condition of the building, stating he had worked every day he was scheduled to work during the Christmas break. He said he went home ill due to high blood pressure and that the doctor told him to remain off work until February 7. He stated he wasn't informed of the requirement of the FMLA to turn in leave paperwork by the principal, the custodial supervisor, or anyone in human resources.

The board convened a closed session for deliberations at 11:51 p.m. They returned at 12:00 p.m. and reported no action was taken in closed session.

Ms. Fox made a motion stating the district had proven items 1 – 3 of Dr. Holmes termination letter. Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Ms. Fox moved the district did not prove item #4 of the termination letter. Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried 4-1**, with Mr. Carreiro voting no.

Ms. Fox made a motion to uphold the superintendent's recommendation for termination; seconded by Ms. Curry. The **motion carried 5-0**.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 12:03 a.m.

APPROVED: 10-25-12

Originals Signed by:
Dianne Curry, President
Norma J. Johnson, Secretary