



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

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
September 26, 2013

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 26, 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 5:32 p.m. Five members of the board were present at roll call; Ms. Fisker arrived at 5:40 p.m. Dr. Nellums arrived at 5:45. The teacher ex-officio, Tamika Gore from Dodd Elementary, and student representative Tylon Jackson from McClellan High School were also present.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Partners in Education

At the agenda meeting, Debbie Milam presented new partnerships and introduced representatives from the schools and community partners:

Brady Elementary, represented by **Tyrone Harris**, in partnership with the **Pulaski County Extension Services / SNAP Program**, represented by **Laura Ann Warren**

Carver Elementary, represented by **Shanel Ditmore**, and the **Pulaski County Extension Services, SNAP Program**, represented by **Laura Ann Warren**

M. L. King Elementary, represented by *Karen Carter and Barbara Griggs* in partnership with the **Pulaski County Extension Services**, represented by *Laura Ann Warren*

M. L. King Elementary, represented by *Karen Carter*, in partnership with **Second Baptist Church Downtown**, represented by *Chris Ellis*

Mabelvale Elementary, represented by *Darian Smith and Phillip Carlock*, in partnership with **HOLA Arkansas Media Group**, represented by *Maura Lozano Yancey*

Meadowcliff Elementary, represented by *Mona Lisa and Kim Harris*, in partnership with **Meadowcliff Brookwood Neighborhood Association**, represented by *Norm Berner*

Rockefeller Elementary, represented by *Janice Wilson*, in partnership with **Bethel AME Church**

Rockefeller Elementary, represented by *Janice Wilson*, in partnership with the **Pulaski County Extension Services, SNAP Program**, represented by *Laura Ann Warren*

Geyer Springs Elementary School, represented by *Richard Mills*, in partnership with **Geyer Springs Greater Second Baptist Church**, Pastor Marcus Heard

At the meeting on September 26, 2013, Mr. Carreiro moved to approve the partnerships; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Allan Sealy, parent of four students in the LRSD voiced concerns about requiring sixth grade students to read *Tom Sawyer*. He had contacted the administration about having the book removed from the reading lists.

Mike Campbell spoke about issues he considered to be “employee relations.” He voiced concern over having the pay schedules for transportation employees changed from 20 to 24 pay periods per year. The initial changes have caused some bus drivers and school custodians to suffer financial hardship. He asked the board to consider allowing employees on a 9-month contract to continue to be paid on a 20-pay-period year.

Neddie Nichols addressed the same concern regarding pay schedules for transportation employees, stating some of them received from \$130 to \$150 less on each paycheck.

Kenny Fisher, an employee in the maintenance department, addressed the board over concerns he has expressed over the past few months. He believes the transfer of building engineers to the maintenance department is a violation of their rights. He discussed previous correspondence with former superintendent Holmes and he asked for consideration.

C. Donations of Property

Student ex-officio Tylon Jackson, read the list of recent donations to the district. Ms. Johnson made a motion to accept the donations. Ms. Fisker seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. The donations are listed in the following chart:

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Bale Elementary	\$500.00 cash	Allison Presbyterian Church
Central High School	\$2,000.00 cash to the SECME Team \$10,000.00 cash to the Sunshine Fund \$250.00 cash to the EAST Lab	Li Tong and Siang Gao Mr. & Mrs. Christoph Keller Foxwood Sports
Hall High School	\$500.00 to complete Eco-Schools Action Project / Environmental Science Department Three large file cabinets and office supplies, valued at approximately \$125.00	National Wildlife Federation Mr. Matt Brandt
Mabelvale Middle School	\$10,000 cash for purchase of iPads	Geyer Springs Baptist Church
Mann Magnet Middle School	\$500.00 cash to the Visual Arts Department	Mann High School Class of 1963
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$500.00 cash to the football program \$500.00 cash to the football program \$100.00 cash to the football program \$100.00 cash for Ms. Wolfe, 8 th grade science teacher	Telcoe Federal Credit Union Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Mosley April & Tom Owen Carol Jenkins Real Estate
LRSD Health Services Department	\$775.00 cash to purchase a refrigerator for the School Based Health Clinic at Franklin Elementary School	Executive Women International / Little Rock Chapter

D. Little Rock PTA Council

Shikara Linsey, recording secretary for the LRPTA Council, reported she has students at Central High, Pulaski Heights Middle and Jefferson Elementary Schools. She thanked Superintendent Suggs for hosting the first council meeting of the year. The next council meeting will be held on October 8, 11:30 a.m. at Hamilton Learning Academy. Training for PTA officers will be conducted at that time. She also reminded the board that the PTA partners in the efforts of the district's Computer Power Day, with the next one to be held at Henderson Middle School on October 5th. She closed by encouraging board members to join the PTA units in their school zones.

E. Little Rock Education Association

Cathy Kohler recognized people in the audience, including State Representative Charles Armstrong, Mrs. Armstrong, who is a candidate for the Zone 6 seat on the board, and Reverend C. E. McAdoo, recently elected to the Zone 2 position on the board.

She thanked Tommy Branch for his service for the last year, commenting on a job well done during his time on the board. She also thanked Dr. Nellums, and expressed appreciation for his insight and for making decisions based on what is in the best interest of students.

Ms. Kohler expressed pride in being an educator in the LRSD, and pride in the work being done in the district every day. She said everyone should be treated professionally, and she hopes to build on the relationship that has developed over the past six years. She stated LREA members would be attending board meetings to watch the decisions being made. She hopes adults will begin focusing on the students and holding adult conversations when there are disagreements.

She closed by introducing the financial negotiations team members present: *Teresa Gordon, Neddie Nichols, Curtis Dunhoo, Don Akins, Betty Harrison, Daniel Bowman, and Pam Fisk.*

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Mr. Carreiro commended students at Parkview and Central for recently being selected as “top achieving” in Advanced Placement testing. Also, it was noted, two of the state’s eleven National Achievement Scholars are from Central High School. He closed by thanking Dr. Nellums and Mr. Branch for their time on the board.

Ms. Fischen also thanked Mr. Branch and Dr. Nellums for their service. She commended Pamela Smith and the communications department for their efforts in reaching out to the community to keep parents and others informed.

Mr. Branch thanked board members for their comments. He also thanked people in the community who supported his efforts to be elected to the Zone 6 position on the board. He thanked Dr. Nellums for his guidance as he learned “the ropes” of being a board member. He closed by thanking Dr. Suggs for his leadership, and stated he was proud to have been a part of the team that selected the new superintendent.

Dr. Nellums wished Mr. McAdoo the best of luck as he takes the Zone 2 seat. He wished Ms. Armstrong and Ms. Shephard luck as they head into the run-off election. He stated pride in that the board works hard to keep disagreements out of the public eye, and to debate and disagree, but to remember the reasons the board is working hard and struggling to make things better for our students. He wished Dr. Suggs the best of luck.

Ms. Johnson thanked the individuals who address the board to make them aware of their concerns and situations. She encouraged listeners to call her, and to continue to work to ensure their comments are heard.

Mr. Adams reported on his attendance at the League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC) scholarship banquet. He noted two district employees received community service awards: Hall High teacher, Leslie Purdy; and Superintendent Dr. Dexter Suggs.

Mr. Adams expressed excitement over the changes being made in the district, and in the positive communications and increased public awareness. He also acknowledged questions and concerns regarding the reconfiguration of Geyer Springs and Forest Heights. He assured the listening audience that the district is still in the planning stages for these two schools, and that it was too early to provide all of the answers.

Mr. Adams stated the committees are working through all of the issues, and will be reporting to the board and responding to the community along the way. He was concerned that most of the comments were negative, and assured the listeners that the board was going to do the right thing for the students. We want to do better by our kids. He noted that Geyer Springs and Forest Heights had been underperforming in a number of ways for many years. It is time for the district to be more creative and become more appealing to the students and families that we currently lose to other schools. Every student is important.

Ms. Curry thanked Mr. Branch and Dr. Nellums for their service on the board. She noted Dr. Nellums often provided a different perspective on some of the issues considered, and she wished him success. She congratulated Dr. Suggs and Dr. Purdy for their awards at the LULAC banquet, and also noted recognition was given to Heather Rainbolt from Central High who was recognized at the banquet for starting a chapter of LULAC at Central. She said she had enjoyed the Superintendent's bus tours and was looking forward to the next one. She thanked Neddie Nichols for being an excellent driver. She encouraged other board members to participate.

B. Presentation: Title 1 Parent Engagement Meeting and Organizational Collaborative Design

Mr. Burton answered a few questions regarding the attachment to the agenda, and announced a more in depth presentation would be done at the October 10th agenda meeting.

C. College and Career Readiness / Scholarship Reminder

A copy of the ACT College and Career Readiness brochure was provided as an attachment to the agenda. Mr. Burton responded to questions.

III. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Joseph Pfeifer Kiwanis Camp

Sanford Tollette made remarks at the board's agenda meeting earlier in the month. Detailed information was provided in the board's agenda regarding the history of the Joseph Pfeifer Kiwanis camp and the ACE program which has served LRSD students in third, fourth and fifth grades for over 15 years. The board was asked to approve the service contract for the current school year.

B. Marketing Campaign: WE PROMISE

The board discussed the **WE PROMISE** marketing campaign in depth at the September agenda meeting. This campaign will provide a message broadcasting to the community and covering a full range of media advertising. The board was provided with a budget and a copy of the proposed contract which will run through January of 2014. The administration recommended approval.

C. Memorandum of Understanding between Pulaski County Youth Services and Little Rock School District

Marvin Burton and Shoutelle Richardson responded to questions regarding a memorandum of understanding which provides services to students who participate in the PC Youth Services OUR Club. The M o U was attached to the board's agenda for review, and approval was requested.

D. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on August 22, 2013 were presented for review and approval.

E. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda.

F. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's report was printed in the board's agenda. No additional information was requested.

Ms. Fisken made a motion to approve all consent items with the exception of Items D and E regarding the proposals for reconfiguration of Forest Heights and Geyer Springs. Dr. Nellums seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

PULLED FROM CONSENT FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

Reconfiguration Proposal: Forest Heights Reconfiguration Proposal: Geyer Springs

At the agenda meeting on September 12th, Shoutelle Richardson briefly reviewed a proposal to reconfigure Forest Heights Middle School into a K-8 STEM Academy, and Geyer Springs Elementary School into a High Ability Academy. Committees of community members and district staff will work over the course of the current school year to fully develop the proposals, to determine attendance and selection criteria, and to develop a timeline for implementation of the conversions. Community forums will be held and other opportunities for input will be provided.

Dr. Suggs also responded to questions, assuring the board that the student enrollment at these schools would be reflective of the community. Although the entrance criteria haven't been fully established, the schools will not be "one-race." He assured listeners that the reconfigurations would not contribute to the development of additional segregation in our schools. There will likely be adjustments to attendance zones, and those adjustments will likely have an effect on all of the district's elementary and middle school zones. He invited board members to sit in on the committee meetings and to prepare to hold work sessions as the plans are more fully developed.

The recommendation from the administration was to approve the planning processes required to transform Forest Heights Middle School to a K-8 STEM Academy and Geyer Springs Elementary to a High Ability Academy for the 2014-15 school year

Board members expressed concerns and discussed the public's reaction to the implementation of changes at Forest Heights and Geyer Springs. These concerns included "fairness," (all students need STEM instruction); and "timing," (why are we doing this now when we have so many other pressing problems.)

Dr. Suggs responded to questions from the board, appealing to them to begin eliminating the "cookie cutter approach" to educating students in the LRSD middle schools. "We have to do something different because up until now, the LRSD has not done their best to educate its middle level students. We have an opportunity to do something different and better."

Dr. Suggs expressed amazement that the district is being criticized for trying to do something better, more innovative, different, and designed to help all students excel. We have to move into the 21st century if we want to prepare our students for the future.

The board discussed factors they will ask to be addressed by the working committees to reconfigure the schools, including the impact on our other middle schools, the questions about the possible effects of middle schools "resegregating," the amount of funding that will be required as far as staffing and operating budgets.

Mr. Carreiro spoke in support of the recommendation to begin the planning process. "Some of the conversations we are having are premature; the committees need to do their work, report to the board, and then formulate a recommendation."

Mr. Adams also spoke of the benefits of making changes in our schools, but expressed understanding that change is uncomfortable for a lot of people and raises concerns when not enough information is available, however "we have to start somewhere." He thanked Ms. Johnson and Dr. Nellums for their comments.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the planning processes for both Forest Heights and Geyer Springs reconfigurations. Ms. Fisker seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, five members of the board voted in favor; Ms. Johnson abstained and Dr. Nellums voted no. **The motion carried 5-1-1.**

IV. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW

A. Board of Education Policy – First Reading: GBEB Staff Dress Code

The board discussed policy GBEB, staff dress code, and Linda Young was present to respond to questions. Mr. Adams suggested rewording to include allowing physical education teachers to continue wearing athletic shoes, changing the language of the portion which refers to head coverings which are allowed for religious reasons, and a delineation between distracting and non-distracting tattoos which should be covered whenever "practical," instead of "possible."

Ms. Curry questioned the section of the policy which allows jeans to be worn on particular days of the week and at the discretion of the building administration. She also asked to include language that would ensure all schools and departments are included in the provisions for "spirit days."

Ms. Young will incorporate the changes and provide the revised policy prior to second reading in October.

Mr. Adams made a motion to approve GBEB on first reading with changes as recommended by board members; Mr. Branch seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Board of Education Policy Revision – First Reading: BCA School Board Member Code of Conduct

At the board's retreat in July, the board developed updates to the existing BCA, School Board Member Code of Conduct. Ms. Young was present to respond to questions regarding the first reading revisions. Ms. Johnson suggested language in sections 5 and 11, to guide the board in expressing appropriate appreciation to school employees.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve BCA on first reading; Ms. Fiskens seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

V. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Facilities Master Plan Study

The board was asked to provide authority to the administration to enter into contract discussions with Fanning Howey to conduct a districtwide facilities review master plan study. The last thorough review of the district's facilities was conducted in 1995. The administration accepted the RFP's from five companies, a committee was formed to review the responses, and a formal presentation was made to the board at a public meeting on September 10, 2013.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the administration's recommendation to enter into contract discussions with Fanning Howey. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Minority & Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) Monthly Spending Report

At the board's request, the MBE/WBE monthly report was included as an attachment to the agenda.

C. 2013-2014 Budget

The board was provided with electronic copies of the 2013-2014 budget. Under Arkansas Code 6-20-2202, the district is required to have the budget approved by the board and submitted to the state prior to September 30, 2013. Mr. Bailey responded to questions. Dr. Nellums made a motion to approve the budget for submission. Ms. Fiskens seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. CLOSING REMARKS

A. Superintendent's Comments

At the agenda meeting, Dr. Suggs encouraged parents to spend 20 – 30 minutes a day reading to their children.

At the board meeting, Dr. Suggs expressed appreciation to Dr. Nellums and Mr. Branch for their service to the district and to the community. He thanked them for their time on the board, and presented both of them with plaques in recognition of their commitment to the students of the district.

B. Announcements and Reminders

Pamela Smith made announcements of upcoming events including:

- Forest Park pavilion dedication at 9:30 on September 27th
- Deadline for October ACT is September 27th
- Academic All-star pep rally at McClellan at 9:40 on September 27th
- College Night at Statehouse Convention Center on October 1st
- Anti-bullying rally on October 3rd
- Terry Elementary Hispanic Heritage Celebration on October 3rd
- Computer Power Day – 8:00 a.m. 12 p.m. on Saturday, October 5th
- Town Hall meeting – 6:00 p.m. on October 14th, at the Willie Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center.

Mr. Adams announced the swearing in ceremony for he and Mr. McAdoo on Thursday, October 3rd at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

APPROVED: 10-24-13

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