



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

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
July 25, 2013

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 25, 2013, in the boardroom of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Dianne Curry presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dianne Curry
Greg Adams
Norma Johnson
Tommy Branch
Jody Carreiro
Leslie Fisker
Michael Nellums

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Dexter Suggs, Superintendent of Schools
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Ms. Curry called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Four members of the board were present at roll call; Ms. Fisker arrived at 5:33 p.m., Dr. Nellums arrived at 5:35 p.m., and Mr. Branch arrived at 5:38 p.m. Teacher ex officio Karen Banks, from Carver Magnet Elementary School, and student representative Nasasha Worthy, from J. A. Fair High School, were also present.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Superintendents Citations & Commendations

Dr. Suggs made brief opening remarks in acknowledgement of this being his first official meeting as the leader of the LRSD. He expressed optimism, stating he was looking forward to working together with the community to do great things for the children of our city.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Joy Springer spoke in opposition to proposed changes to policy IL and regulation IL-R. She read statements made by Dr. Suggs in a previous meeting regarding implementation of the data warehouse for utilization by teachers and administrators. She also mentioned statements made by Attorney Heller regarding on-going assessment of student achievement and academic progress. It was her belief the staff was currently doing required formative assessments, and she did not feel it necessary to change the policy.

John Walker addressed the board regarding plans for building a new west Little Rock middle school. He expressed belief that there was enough capacity in the current middle schools to accommodate the student enrollment. He believes building a new school in west LR will have an adverse effect on the existing schools, especially magnet schools Dunbar and Mann.

C. Donations of Property

Student ex officio Nasasha Worthy read the donations as listed in the following chart. Ms. Fisken moved to accept the donations. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously.**

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Bale Elementary	\$75.00 cash	UALR Children International
Western Hills Elementary	Casio electronic keyboard with stand valued at \$100.00, and acoustic guitar valued at \$25.00 to the music room	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lowery
	Peavy drum set, valued at \$750.00 to the music room	Mr. Ed Green
	Charcoal grill, valued at \$80.00	Ms. Shani Baker

D. Little Rock PTA Council

Sarah Bernhardt, LR PTA Council president, reported on attendance at the national PTA council meeting. The summer leadership session for PTA officers is scheduled for August 3rd, and the first PTA Council meeting will be held on September 10th, 11:30 a.m. in the LRSD board room. Ms. Bernhardt announced that J.A. Fair High School had won a national PTA award for the highest increase in membership from across the nation. This recognition won \$1,000 for the school PTA unit.

E. Little Rock Education Association

Cathy Kohler addressed the board, congratulating the J.A. Fair PTA president for his work in increasing membership in their PTA. She also recognized the J. A. Fair student who was serving as this month's ex officio to the board. LREA members present were asked to stand.

Ms. Kohler likened the district to a three-legged stool, and stated we were most successful when the three components -- administration, board and union -- worked together as a unit. She asked the board to continue to “keep all legs level on the floor” so that we can continue to have the greatest impact on our students.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Fisken expressed excitement about the positive focus and direction being taken by Dr. Suggs and the administration team. She is looking forward to a successful new school year.

Mr. Carreiro mentioned an announcement from *Kiplinger's*, which named Little Rock as the #1 city in the nation. He reported on his visit today to the district's leadership meetings, and was pleased to see a new level of excitement and energy for the new school year.

Mr. Branch thanked the audience members for their attendance. He noted he was a J. A. Fair High School graduate, and he pledged to join the Fair PTA.

Dr. Nellums congratulated the J. A. Fair PTA president for their membership achievement. He then made remarks regarding his being a “lame duck” member of the board, and reviewed his previously expressed concerns regarding purchasing property in west and southwest Little Rock. It is his belief that building schools in the western part of the city will have a negative impact on enrollment at Dunbar and Mann. The result will also leave the board with tough decisions about what to do with schools in the central part of the city. His concerns were whether these would become “neighborhood” schools and no longer a magnet or attraction to encourage student attendance in the inner city.

Dr. Nellums closed by wishing Dr. Suggs the best in his endeavors to increase achievement for all students. He expressed hope that the district will do whatever is necessary to make this a successful school year for our students.

Ms. Johnson welcomed Dr. Suggs and discussed her viewpoint on the upcoming changes for the new school year. “We don't know what is going to happen, but we will work hard to make sure good things happen.” She asked Dr. Suggs to clarify the new dress code, especially related to two groups of employees - - Information Technology and bus drivers.

Dr. Suggs responded in regards to his implementation of a dress code which states all central office and operation staff will comply by being professionally dressed. This includes all building level administrators. Transportation and facilities employees will have some exemptions; however the perception will be of a staff of professional educators. To change the image of our school district, we have to be viewed as a business and as role models for our students. We must behave as we wish our students to behave.

Ms. Johnson also asked Human Resources staff to consider attaching photographs to the applications when we hire new employees.

Mr. Adams made brief comments regarding his three years as a member of the board. He is feeling more hopeful and optimistic as he runs for a second term than he did during his first run. In the last three years as a board member, he has observed increased collaboration, decreased conflict, and more focus on the students. He is excited about the changes and encouraged by the positive direction and potential for success. His concerns were regarding the children being left behind, especially those who are failing to achieve academically. "It will be our responsibility as a board and a district to make people more comfortable with change because change is what is best for kids."

Ms. Curry echoed remarks from previous board members, and expressed encouragement in the communications among board members. "We may not always agree, but we do exhibit respect for each other." She welcomed Dr. Suggs and spoke to the opportunity to discuss concerns and reach resolutions to improve the image and the public perception of the LRSD.

B. Internal Auditors Report

The monthly auditor's report was provided in the board's agenda. No additional information was requested.

LEGAL UPDATE

Mr. Heller reported on news from the Eighth circuit court in the school choice case. The trial was regarding a challenge of the 1989 school choice law over racial limitations in student assignments. A group of parents challenged the law, sued, and won in district court. That court ruling blurred the process where race was allowed to be used as a factor when making school choice decisions, especially in cases where racially balanced schools were a court-ordered desegregation consideration. The Eighth circuit considered "diversity" cases vs. "remedy" cases, and found the case moot and vacated the district court's ruling. Mr. Heller had provided a copy of the ruling in an email to board members earlier in the day.

A two week trial is set for December on issues between the three Pulaski County School Districts and the State of Arkansas. Mr. Heller reported his involvement in discovery and in meeting with other parties on our side of the case, including the Joshua Intervenors, the Knight Intervenors, and the Pulaski County and North Little Rock School Districts. The parties are collaborating to streamline a defense to see if there is a way to create a proposal for submission to the state before it goes to trial. They have found a number of things in common which can be used to structure the proposal.

In response to Mr. Walker's comments earlier in the meeting regarding magnet school funding, Mr. Heller stated amounts of money supposedly received by the District is an "artificial number" related to funding of transportation, teacher retirement and employee health insurance benefits. The transportation issue is a statewide problem related to the state's use of a "random senseless formula." Mr. Heller stated he had worked with Representative Armstrong to develop a bill to address the issues, and would likely continue to assist in the development of legislation to address the problems of funding transportation, health insurance and teacher retirement benefits. We receive that

funding because the state changed the way they calculate the payments to school districts to the disadvantage of the three districts in Pulaski County.

Mr. Heller remained hopeful that all parties would come together to work out a solution, and it is his intent to bring a proposal to the board for approval before the trial date.

Ms. Curry encouraged Mr. Heller to continue working out a resolution with the state and asked Board members to visit with Mr. Heller if they have any questions.

IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on June 27th, and from a special meeting held on July 11th, were presented for review and approval. Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the minutes; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

V. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW

A. Policy JJIC – First Reading: Extracurricular Activity Eligibility for Home Schooled Students

Arkansas Act 1469 of 2013 permits home-schooled students who are legal residents of the district to pursue participation in interscholastic extracurricular activities governed by AAA within the public schools. A board policy was drafted to provide guidelines for compliance with the statutes. The administration recommended approval on first reading.

Linda Young addressed the board regarding the policy and the intent to insure clarity for home school parents and district administrators. She also asked the board to consider the second policy reading at the August agenda meeting so that the policy can be in effect by the August 16th deadline imposed by the state law.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to accept policy JJIC on first reading; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Policy IL – Second Reading: Evaluation of Instructional Programs and Regulation Revision, IL-R Program Evaluation Process

The original policy IL, Evaluation of Instructional Programs, was approved by the board in March 2001. The administration recommended revision of that policy and accompanying regulations to ensure program evaluations focus on all LRSD students, programs, academic achievement, and subgroup comparisons. IL was approved on first reading at the June board meeting.

Mr. Branch made a motion to approve IL on second reading. Ms. Fiskens seconded the motion and it **carried 6-1**, with Dr. Nellums voting no.

VI. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Appointment of Administrators

Recommendations for administrative appointments were presented for board approval. The recommendation included the following:

- Marvin Burton, Deputy Superintendent
- LaGail Biggs, Assistant Principal, J. A. Fair
- Marie Boone, Assistant Principal, McClellan
- Phillip Carlock, Assistant Principal, Mabelvale Elementary
- Sherry Chambers, Principal, Chicot Elementary
- Charlotte Cornice, Assistant Principal, Booker Magnet
- Marjorie Davis, Assistant Principal, Central
- Tonjuna Iverson, Assistant Principal, J. A. Fair
- Christopher Johnson, Assistant Principal, J. A. Fair
- Katrina Jones, Assistant Principal, Hall
- Thomas Noble, Assistant Principal, Hall
- Frank Williams, Assistant Principal, McClellan

Ms. Chambers, Mr. Carlock and Mr. Burton were present and made brief remarks.

Dr. Nellums commented regarding a concern over policy, and stated he would abstain from the vote. However, he did congratulate the appointees.

Ms. Fisken made a motion to approve the appointments recommended by Dr. Suggs. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried 6-0-1**, with Dr. Nellums abstaining.

B. Creation of Positions: Teachers on Special Assignment

The administration recommended approval of the creation of three positions for advertisement at Hall, McClellan and Fair. Dr. Suggs responded to questions from the board regarding the assignments, the responsibilities and reporting of the employees who are going to be placed in these positions. Mr. Bailey responded to questions regarding the allocation of funds, noting that some savings had been realized by eliminating positions that were no longer necessary. Ms. Fisken moved to approve the creation of these positions; Mr. Branch seconded the motion. It **carried unanimously**.

C. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. Ms. Fisken moved to approve; Mr. Branch seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Budget Update

Mr. Bailey responded to questions and reviewed the district's Minority and Women Business utilization goals. The recent MWB Enterprise Summit was successful and brought a lot of interest in our district from minority vendors.

VIII. CLOSING REMARKS

A. Announcements and Reminders

Pamela Smith announced upcoming events July 29th through August 3rd in conjunction with Art Porter Music Education Week. Board members were invited to participate.

On August 2nd, there will be a wrap up of summer camp at Roberts Elementary, and board members were invited to attend.

August 1st and 2nd is registration and check in for LRSD students. Schools will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Board members were asked to listen for the radio ads and watch for the billboards.

August 9th is the end of summer hours for administration employees. Normal business hours resume on August 12th.

August 12th is the convocation for all employees, and August 12th through 15th are professional development days for teachers and other employee groups.

August 19th is the first day of school, and a campaign is on to encourage dads to take their kids to school.

Sandy Becker made brief remarks regarding computer days during check in, where a partnership with school PTAs will assist in registering families without computers. The computers are \$50.00 and will be available for distribution after check in on August 10th.

Tuesday, July 30th will be the next Parent Involvement Academy at Metro from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

APPROVED: 08-22-13

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