



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

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
September 22, 2011

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 22, 2011, in the boardroom of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Melanie Fox presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Melanie Fox
Jody Carreiro
Michael Nellums
Greg Adams
Charles Armstrong
Dianne Curry
Katherine Mitchell

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

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

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Ms. Fox called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. All members of the board were present at roll call. David Higginbotham, the teacher ex-officio from **Stephens Elementary School** was also present. The student ex officio from **Hall High School** did not attend.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Superintendent's Remarks

Betty Connor, owner of Betty's Beauty Bazaar, and her staff of cosmetologists offered free hairstyling services to students in the LRSD on Sunday, August 14, the day before school started. This was the second year Betty and her group of volunteers offered this service. In addition, each child received supplies and materials for the first day of school and advice on how to be a successful student this year. The volunteers did a total of 135 girl's hairstyles and 50 boy's haircuts. The stylists donated \$8,596.00 which included food, beauty supplies, school supplies and services. Dr. Holmes presented a Superintendent's Citation and expressed appreciation on behalf of the Board and parents of the LRSD.

At the agenda meeting on September 8th, a plaque was presented to Dr. Katherine Mitchell for her 23 years of service as a LRSD board member. Dr. Holmes made remarks in support of Dr. Mitchell and in appreciation of her dedication and diligence to the volunteer position. In addition, fellow Board members also offered comments and expressions of appreciation for her accomplishments as a member of the LRSD Board.

Dr. Mitchell was first appointed to the board in 1988. She served as president in 1990-91, 2000-2001, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008. She also served on a wide range of district and City of Little Rock boards and commissions, including the Children, Youth and Families Commission and the City of Little Rock Education Commission. She was on the district's health and wellness committee and served on many textbook selection committees throughout the years.

B. Partners in Education

Debbie Milam presented new school and business partnerships for the board's consideration and approval:

- **Dunbar Magnet Middle School**, represented by *Principal Eunice Thrasher*, in partnership with **Union AME Church**, represented by *Reverend Watson and Irma Walker*
- **Henderson Magnet Middle School**, represented by *Principal Steve Guerin, Melinda Martin-Johnson and other Henderson Staff members*, in partnership with **Kroger Foods on West Markham Street**, represented by *Manager Tommy McElmurray*
- **Rockefeller Elementary School**, represented by *Principal Janice Wilson* and other staff members, in partnership with:
 - **Womens Actions for New Directions (WAND)**, represented by *Pat McGraw and Sherry Joyce*
 - **Greater Immanuel Church**, represented by *Bishop Kevin Allen*; and
 - **Epoch Church**, represented by *Pastor Nathan James*

Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the new partnerships; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

In addition to the approval of the partnerships, Ms. Milam reported briefly on the upcoming Jane Mendel Reading Day, set this year for Tuesday, November 15. The ViPS office will be assigning a volunteer to read in every elementary classroom in the district on that day, and board members were encouraged to sign up early.

C. Remarks from Citizens

Anika Whitfield addressed the board and requested consideration for a follow up meeting with concerned parents and citizens of the LRSD. She presented the DVD's from a previous meeting held in August at Philander Smith College. She asked if October 13 or 20 could be set to further discuss and address concerns from the parents. At the previous meeting, communications between parents, teachers and administrators were noted as areas of high concern. She asked for the DVD's to be copied and distributed to all board members.

D. Legal Update

Chris Heller provided a brief update on the Eighth Circuit Court hearings held earlier this week in St. Louis. He attended the hearing with Dr. Holmes and CFO Kelsey Bailey. He discussed the State's position on the issues surrounding the continuation of state funding for magnet schools. The state argued those issues should have been raised during the North Little Rock and Pulaski County unitary status hearings. Mr. Heller reported the Judges did not seem to be convinced of their position.

The case has been submitted to the court of appeals, and it's just a wait to be notified of their findings. Mr. Heller felt comfortable reporting that our arguments were clear and were well accepted by the judges.

E. Donations of Property

The board was asked to approve the receipt of recent donations to the district. David Higginbotham, teacher ex officio read the list of donations. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to accept; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Chicot Primary School	School supplies valued at \$200.00	Chenal Valley Church
Mabelvale Elementary School	School supplies valued at \$1,200.00 Book Bags and school supplies valued at approximately \$600.00 \$50.00 cash to assist students in need of lunch money Plants and bark, valued at \$40.00 for planter in front of school	Employees of Custom Direct Congregation B'Nai Israel Social Action Committee Ms. Corinna Hampton Geyer Springs First Baptist Church
Mann Magnet Middle School	\$500.00 cash for needy families and \$500.00 in I-Tunes gift cards for the dance department \$750.00 grant for student, Nicki Barnes, earned through VIP Grant	Jerill and Angela Green Verizon Foundation / Verizon Volunteers Program
Roberts Elementary School	\$200.00 cash donation to purchase items for activities and events Supplies valued t \$50.00 and \$300.00 cash to purchase additional supplies for students	Dr. and Mrs. Don R. Roberts Little Rock Athletic Club / Mr. Pat Riley

F. Little Rock PTA Council

Henri Smothers reported on the first PTA Council meeting which was held last week in the administration building board room. She reported the next meeting was scheduled for October 11, and would be held at Fulbright Elementary. At that time, there will be training for local unit officers and other information provided. She closed by offering PTA memberships to anyone in the audience who might be interested in joining PTA tonight.

G. Little Rock Education Association

Teresa Gordon, vice president of the LREA, reported on behalf of Cathy Kohler. She discussed concerns regarding the use and lack of technology in the district. She stated strong belief in teaching with technology in the classroom and training teachers to use technology more fully in reaching their students. She touched on a few of the limits placed on teachers who don't have the technological tools needed. She expressed hope that students would soon be able to receive laptops or netbooks, since most textbooks will be provided digitally.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Curry reported she had attended middle school open house at Cloverdale, and was impressed with attendance and parent participation. She responded briefly to Ms. Gordon's comments regarding technology as it relates to the requirements of common core standards. She agreed the district would need to be more innovative and aggressive in bringing additional technology to the teachers and students. She closed by thanking Dr. Mitchell for her time on the board, and she welcomed the new Zone 1 representative, Ms. Johnson.

Mr. Adams also congratulated Ms. Johnson on her election and offered congratulations to Mr. Carreiro for being elected to his second term in office.

Mr. Nellums greeted members of the audience from Dodd Elementary and reported he had eaten lunch with some of the students. He was pleased with the student's enthusiasm about the upcoming after school tutoring sessions.

Also, Mr. Nellums noted there was an article in the newspaper regarding the city's approval of a proposal which would grant lots and vacant homes to teachers in the LRSD who would like to live in the area near the school where they work. The land bank program will afford an opportunity for both new and current teachers in the LRSD to acquire the land bank properties for renovation and building.

Mr. Carreiro discussed the district's participation in the Arkansas Department of Health flu vaccination clinics. These vaccines are provided to students and staff members, and assist in prevention of widespread outbreaks of influenza in our schools. He encouraged parents to watch for notification and encouraged them to allow their children to receive the vaccines.

Mr. Carreiro also congratulated students who recently took the Advanced Placement tests. He reported a number of students who scored three or better on the tests received a monetary award for their achievement through a grant award program.

Mr. Armstrong congratulated Ms. Johnson on her election as the new Zone 1 representative to the board. He reported he had visited elementary schools last week, and he expressed some disappointment that security in the lunchroom was required to keep students in order. He encouraged parents to teach their children to act responsibly in school, and to go to the schools to assist during times when additional supervision is needed.

Dr. Mitchell congratulated Ms. Johnson and wished her well as the new representative to the seat she has held for 23 years. She also reported visiting Booker Elementary School, where she read to a third grade class. She was pleased with the students behavior and attention and their responsiveness to learning. Dr. Mitchell closed by acknowledging the power of prayer during her service on the board. She promised to be back to sign up to speak, and she encouraged district staff and board members to continue to support and uplift each other.

Ms. Fox thanked Dr. Mitchell for her years of service, saying that she was “passionate about the children of the district.” She also welcomed Ms. Johnson to the board.

Dr. Holmes reported he had visited several schools and had read to fifth grade students. At the school he quizzed students about proper use of grammar, writing, and parts of speech. He also taught a lesson on how to minimize risk, and he believed the students “really got it.”

Mr. Higginbotham, ex officio member of the board, reported his enjoyment with the job of being the music specialist at Stephens Elementary School. He noted that each week, he gets to see every student at least one time. He acknowledged the amount of time it takes some days to get them to focus on the lessons, but that once that is accomplished, the students have a very positive social experience. He also reported briefly on the new breakfast in the classroom program and his excitement about the students having that extra nutrition each day. He felt this one component of the school day would result in the students having a greater attention span and better academic performance.

B. Staffing Update

David Hartz provided a brief report on staffing levels for classroom teachers. He reported currently there are five vacancies, all of which are covered by appropriately certified staff. The exception to that is the need for an art teacher at the middle school level. He reported working daily with the associate superintendents to balance staff and fill the vacancies permanently and as quickly as possible. He closed by responding to questions from the board regarding placement of long term or permanent substitutes.

C. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker’s report was provided as part of the board’s agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on August 25, and from a special meeting held on September 8, 2011, were presented for review and approval. Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

V. ADMINISTRATION

At the agenda meeting on September 8, 2011, Dr. Freddie Fields and Barbara Barnes provided a brief overview by PowerPoint presentation on the “new face of special education.” The Division of Exceptional Children is being restructured to provide a more clear line of organization and support for students receiving special education services. The report was not brought forth to the regular board meeting, but additional discussion is expected in the next few months. No action was requested.

A. Open Enrollment Charter School: KidSmart Bilingual Education Academy

An application was submitted on August 29, 2011, to the Arkansas Department of Education to open the KidSmart Bilingual Education Academy. The address of the school is listed on Baseline Road, within the boundaries of the Little Rock School District. Under applicable Arkansas law, the district is required to submit a letter on or before September 30, 2011, stating any opposition to charter applications pending before the ADE. Board members were provided with a copy of the full application for this charter school, and Mr. Heller was present to respond to questions. He noted there was nothing in the application for this school that would provide a unique, different or better educational program than that offered by the LRSD. Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the superintendent’s recommendation to oppose the application; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Quarterly Progress Report to the Board on District Goals and Initiatives

Dr. Holmes provided a brief overview of the presentation on the Quarterly Report. He expressed intent to present additional information quarterly on comprehensive school-by-school progress toward meeting the goals set by the board and those adopted with the Goals 2015 Strategic Plan. He encouraged board members to provide feedback after this presentation and to interact with the administration on information they want to have available.

Dennis Glasgow reported briefly on the tracking of information which will be incorporated into the compilation of the report. It is expected this reporting format will keep the board better informed on all aspects of recordkeeping across the district. The intent is to provide valuable information presented in a manner that will be easily accessible.

Sadie Mitchell responded to questions regarding disseminating the information at the school levels to ensure monitoring of progress.

Mr. Carreiro moved to adopt the framework of the quarterly and annual report. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. America's Choice Proposal for School Improvement Grant Schools

The administration requested approval to continue contracting with *Americas Choice* to assist in the school improvement process and achieving adequate yearly progress. America's Choice technical assistance and professional development services are included in the School Improvement Grants 1003 (g) at Hall and J.A. Fair High Schools and Cloverdale Middle School.

America's Choice provides intensive on site professional development services to classroom teachers in the areas of math, literacy and science and will focus on improving instructional strategies, use of data to inform re-teaching, and effective integration of technology in the teaching process. The proposals described in the attached contracts will be funded through the SIG grant funds. A separate contract for services is required for each school site.

Linda Young was present at the agenda meeting and responded to questions from the board. Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the administration's recommendation. Mr. Adams seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Credit Recovery Through Integrated Learning Systems

The NovaNet computerized-instruction delivery credit recovery program is provided as a way for students to recover credits that count toward graduation at the five (5) LRSD high schools. Programs are used during the school year and in the summer for credit recovery.

LRSD entered into a three year contract with Pearson Learning (Nova Net Software) in 2005-2006 and a second 3 year contract in 2008-2009 which is now expiring. The contract includes license fees, updates, technical assistance and professional development.

LRSD Curriculum staff has updated the course alignments annually to address any district and/or state changes in the curriculum. The district uses Plato, Inc. (Plato Learning Systems Software) for credit recovery at the Accelerated Learning Center. The district owns the license for Plato. The contract includes all updates, technical assistance, and professional development.

Mr. Armstrong moved to approve the recommendation to continue the agreement with NovaNet. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Renaissance Learning Contract Renewal

The contract with Renaissance Learning provides support for students through the Accelerated Reader program. There was an in depth discussion at the agenda meeting regarding the value of continuing the AR program across elementary levels. At the current time, AR is used in all elementary schools with the exception of Romine Elementary. The superintendent recommended approval. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

D. World Book Online Subscription Renewal

The board was asked to approve the renewal of a contract for *World Book Online*. This reference source is available for all students through an annual subscription fee, which amounts to approximately \$14,500 annually. The fee is paid out of district operating funds allocated to the library/media budget.

The superintendent recommended approval. Mr. Armstrong moved to approve the recommendation. Mr. Adams seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VII. SCHOOL SERVICES

A. Middle School Reform Strategies

At the agenda meeting on September 8, Dr. Whitehorn provided a brief overview of a report which will be completed and presented at the board meeting. Highlights included the following proposed actions:

- Expand the GT program at all middle schools. Make sure that every middle school has enough teachers with GT training and that there is documented evidence of recruitment/retention of GT students at each school.
- Implement the naked curriculum at all middle schools.
- Develop a collaboration schedule at each middle school.
- Document the data used in the school
- Schedule implementation and supervision of math and literacy across the curriculum
- Create viable and up-to-date student recruitment plans on file.
- Develop monitoring/visibility plan and make available for inspection
- Recruit and retain top teaching talent and have a teacher recruitment/retention plan on file.

At the board meeting, Mr. Carreiro spoke in favor of approving the plan presented. He served as the board's representative on the Middle School Task Force. He made a motion to approve the recommendation of the administration. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

The board took a break at 7:54 p.m. and returned at 8:00 p.m.

B. Southwest Little Rock Initiatives

At the agenda meeting on September 8, Mr. Burton provided an overview of the plans being developed to improve perceptions of the schools in southwest Little Rock. It's important for the community to know the same quality educational opportunities exist in southwest Little Rock as in other areas of the city.

At the board meeting, additional information was presented on the creation of excellence in the schools in southwest Little Rock using the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) family engagement model. This model will be implemented in the southwest Little Rock community secondary schools during the current school year. A needs assessment is being developed to be reviewed and compiled by a team in each school to determine basic and specific needs in each school. Resources and staff will be allocated according to the needs identified.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to approve the administration's recommendation to implement the NPSS model in the schools in Southwest Little Rock. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. STUDENT SERVICES

A. Let Our Violence End (LOVE) Contractual Services

Let Our Violence End (L.O.V.E.) works with local schools and within the community to develop and implement solutions for building healthy relationships and positive peer pressure. It operates in fourteen schools in the LRSD to provide gang, drug and violence prevention, intervention, and awareness training to students, staff, and security personnel through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program.

Reggie Merritt and Sheila Green introduced coordinators for the LOVE program in the district's schools. A brief overview of the program component included information regarding the number of students who participate in the program and activities provided to students through the in-school suspension classrooms.

The administration recommended authorization to continue the L.O.V.E. program through a contracted agreement which would pay \$196,000 through Title I stimulus funding. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to approve the contract extension for the LOVE program. Mr. Nellums seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Phase II: Renovation of Self Contained Classes at Secondary Level

This item was removed from the agenda prior to the board meeting. Mr. Harris responded to questions from the board at the agenda meeting. If necessary, it will be placed back on the agenda at a later time.

IX. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine general personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to approve; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

X. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Proposed Bond Refunding

Mr. Bailey provided information for the board regarding refunding of outstanding bond issues which would result in an overall debt savings. The board was asked to approve the administration's recommendation to apply to the Arkansas Department of Education to gain their approval to offer bonds for sale by competitive bid. The bonds recommended for refunding were dated November 1, 2003 and December 1, 2006. The resolution authorized Stephens, Inc. to file the appropriate application with the ADE and to submit a competitive bid once the state has granted permission.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to approve the recommendation; Mr. Adams seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Modifications to the ARRA Title I and Stabilization Plans

Since the LRSD Title I Stimulus Plan was originally approved, it was determined the plan should be modified so that the allocation of funds more closely reflects a rank order based on the total number of children from low-income families in each school.

During the May board meeting, a proposal was approved by the board that would allow for attendance tracking software to be used in the secondary schools within the ARRA Stabilization plan.

Four additional projects were proposed for inclusion in the Title I stimulus plan at this time: wireless internet installation, social/behavioral modification intervention; supplemental classroom instructional materials, and additional library materials. Funding for after school tutoring, math and literacy coaches, Reading First and Reading Recovery were also recommended for reallocation under this proposal.

The board was asked to approve the recommendation presented. Ms. Curry made the motion to approve. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Budget Update

No additional budget information was available at this meeting.

D. 2011-2012 Budget

Under Arkansas Statute, the district's budget must be approved by the Board and submitted to the Arkansas Department of Education no later than September 30, 2011. The board held a budget workshop earlier in the month, and was given an opportunity to provide input and ask questions.

The administration recommended approval for submission. Ms. Curry made the motion; Mr. Nellums seconded, and it **carried unanimously**.

CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Holmes thanked the board for taking the time to consider all the detailed information provided this month.

Ms. Fox announced the swearing in ceremony for Ms. Johnson and Mr. Carreiro would be on Thursday September 29, 5:00 p.m. An employee hearing was also tentatively set for that night, but was not held.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned 8:58 p.m.

APPROVED: 10-27-11

Originals Signed by:
Melanie Fox, President
Michael Nellums, Secretary