

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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
September 23, 2008**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 23, 2008, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Katherine Mitchell presided.

OATH OF OFFICE:

Prior to the call to order, Judge Marion Humphries, administered the oath of office to Dr. Katherine Mitchell, reelected to the Zone 1 position on the board, and to Jody Carreiro, newly elected representative of Zone 5.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Linda Watson, Superintendent
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Dr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. All members of the board were present at roll call; Junniest Redus, teacher at Carver Magnet Elementary School, and Candiance Davis student from J. A. Fair High School were present as ex officio members of the board for the month of September.

Dr. Mitchell welcomed members of the audience and invited Mr. Carreiro to introduce his family members who were present. Dr. Watson then proceeded with the citations and commendations.

III. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations

The Environmental Protection Agency, the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and the Blue Skyways Collaborative recently recognized the Parkview Chemistry Club for a team project involving the retrofitting of 65 LRSD buses with diesel oxidation catalysts. These catalysts will significantly reduce diesel emissions from the buses including hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and particulate matter.

Dr. Dexter Booth was present with the students from the Chemistry Club; Waltin Zomaya, Yvette Wanchia, Dolapo Odeniyi, Bukola Odeniyi, and Zain Fanek. The funds to do this project came from a grant from the Blue Skyways Collaborative, a group of ten states (including Arkansas) and other public and private partnerships. The Chemistry Club also recently received the Youth Conservationist of the Year Award from the Arkansas Wildlife Federation, which was presented at the 71st annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards banquet on September 11.

Arthur Olds and members of the Central High School Quiz Bowl team were recognized for their win at the Arkansas Governor's Quiz Bowl Association 7-A state championship last spring. Team members included Alex Richardson, Dallas Tompkins, Cyrus Bahrassa, Anne Ye, Peter Liu, and Dillon Hupp. Most of these students graduated from Central in the spring and were away at college.

Ex-officios for September were recognized; Candiance Davis, student from J.A. Fair Magnet High School, and o Junniest Redus, teacher from Carver Magnet Elementary School.

B. Remarks from Citizens

None.

C. Little Rock PTA Council

No remarks.

D. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Cathy Kohler spoke on behalf of members of the Little Rock CTA, addressing concerns regarding the negotiations process and the amount of money available for allocation to teachers for salary increases. She noted that administrators recently received \$200,000 in raises and that teachers were having a difficult time understanding why teachers and other school-based employees weren't being given an equitable increase. She stated that the teachers want to be a priority to the district in the negotiations process and that their team expected mutual trust, respect, integrity and accountability.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Fox congratulated Dr. Mitchell and Mr. Carreiro on their successful campaigns for board service.

Ms. Curry congratulated Dr. Mitchell and Mr. Carreiro; she also spoke to the audience regarding support for LRSD teachers and educational support staff and putting achievement as our top priority.

Mr. Kurrus thanked Mr. Berkley for his service, stating that he was always well prepared and always advocated in the best interest of the students.

Mr. Kurrus asked for support for our district athletics programs, stating "we aren't going to be competitive until we change the way we fund our athletic programs." He invited the audience to attend Friday night football games and see first hand the difference between the support given to LRSD schools compared to surrounding communities, private schools and other districts across the state.

Mr. Kurrus also addressed the budget and the upcoming negotiations with the teachers' union. He reminded the audience that he had voted against the recent increases in salaries for administrators and that he was always an advocate for the people who are closest to the children, saying "the best school districts spend the majority of their money in the classrooms, not in the administration."

Dr. Daugherty stated that he was also an advocate for teachers, but that having a realistic budget would allow the board to negotiate in good faith. He stated that Little Rock has the best teachers in the state and that they aren't paid near what they are worth, but it is important to set our priorities and operate within our means.

Mr. Armstrong welcomed Mr. Carreiro to the board and congratulated Dr. Mitchell on her reelection. He said that his heart is with the teachers who are the district's "foot soldiers" and that nothing can be accomplished in the district without the support of the teachers and others in the schools.

Mr. Carreiro thanked his voters and said that he ran for the board because his children had received an excellent education in the LRSD. He agreed with Dr. Daugherty that our teachers are some of the best in the state and that he wanted to do his part to serve the district and to ensure that we continue to do our best for the children in our city.

Dr. Mitchell expressed appreciation for the service Mr. Berkley provided to the district and invited him to attend the next board meeting for a public recognition. She thanked her electors for allowing her to return for another term on the board. She stated that she had been a public school classroom teacher and that she knew firsthand the challenges of a classroom teacher. She assured the teachers that the administration and the negotiating team would make sure that the negotiations were fair to everyone.

B. Legal Update – Chris Heller

Mr. Heller provided a general outline of the conditions necessary for final settlement with the state concerning financial issues of the desegregation case. Three districts and the Joshua Intervenors have agreed on key points necessary to be submitted to the state later this week. Mr. Heller responded to questions from the board and it was agreed by consensus to allow Mr. Heller to move ahead with the discussions on settlement.

C. Presentation: AVID

Suzi Davis presented information on the district's AVID program. The mission of AVID is to insure that students are exposed to rigorous curriculum and college prep courses with the goal of enrolling in four-year colleges upon graduation from high school. Ms. Davis and Laureen Isom, the district's director of counseling, share in the responsibilities of directing AVID in the secondary schools. AVID coaches work with students at Dunbar, Forest Heights, Henderson, Mabelvale, Central and Hall. Two AVID students, Chelsea Chang, student at Hall High and Deshawn Lee, Central High student who formerly attended Dunbar, addressed the board providing their personal perspective and experiences as AVID participants.

D. Benchmark Test Results

Karen DeJarnette reported on the results of the 2007-08 benchmark testing. A report was provided as part of the board's agenda which included a three-year comparative report by grade and ethnic background. She responded to questions from the board and indicated that additional reports would be provided once the state has ruled on appeals for several schools' AYP status.

E. PRE Quarterly Report

The quarterly report was provided as part of the board's agenda.

F. Update: Chief Financial Officer Search

David Hartz provided a brief overview of the search for a replacement for the position of chief financial officer, indicating that the search is being revitalized by placing ads in publications in Dallas, Kansas City, Memphis, and Tulsa.

G. Update: Contract Negotiations

David Hartz reported that the teams are negotiating this week and that in depth review of the budget is underway. He pledged to continue negotiating in good faith on behalf of the administration. .

H. Budget Update

No report.

I. Internal Auditors Report

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

The board recessed briefly at 7:20 p.m.

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

Mr. Armstrong moved to suspend the rules to elect board officers at this time. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

A. Election of Officers

For the position of Secretary, Dr. Daugherty nominated Mr. Kurrus; Mr. Kurrus declined the nomination. Ms. Fox nominated Ms. Curry; Ms. Curry declined the nomination.

Dr. Daugherty nominated Mr. Carreiro and Mr. Armstrong nominated Ms. Fox. Mr. Armstrong then moved to close the nominations. The vote in favor of Mr. Carreiro was **unanimous**.

Ms. Curry nominated Mr. Armstrong for the position of Vice President; Mr. Kurrus nominated Ms. Curry. Ms. Curry declined to accept the nomination and Ms. Fox moved to close the nominations. With one nomination on the floor, Ms. Fox moved to elect Mr. Armstrong by acclamation. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

For the office of President, Ms. Fox nominated Mr. Kurrus; Dr. Daugherty nominated Ms. Curry. Mr. Armstrong's motion to close the nominations was approved **unanimously.** Ms. Curry was **elected by a 4-3 vote,** with Ms. Fox, Mr. Carriero and Mr. Kurrus voting for Mr. Kurrus.

B. Board Disbursing Officers

The Board was asked to approve a Resolution designating the Board President as the primary disbursing officer and the Board Vice-President as the alternate disbursing officer for the Board. As required by Arkansas Code 6-13-618. Mr. Carreiro moved to adopt the resolution as presented. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

C. Donations of Property

The Board was asked to approve the acceptance of recent donations to schools and departments within the District. The donations are listed in the following chart. Student ex officio, Candiance Davis, read the items listed in the Board's agenda. Ms. Fox made a motion to accept the donated items, Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
J. A. Fair High School	\$250.00 donation to the Poetry Slam	Elmer L. London / Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.
	\$100.00 donation to the Poetry Slam	Kim E. Richards of Flooring Liquidators
Otter Creek Elementary	Cash donations to Special Education Class: – \$ 25.00 – \$ 50.00 – \$ 30.00 – \$ 50.00 – \$ 50.00 – \$ 50.00 – \$ 75.00 – \$ 25.00 – \$100.00 – \$100.00	Harold & Mary Dunn Cheryl Corley, Ginie Cameron, Allen Gandy & Family Mr. & Mrs. C. W. Kinslow, Jr. Muslow Oil & Gas, Inc. Don & Rhonda Newsome Robert E. Dudley Sheriff Steve Prater Hollis Downs, Rep. Dist. 12 Kim Rachel Kinnie R. Morrison
Woodruff Elementary	\$170.00 donation for student supplies	Danny Acker, UAMS Pathology Dept.
	Round-Up spray for school grounds	Shawn Ray / Priority I Janitorial Services
	\$200.00 donation for incentives for faculty & staff	DaySprings Behavioral Health Services of Arkansas

D. Minutes

Minutes from the board meeting held August 28, 2008 and from a special meeting held on September 11, 2008 were presented for the board's review and approval. Mr. Armstrong moved to approve the minutes as presented; Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Arkansas Department of Education: School Improvement Fund Grant Submissions

The Board was asked to support the submission of six grant applications in the ADE's School Improvement Fund grant competition. Applications were developed for Watson Elementary; Cloverdale, Forest Heights, Henderson and Mabelvale Middle schools; and McClellan High School. Eligible applicants were Title I schools in School Improvement Year 2 or beyond with priority given to schools in Year 3 or higher with the largest number of subpopulations failing to make AYP for three or more years. Dr. Mitchell moved to maintain the submission of these grant applications. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Board Regulation Revision – JICA-R Student Dress

At the request of the board, regulation JICA-R dealing with student dress regulations was revised to remove language that implied that students would have to transfer to another school in order to opt out of school uniforms. The revised regulation will place the district in compliance with state law. No vote was required to implement the revision.

VII. SCHOOL SERVICES

A. Adjustment to Class Size Procedures

Dr. Watson presented a recommendation to make an adjustment to the class size provisions established by the board for Stephens, Chicot and Watson Elementary Schools. Under the board approved guidelines, kindergarten through third grades classes were staffed at 1:15 at Stephens; and 1:18 for all grade levels at Chicot and Watson.

Budgetary constraints necessitated the superintendent's request to allow flexibility in staffing as long as the classes don't exceed state standards. Dr. Watson assured the board that every effort would be made to continue to fund these classes at the lowest possible ratio.

Mr. Kurrus moved to support the superintendent's recommendation; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion. After discussion, Mr. Carreiro moved for an amendment to the motion to include a sentence stating that the student ratio for Chicot and Watson would continue to be set at the 18:1 ratio, but that the administration would have the flexibility to assign additional students to these classes as needed. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion to the amendment.

The vote was **unanimous** to amend the motion, and **unanimous** on the original motion as amended.

B. Proposed Charter Schools: Fiscal Impact Statements

The board was asked to approve the submission of a fiscal impact statement on two open enrollment charter applications pending before the Arkansas Board of Education. Under the state's charter school laws, the district is required to submit separate fiscal impact statements to the state prior to September 30.

Mr. Heller worked with Superintendent Watson to draft letters for submission to the state indicating that the district not only loses funding for each student who leaves our district to attend a charter school, but that the continuing impact of charter schools on the LRSD is more serious than just loss of funding. The students who leave are those who are from more affluent and well-educated families, leaving behind the students from lower socio-economic homes. There is evidence to support the district's position that the continual loss of students has and will continue to negatively impact the overall academic levels of the LRSD.

Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the submission of the proposed fiscal impact statement to the ADE opposing the application from the Little Rock Preparatory Academy. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried 5-2**, with Ms. Fox and Mr. Kurrus voting no.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to approve the submission of the proposed fiscal impact statement to the ADE opposing the application from the Urban Preparatory Academy for Young Men. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried 6-1**, with Mr. Kurrus voting no.

VIII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were provided as part of the board's agenda. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to approve these changes as submitted. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

IX. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Purchase of Property at 13201 Kanis Road

The administration had been asked to continue to pursue the acquisition of land in West Little Rock for future development of a middle school. A parcel of land at 13201 Kanis Road, which consists of approximately 9.6 acres, was offered for sale to the District for \$720,000. Wayne Adams discussed the proposed purchase and responded to questions from the board. He agreed with board members that additional land would be required to make the site suitable for a school facility and that there were road improvements that would have to be made if a school was to be built at that location.

Mr. Kurrus moved to decline purchase of this particular piece of property; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion. The motion **carried 5-1-1**, with Dr. Mitchell voting no and Mr. Armstrong abstaining.

Dr. Daugherty left the meeting at approximately 9:05 p.m.

B. 2008-2009 Budget

Jean Ring presented the 2008-2009 budget for the board's review and approval and responded to questions. Ms. Fox requested the federal programs detailed budget and asked Leon Adams, Title I coordinator, to respond to questions regarding federal funding and Target Teach allocations. Ms. Fox requested additional information including a breakout by salaries, supplies, and professional development. She also asked that a periodic detailed budget for federal programs be provided for the board's review.

Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the annual budget for submission to the ADE. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Armstrong, seconded by Ms. Fox.

APPROVED: 10-24-08

Originals Signed by:
Dianne Curry, President
Jody Carriero, Secretary