



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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
July 24, 2014**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 24, 2014, in the boardroom of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Greg Adams presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Greg Adams
Norma Johnson
C. E. McAdoo
Jody Carreiro
Dianne Curry
Leslie Fisker
Tara Shephard

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

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

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mr. Adams called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. All members of the board were present at roll call. The teacher ex-officio, Sheryl Jackson from Bale Elementary School, and the student representative, Rebecca Belizaire from McClellan High School were also present. Student Rachel Lewis, from McClellan High School, attended the agenda meeting on July 10.

The student ex officio was asked to read the Cultural Imperatives of the LRSD. The teacher ex officio read the Board Goals.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Remarks from Citizens

John Cartwright spoke to the topic of school uniforms at Forest Heights STEM Academy. Mr. Cartwright is a Forest Heights parent, and described himself as an active volunteer. He spoke in opposition to the uniform implementation at FH. "If we are trying to inspire students to be creative and individual, requiring them to wear uniforms isn't the way to go." He asked the board to act to change the uniform requirement at Forest Heights.

Rosalee Daniel introduced herself as a grandmother. She admitted anticipating some type of uniform, but did not expect to see the district select uniforms that look like a prep academy or a private school. School uniforms are an expense some cannot afford, and she felt the uniforms selected should have been less expensive. Uniforms should be comfortable and not elitist. She asked the board to consider reducing the stringency of the uniform policy.

B. Donations of Property

Rebecca Belizaire, student ex officio, read the list of recent donations to the district. Ms. Fiskken made a motion to accept the donations; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. The donations are listed in the following chart:

DONATIONS

| SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT | ITEM | DONOR |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Central High School | \$300.00 cash | Carol Barlow |
| | Donation of hamburgers, hot dogs, potato chips, cookies, and condiments for 300 employees for a cookout for their donations to United Way. | Frank Scott and First Security Bank |
| Gibbs Magnet School | \$40.00 cash for the Passini Walking Track | Mr. Richard Buring |
| | \$100.00 cash for the Passini Walking Track | Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Purvis |
| | \$50.00 cash for the Passini Walking Track | Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Lehrer |
| | \$50.00 cash for the Passini Walking Track | Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Small |
| | \$100.00 cash for the Passini Walking Track | Mr. Sam Alley |
| | \$50.00 cash for the Passini Walking Track | Mr. Robert Radinsky |
| Romine Interdistrict School | \$100.00 cash to assist with students attending the annual Field Day event at Playtime Pizza | 100 Black Men of Greater Little Rock Inc |
| Western Hills Elementary School | Donation of a Mirage Clarinet valued at \$150.00 | Cynthia Buehling |

| SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT | ITEM | DONOR |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| LRSD Computers for Kids Program | Donation of one box of USB flash Drives (approximately 250)valued at \$6.00 each for a total value of \$1500.00 | Acxiom Corporation |
| | Donation of 55 gift bags valued at \$7.00 each totaling \$385.00, 110 books valued at \$5.00 each totaling \$550.00. Grand total \$935.00 | Norma Jean Johnson |
| LRSD Elementary Literacy and Early Childhood | Donation of 4 boxes of recycled paper valued at approximately \$50.00 | Arkansas Teacher Retirement System |
| | Donation of 2948 books to 20 LRSD elementary students. Estimated value of the books is \$14000. | AR Kids Read |
| LRSD Fine Arts Department | Donation of various ceramic molds and ceramic green ware valued at \$500.00 | Janis Moseley |
| | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | W. Wayne Davis |
| | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | Catering To You Inc. |
| | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | The Borne Firm Architects, P.A. |
| LRSD Fine Arts Department | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | Emergency Plumbing Co. |
| | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | The Learning Institute |
| | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | Team Summit, LLC |
| | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | Chr-Eyton Electric |
| | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | American Bus Sales |

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|--|---|-----------------------------|
| | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | Laverne Goldsby |
| | Donation of \$100.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | Woods Group Architects, Inc |
| | Donation of \$25.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | H.K. Stewart 2-84 |
| | Donation of \$50.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | Dr. Keith Hearnberger |
| | Donation of \$50.00 cash towards the 2014 Dr. Morris Holmes Fine Arts Scholarship fund | Rosalyn Ziegler |

C. Little Rock PTA Council

Neva Johnson, first vice president, updated the board on recent PTA activities. Two members recently attended the national PTA conference. Training was held for the officers at each school, and the PTA will have a table set up at check-in to begin the membership drive at check-in on August 4-5. PTA audits are due by August 15th, and assistance can be provided by Mr. Becker, Internal Auditor.

D. Little Rock Education Association

No report.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Curry expressed appreciation for the staff and administrators of the summer school programs across the district. She noted successful implementation of the various programs designed to reinforce student academics. She requested a report on the summer programs at a future board meeting.

Ms. Fisker thanked the teachers and staff who worked throughout the summer. She also thanked the parents who continue to work with their children over the summer to insure they maintain their levels of achievement.

Mr. McAdoo thanked students and patrons for their work over the summer. He expressed hope that every student would find something to inspire them to do better. He then read a Robert Frost poem, *Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening*. He asked parents to pass on something positive to their children.

Ms. Johnson expressed appreciation to parents for being involved in their children's education, especially over the summer months. She challenged area churches to partner with the families in their neighborhoods to support student success. She suggested members could provide mentoring, tutoring, Saturday activities, and other means to support the education of the children who live near their churches.

Mr. Carreiro discussed the recently received report on Advanced Placement test results for last school year. The LRSD experienced growth in the number of students enrolled in AP courses, the number of students who took the tests, and the number of students who scored 3 or 4 on the exams. He congratulated the AP teachers at Central for challenging their students to succeed.

Ms. Shephard acknowledged the City Parks and Recreation summer program which provides educational and recreational activities for students around the city. The participating students take field trips to the Museum of Discovery, Wild River Country, Mosaic Templars, and participate in other activities. These students receive free breakfast and lunch, assisting families in keeping their students engaged during the summer.

Mr. Adams noted the current concerns of the district, including academic performance / academic distress, budget concerns, and improvement to facilities across the district. The LRSD will strive to be a competitive option in the educational marketplace. The community should know the board is highly aware of these concerns, and will be holding worksessions to discuss and develop solutions.

B. Facilities Review – Fanning Howey

At the agenda meeting on July 10, 2014, Troy Glover provided an overview of the facilities review related to athletic facilities, kitchens and food service areas.

A proposal is being developed surrounding a districtwide sports complex and improvements to middle and high school athletic facilities. Mr. Glover responded to questions from the board regarding the existing gymnasiums, which will be recommended as "student activity centers." There were also questions regarding stand-alone Pre-Kindergarten Centers, conversion to K-6 facilities, and options for middle grade configuration to 7 – 8. Handouts were provided for the board's review and are attached to the agenda. Additional discussion and review will be held at a worksession after the August 14th agenda meeting,

A draft of recommendations will be provided for the board to review prior to the worksession. After that time, revisions will be made and brought back for the board to discuss and take action.

C. Update: Forest Heights STEM Academy and Geyer Springs Gifted and Talented Academy

Shoutell Richardson reported to the board on Forest Heights STEM Academy and Geyer Springs Gifted and Talented Academy. The faculty and staff at both Forest Heights and Geyer Springs have begun professional development with a focus on team-building.

She responded to questions regarding staffing at the schools: Forest Heights has two open positions; Geyer Springs has one open position. The enrollment at Forest Heights

is approximately 700, and 235 students are enrolled at Geyer Springs. In addition, board members asked about the school uniforms, and whether provisions were being made to support families who cannot afford to purchase the uniforms.

Ms. Richardson invited board members to stop by either school at any time to see the progress being made at those buildings. She was asked to send demographic information on both schools in the Friday update.

D. Update: Enrollment / Middle School

Dr. Fields provided an update on enrollment at the middle level at the request of the Board. Students are being enrolled in school every day, so the report provided with the agenda is only accurate as of the time it was prepared. He noted a positive increase in the number of students enrolled; however the official count does not take place until October 1, 2014. There will be a 10-day count, which will take care of any students who “dropped” or did not return to the district. He is currently preparing a report on the number of students coming back to the district after dropping in previous years. It was encouraging to note that every middle school had increased in enrollment when compared to last year.

E. Report: Poverty’s Effect on Achievement

Dr. Ed Williams provided an overview by PowerPoint of the report, *Poverty’s Effect on Achievement*, which was provided in the board’s agenda. The test data from elementary schools were charted according to Free and Reduced Lunch Status (FAR) and the Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG) which includes ELL and Special Education students. The discussion surrounded development of strategies for addressing student achievement at all levels. A request was made for a similar report of the Secondary schools.

V. CONSENT ITEMS

There were no objections to the consent agenda, and it was **approved**.

A. Minutes

Minutes from meetings held on June 26 and July 10, 2014 were presented for review.

B. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker’s month report was included in the Board’s agenda. No approval was required.

VI. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board’s agenda. Ms. Fisker moved to approve the changes as submitted. Mr. McAdoo seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

In addition, administrative appointments were submitted for approval. The appointments were printed in the agenda:

- Tina Greenwood, Assistant Principal at Chicot
- Wendy Minor, Assistant Principal at Otter Creek
- Veronica Perkins, Chief Academic Officer, Department of Academic Accountability
- Shoutell Richardson, Director, Elementary Education
- Romona Sawyer, Gifted & Talented Coordinator, Geyer Springs
- Melinda Smith, Supervisor, Special Programs

Mr. McAdoo moved to approve the administrative appointments. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Mr. McAdoo stated he had received concerns from a parent regarding the process for selection of personnel. He called the superintendent and others, and wanted the record to be clear for those who had concerns - - building principals and supervisors are responsible for selection of staff.

VII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Resolution of Authorization

Mr. Bailey presented a resolution which would authorize district administrators to close on property previously approved for purchase in southwest Little Rock. Upon approval, Mr. Bailey would be the designated signatory to complete the purchase. This parcel of land will be used to construct a main entrance with a traffic light at the site of the new high school. Ms. Curry moved to approve the resolution as recommended. Ms. Fiskén seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

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

The monthly MWBE report was included in the Board's agenda.

C. Budget Update

Mr. Bailey provided a brief overview of the current budget cycle. The district is receiving state aid and federal funding allocation notifications. He indicated a more thorough update could be provided at the August agenda meeting.

VIII. CLOSING REMARKS

A. Announcements & Reminders

At the agenda meeting, Ms. Smith reminded board members of the August 4-5, check-in for the upcoming school year. Schools will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. each day. The first day of school is August 18th.

The districtwide welcome back convocation for all employees is set for August 11, 9:00 a.m. at Barton coliseum.

At the board meeting, Ms. Smith announced the districtwide calendars are at the printers and will be delivered to the school prior to check-in. In the meantime, the calendar is online and accessible at the LRSD website.

Meet and Greet activities for parents of students at Geyer Springs and Forest Heights have been scheduled. Parents are being notified through Parent Link.

The tax-free weekend is August 2 & 3.

The Dads Take Your Kids to School photo contest will be held on August 18th. Photos are submitted to the district's FB page, and winners are selected by viewers who vote on the photos.

Monday, July 28th, at City Hall is the kick-off event for Art Porter Music Education Week.

Mr. Adams reviewed the upcoming dates for additional board meetings and worksessions:

- August 14th – agenda meeting with worksession on facilities. The drafted superintendent's evaluation tool will also be discussed on that date. Once the tool is approved, the evaluation can be held after the board meeting on August 28th.
- August 22nd, Friday evening, 3:00 p.m. - worksession to discuss the budget and the academic distress implications and strategies.

B. Student Expulsion Recommendations

Dr. Fields presented recommendations for two students who were found with weapons on school campus. As required by Arkansas law, students found with weapons on school campuses are expelled for one calendar year.

- Student FM was found in possession of a handgun on the campus of Central High School.
- Student JM was found in possession of a handgun on the campus of Cloverdale Middle School.

Ms. Fisker made a motion to uphold the administration's recommendation. Ms. Shephard seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

The board recessed at 7:45 p.m. and returned at 8:10 p.m. to convene employee hearings.

C. Employee Hearings

Mr. Adams introduced Jay Beckett, who was serving as the hearing officer for the hearings of three employees <IR, JH, and MW>. Prior to the start of the hearing, Attorney Walker expressed strong opposition to the involvement of a hearing officer. He was also angry that he had not received notification prior to the meeting that a hearing officer would be involved.

Mr. McAdoo exited the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Ms. Curry left the meeting at 8:19 p.m. Ms. Shephard left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

In support of the decision to retain a hearing officer, Attorney Chris Heller addressed the board regarding the issues raised in a previous hearing. At a special meeting on June 23, 2014, there was discussion regarding the timely receipt of notifications to the three employees, the superintendent's recommendation to change the terms of their contracts, and whether or not the outcome of the hearing was considered to be in support of the superintendent's recommendation or in favor of the employees. He felt the hearing officer was appropriate considering the contention between the parties involved.

Mr. Walker, his staff, and the employees exited the board room.

Ms. Fisker made a motion to deny the request from Mr. Walker to reject the superintendent's recommendation based on procedural concerns and to move forward on the substance of the recommendations. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Mr. Carreiro suggested voting on the motion to continue the hearing, but to also set a time to reconvene when all board members could be present. He then placed the suggestion in the form of a motion: "to continue this on another night, provide notice, and then allow board members to choose whether or not to participate." The **motion failed** due to lack of a second.

Hearing Officer Beckett asked Dr. Suggs to review his recommendations for each of the three positions before the board. Dr. Suggs reviewed the recommendations based on position justification forms completed by cabinet level administrators and position surveys completed by the employees.

He further explained this is just the first step in the elimination of administrative positions. Due to the phase out of desegregation funds, the LRSD will begin phasing out up to \$40 million in expenses over the next few years.

Mr. Heller responded to questions from the board regarding the use of a hearing officer and whether there were any procedural violations by requesting the hearing officer to direct the hearing. It was noted again, hearing officers are often used in cases where there are circumstances that warrant a mediator. The LRSD, in fact, had used hearing officers in the past.

The board convened an executive session at 9:37 p.m. They returned at 9:53 p.m. and reported no action was taken.

In the case of employee MW, Mr. Carreiro made a motion that the administration had proven the recommendation to eliminate the position of Director/Facilitator of PE and Health and to uphold the superintendent's recommendation to reassign her to a 9.25 teaching position. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried 4-0**.

In the case of employee WH, Mr. Carreiro made a motion that the administration had proven the recommendation to eliminate the position of Senior Director of Curriculum / Social Studies and to uphold the superintendent's recommendation to reassign her to a 9.25 teaching position. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried 4-0**.

In the case of employee IR, Mr. Carreiro made a motion that the administration had proven the recommendation to eliminate the position of Grant Project Director for Music and to uphold the superintendent's recommendation to reassign her to a 9.25 teaching position. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and it **carried 4-0**.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

APPROVED: 08-28-14

Originals Signed by:
Greg Adams, President
C. E. McAdoo, Secretary