

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

**A) MINUTES  
B) REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
July 24, 2008**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 24, 2008, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Katherine Mitchell presided.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Katherine Mitchell  
Charles Armstrong  
Melanie Fox  
Dianne Curry  
Robert M. Daugherty  
Baker Kurrus

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Larry Berkley

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Linda Watson, Interim Superintendent  
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

**I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Dr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call; Mr. Berkley was absent. Marilyn Burrus, teacher at Booker Elementary School was present as ex officio member of the board for the month of July. The student representative did not attend.

Dr. Mitchell welcomed members of the audience and asked Dr. Watson to proceed with the citations and commendations.

**C) II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations**

There were no citations for presentation.

**B. Remarks from Citizens**

Anthony Brown addressed the board on behalf of Cloverdale Middle School

parents and faculty members. He spoke in support of Nona Whittaker for the position of assistant principal of Cloverdale.

Nona Whittaker addressed the board and asked for consideration for the position of assistant principal. She read a letter addressed to the Associate Superintendent for Secondary Education, Mr. Junious Babbs, asking for his support in being assigned to the position of assistant principal. She asked the board to support her and to provide fairness and equity in assigning staff at Cloverdale Middle School.

### **C. Little Rock PTA Council**

Patty Barker, president of the Little Rock PTA Council, addressed the board regarding 2008-2009 school year plans and activities for the Council. She reported that the local school officers assist during check-in and serve to recruit members for the PTA. She reminded the audience that their membership at the school level supports the districtwide council as well as the statewide national PTA organizations. She thanked the district administration for allowing her to address the building principals at this year's Leadership Institute. She asked principals to continue to serve as the school membership leaders.

### **D. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association**

Cathy Kohler addressed the board and reported that she had been traveling for the AEA / NEA. She expressed her belief in public education and she thanked all of the partners who contribute to improving educational opportunities for all of our students.

## **IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

### **A. Remarks from Board Members**

Ms. Fox reported that she had attended a portion of the recent principals' leadership institute this week and that she had enjoyed visiting with district principals and administrators.

Ms. Curry stated that she had visited Watson Elementary for the close out of the summer enrichment program and she commended the staff members who provided summer services for the Watson students. She had also attended the Cloverdale Middle School math and literacy program closing today.

Dr. Daugherty expressed appreciation for the administration and school leaders for making sure that every student who wanted to participate in a summer program had an opportunity to receive remedial activities and enrichment. He thanked Dr. Watson for her leadership and for being proactive for the students.

Dr. Mitchell expressed appreciation for the relationship between the city of Little Rock and the LRSD, noting that collaboration between the district and the city had resulted in more opportunities for children in the neighborhoods this summer. Dr. Mitchell reported that she had attended the Cloverdale closing ceremony today and the principals institute activities last week and had enjoyed hearing Fitz Hill's inspirational message.

Mr. Armstrong asked for more community and parental involvement and for the assistance of the entire community in motivating our students to learn.

## **B. Legal Update: Desegregation / Unitary Status Board Recommendations**

Mr. Heller addressed the board, reminding them that it had been four months since the oral arguments before the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. In the meantime, the state has asked for continuing discussions among the parties regarding future funding issues, and he asked the board to provide input over the next week as he develops our response and recommendations.

Mr. Heller reported that he had sent board members copies of a letter from ADE attorney Scott Richardson; the PCSSD and NLRSD boards have endorsed the idea of continuing negotiations with the state for funding of existing magnet and inter-district programs. A draft resolution was provided for the board's discussion, and Mr. Heller stated that all parties want to move as quickly as possible to resolve the financial implications of the settlement with the state. No action on the resolution was taken, but Board members agreed that Mr. Heller should communicate with the ADE and the other parties our willingness to participate in the settlement.

Approximately \$65 million per year in desegregation funding is received by the three districts in Pulaski County for funding magnet schools and interdistrict transfer programs. Under the terms of the settlement proposal, the amounts received would decrease gradually over a seven year period until no separate desegregation funding was allocated.

Mr. Heller reminded the board that approximately \$25 million per year is received for teacher retirement and health insurance and that these would remain as continuing expenses even if the desegregation obligations were phased out. He recommended continuing to negotiate with the state to continue funding for these expenses.

Dr. Mitchell asked Mr. Heller to arrange a meeting with Scott Richardson and the attorneys from North Little Rock and the Pulaski County school districts. A representative from each of the three school district boards would also be invited to the meeting to discuss options for phasing out desegregation funding and planning for future magnet school and student transfer options.

Mr. Heller agreed to revise the proposed resolution to include comments from the board and to report to the ADE that the LRSD board is in agreement with proceeding with the negotiations discussions.

## **C. Community Conversation for Closing the Achievement Gap**

Dr. Watson reported that the Closing the Gap Committee had been working with the LR Classroom Teachers Association to develop recommendations for endorsement or implementation. Those recommendations will be presented for the board's review and consideration within a few months.

## **D. Update: West Little Rock School Construction**

Wayne Adams provided a brief overview of the construction of the west Little Rock School. He reported that the road improvement project had been awarded and would begin next week, but that the traffic light would not be installed until the school is completed. He reported that the school be ready for students in the fall of 2010, with a capacity of 895 students.

#### **E. Update: Title IX**

The annual Title IX report was provided as part of the board's agenda.

#### **F. Report: Special Programs / Exceptional Children**

The requested report was provided in the agenda and Barbara Barnes was present to respond to questions.

#### **G. Discussion: Process for Awarding Contracts**

As requested by the board, a summary report on the processes used to award contracts for district operations was provided in the agenda. Dr. Daugherty suggested that contracts in excess of \$10,000 come to the board for review. Mr. Kurrus spoke in opposition and stated that a procurement review committee of the board would not be a good use of the board's time.

Dr. Mitchell suggested reviewing the board's policies for oversight of the awarding of contracts; Ms. Fox suggested that Mr. Becker serve as the board's representative for review of a random sample of contracts awarded each month.

Dr. Watson agreed to schedule a meeting with Mr. Paradis to discuss the awarding of contracts as is currently regulated by board policy.

#### **H. Budget Update**

No report.

#### **I. Internal Auditors Report**

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

### **V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS**

#### **A. Minutes**

Minutes from the board meeting held on June 28, 2008, and from a special meeting held on July 14, 2008, were presented for the board's review and approval. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried 5-1**, with Mr. Kurrus voting no.

Mr. Kurrus discussed the employee hearing reported in the minutes of June 28<sup>th</sup>, and asked whether the employee had been administratively reappointed.

Mr. Kurrus' interpretation of the board's ruling was that the grievance was not upheld and therefore that the school's decision was to be upheld. Mr. Hartz agreed to follow up and provide additional information for Mr. Kurrus.

## **VI. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW**

### **A. Board Regulation Revision – EDCA-R Authorized Use of Computer Networks Regulations**

The regulation was provided for the board's review and information. No vote was required.

### **B. Second Reading Board Policy GBN: Reporting Child Abuse**

The board was asked to approve Policy **GBN, Reporting Child Abuse** on second reading. A 2007 state law, ACA 12-12-507, requires that suspected child abuse and neglect be reported directly to the appropriate state agencies without an employee having to ask for permission to make such report. Supervisors may not require employees to ask permission or notify anyone before calling the hotline or other agency. The board approved the policy on first reading at the June 26, 2008 meeting.

VII) Ms. Fox moved to approve the policy as submitted for second reading; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

### **C. Second Reading Board Policy DIE: Audits / Financial Monitoring**

Revised policy **DIE, Audits / Financial Monitoring**, was presented for first reading in June and came before the board at this time for second reading approval. This policy revision establishes an audit committee to enhance the district's auditing and financial monitoring procedures. The committee would represent the Board of Directors in oversight and internal controls and compliance.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to amend policy DIE as presented to add "or a state legislative audit" to the first paragraph of the policy. Dr. Daugherty seconded the amendment and it carried 5-1 with Ms. Fox voting no.

Mr. Kurrus moved to approve the policy on second reading as amended. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it carried 5-1 with Ms. Fox voting no.

## **VII. HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **D. Personnel Changes**

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the personnel items as submitted. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Appointments of Assistant Principals included Stephanie Pickett at Watson Elementary; Tina House at Forest Heights Middle School; Ken Graves and David Smith at Hall High School.



## **VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **E. Proposed Right-of-Way**

The administration presented a recommendation to approve a right of way utility easement at Forest Heights Middle School. Mr. Armstrong moved to approve the recommendation; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried** **unanimously**.

## **IX. CLOSING REMARKS**

Dr. Watson reminded the audience that check-in for all students would be held at the schools on August 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Kurrus, seconded by Ms. Curry.

APPROVED: 08-28-08

Originals Signed by: \_  
Katherine P. Mitchell, President  
Melanie Fox, Secretary