

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

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
January 24, 2008

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 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
Larry Berkley
Dianne Curry
Robert M. Daugherty
Baker Kurrus

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

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 5:36 p.m. All members of the board were present at roll call; Ex officio representatives, Cynthia Buelhing, teacher at Western Hills Elementary School, and Afshar Sanati, student from Central High School were also present.

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

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations

Anne Ye, a senior at Central High School, was named a winner of the Siemens Award for Advanced Placement, presented by the Siemens Foundation and the College Board. This award is presented to students based on their exceptional performance in Advanced Placement math and science courses. Anne was previously recognized for being selected as a National Merit Semifinalist and for achieving perfect scores on the PSAT, ACT and SAT exams.

Malinda Johnson, a social studies teacher at Henderson Magnet Middle School, was recognized for her selection as a member of the Board of Examiners of the NEA National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Ms. Johnson will serve a three-year term.

Brent Sodman was unable to attend the meeting, but was recognized for receiving the Achievement Award in Writing from the National Council of Teachers of English. This award is presented to the best student writers in the country.

Larry Clark, Education Director, of the Lifeskills Program was recognized for his service to students in the Southwest Little Rock area. Lifeskills volunteers provide after-school tutoring and physical fitness activities to approximately fifty LRSD students at Temple Baptist Church.

Ms. Curry requested public recognition for **Dr. Gloria Todd-Hamilton**, principal of McClellan High School, for her recruitment efforts and the positive changes made at McClellan High School during the past two school years.

The final citations were presented to the exofficio representatives for the month: Student **Afshar Sanati** from Central High School, and teacher **Cynthia Buehling** from Western Hills Elementary School.

B. Partners in Education

Ms. Debbie Milam introduced members of various organizations who participate in the district's mentoring programs and partnerships. Several organizations work together to provide support for students who attend the Kiwanis Pfeifer Camp ALE. Mr. Sanford Tollette, Executive Director of Pfeifer Camp was present. In addition, W. J. Monagle, representing the City of Little Rock, Mark Perry from New Futures for Youth, and ViPS staff member Myrtle Withers were also present. Ms. Withers briefly discussed the Project 67 Mentoring League and introduced students from Arkansas Baptist College, along with Coach Ripley and Coach Wilson who have agreed to partner in support of our students.

Debbie Milam presented two new partnerships for the board's review and approval:

Stephens Elementary School, represented by *Sharon Brooks & Diana Layne Jordan* partnering with **Richmond Lodge #2 of Prince Hall Masons**, represented by *Dewayne Newton*

Hamilton Learning Academy, represented by *Krishna Young*, partnering with **Hearne Fine Arts & Framing and Pyramid Gallery**, represented by *Garbo Hearne*.

Mr. Berkley moved to accept the new partnerships; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Remarks from Citizens

Parents and students from Central High School addressed the board regarding a CHS cheerleader's lawsuit against the LRSD and against the principal at Central High School. The student's settlement proposal requested removal of the cheer sponsors and asked that cheer practices be moved away from Cheer City United.

Parents appealed to the board to consider the best interests of the entire cheer squad and reminded the board that the case had been dismissed by the courts. Students and their parents made individual statements regarding the cheerleaders' academic successes, high grade point averages, and participation as leaders in other extracurricular activities at school and in the community.

They each expressed support for the current cheer sponsors, Barbara Medcalf and Debbie Schlesinger, stating that these teachers encourage and inspire all students to do their best, that they insure equal opportunities for all students on the squad, that they are available to assist squad members with homework, are trusted by students to assist with personal issues, and are considered "school moms" to their students. It was noted that Central cheerleaders compete nationally and that they are scheduled to compete in Atlanta in February where they hope to regain their national title. The speakers on this topic included:

- Katherine Kennedy, parent
- Jon Kennedy, parent
- Mary Kennedy, captain of the cheer squad
- Carolyn Davis, parent
- Jasmine Davis, student
- Karla Hillburn, parent
- Holly Hillburn, student
- Tammy Jefferson, parent
- Takiya Jefferson, student
- Eden Pettit, student
- David Bibbs, parent
- Morgan Bibbs, student
- Katherine Gadberry, student
- Paul Soulsby, parent
- Freddie Sims, grandparent
- Sunshine Barnett, owner of Cheer City United
- Lindsey Soulsby, student
- Sandra Bernet, parent
- Sean Porter, former student and cheerleading coach
- Joy Bernet, student
- Questine McDonald, student
- Antoinette Williams, student
- Brittany Green, student
- Jodie Hickman, parent
- Jeanette Summers, parent of former cheerleader
- Candice Summers, former cheerleader
- Greg Summers, parent
- Jay Gadberry, parent

Barbara Cockrell, parent of two children who attend Carver Magnet Elementary, asked the board to resume televising the agenda meetings. She stated that is has been part of her responsibilities as a PTA member, to keep up with board activities and that the televised meetings offer a greater opportunity for the public to be involved and aware.

Joy Springer quoted the Martin Luther King, Jr. *I Have A Dream* speech, and asked whether Dr. King should have been considered a racist for his views and positions. She spoke in support of Attorney John Walker and his dream, stating that he serves as an advocate for freedom and justice for the majority of the students in the LRSD.

Terrence Bolden and **Helen Davis** signed up to speak, but deferred their time to **John Walker**.

Mr. Walker expressed pride in the students who addressed the board, stating that they were learning to exercise their right to free speech. He also stated that the Fourteenth amendment entitled them also to due process of law; the right to seek to have injustices addressed.

Mr. Walker continued, saying that the concerns discussed by the students could have been avoided if the issues had been addressed by the superintendent following due process procedures. He stated that to be fair, whatever services are offered to one school should be offered to all schools in Little Rock, and that if Central cheerleaders were going to continue to practice at CCU that the same offer should be extended to all high school students in the district. He closed by saying that educational achievement should be the primary objective of the LRSD and that there hasn't been enough attention to remediating student achievement disparities.

The board took a brief recess at 7:16 p.m. and returned at 7:30 p.m.

D. Report: Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission

Carlette Henderson and Spirit Trickey made brief remarks on behalf of the Racial & Cultural Diversity Commission. They reported that the Commission's Education Committee was formed in 2004 with a \$72,000 grant from the Arkansas Department of Education to create a Youth Advisory Council. They are charged with developing and implementing multicultural strategies to address issues in schools and promote diversity as the key to overcoming barriers. Ms. Henderson and Ms. Trickey will return to the February meeting with members of the Youth Advisory Council.

E. Little Rock PTA Council

Bernadette Turner thanked the ViPS board and Project 67 Mentoring Project for their presentation earlier in the meeting. She encouraged audience members to mentor students and to continue to be active in the lives of students who are in need of positive role models.

She thanked the Dunbar Middle School PTA for hosting the last PTA Council luncheon meeting. She reported that the winners of the American Education Week student art and writing contests were recognized at that luncheon. This year's theme was Education: Our Basic Right and Our Responsibility.

Ms. Turner encouraged attendance at the February 12th Founders Day luncheon, where Teacher of the Year and Administrator of the Year awards would be given, in addition to recognition for the Outstanding PTA unit, School Safety, Communications, and the Children's' Champions Award.

F. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Cathy Koehler addressed the board, opening with a quote by John Lewis that encouraged us to keep getting up, standing up, and standing together. She announced the upcoming community conversation on closing the achievement gap, scheduled for Monday, January 28, 2008 at St. Mark Baptist Church. She encouraged listeners and board members to continue to work together to build the LRSD.

She thanked Fitz Hill for his efforts to impact the community at Arkansas Baptist College by working with the district to develop mentoring programs. He and ABC students were recognized earlier in the meeting for their participation in the Project 67 Mentoring Program.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Curry thanked the speakers who addressed the board earlier in the meeting.

Ms. Buehling, teacher ex officio, thanked the board and the administration for supporting the fine arts department. The grants that have been written and received have made an enormous difference in the ability to teach music and art to our students.

Mr. Berkley thanked the students from Central for speaking out. He stated that he realized speaking before the board was difficult for some of them, and he expressed hope that this experience will give them the confidence to continue to speak out publicly for the things they believe in.

Mr. Kurrus also thanked the cheerleaders and their parents for speaking their heart, saying that it was powerful when everyone joins together. He encouraged them to continue to work together for the things they believe in, and he encouraged the parents to continue to advocate on behalf of their children.

Mr. Kurrus also expressed appreciation for the parents who attended community meetings at Terry and Fulbright and he thanked the mentors who were introduced earlier in the meeting for supporting our students.

Mr. Armstrong encouraged listeners to support the education of all the children in the city, stating that we must do a better job of taking care of our students.

Dr. Daugherty stated that he was happy to see all the students here tonight, but that there was nothing on the agenda regarding the Doe case or the issues they addressed. He stated that "the issue doesn't exist."

Dr. Mitchell reported that the board retreat was productive and that it gave board members an opportunity to learn more about each other. She encouraged listeners to attend the upcoming community conversation on closing the achievement gap.

B. Report: Gains Model

Dr. Charity Smith was scheduled to make a presentation to the board on the state's Gains Model. She was not able to attend the meeting, but will be present in February.

C. Report / Overview of the Cloverdale Middle School Saturday Program

Mr. Richard Mills, Interim Principal, and Cloverdale teacher Nona Whittaker made a brief PowerPoint presentation on the remedial support programs provided for students at Cloverdale Middle School. They thanked Ms. Curry for her interest in the students at Cloverdale, and they invited other board members to visit. Cloverdale provides early weekday morning sessions and a Saturday morning program for students to improve their academic achievement.

Mr. Berkley asked that the Cloverdale staff measure the effectiveness of their efforts by utilizing SOAR data, and he asked them to involve PRE in measuring the achievement of students who participate.

D. NCLB Transfer Information

Information was provided to the board through a written report attached to the agenda. Dr. Watson reviewed the report and responded to questions.

E. Student Assignment

The student registration January 16, 2008 enrollment report was provided in the agenda.

F. Racially Identifiable Scholarship Program

Information on the Racially Identifiable Scholarship Program was provided as part of the board's agenda. Information is provided annually to eligible students explaining how to qualify and apply for this one-time scholarship. It was noted that not all eligible students take advantage of the scholarships. Those who don't attend a two or four year college or university are not eligible. School guidance counselors are aware of the scholarship program and promote the availability to their students when appropriate. Information Services also provides a listing of eligible students who are notified by mail. This program extends to students who graduate through the year 2013.

G. Legal Update

There was no report provided by the attorneys. However, there was a brief discussion regarding settlement of pending legal issues. Dr. Mitchell expressed concern and encouraged the district's attorneys to complete negotiations on outstanding legal issues as soon as possible.

Dr. Daugherty reported that he had sent an e-mail to the attorneys regarding the Central cheerleader (the Doe case). He asserted that the board should have heard the case when it was still considered a grievance, in which case it would have been settled before going to a hearing involving attorneys. Mr. Berkley and Mr. Kurrus disagreed, saying that it wasn't the board's role or responsibility to become involved in selecting or mediating issues regarding cheerleaders. Mr. Kurrus stated that there is a process outlined in the student handbook, and that if that process was followed, there would be no right to an appeal before the board.

Dr. Watson stated that she would provide research and follow up information for the board.

H. Budget Update

There was no update provided.

I. Internal Auditors Report

The monthly update was printed in the agenda.

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the December 13, 2007 meeting of the board were presented for review and approval. Ms. Fox moved to approve the minutes as written; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Prior to continuing with the printed agenda, Dr. Watson introduced Rhonda Hall who was appointed as interim principal at Hall High School. Ms. Hall made brief remarks and introduced her family.

VI. BOARD POLICY & REGULATIONS REVIEW

A. Second Reading: Policy BDGA – Legal Settlements

Amended board policy **BDGA – Legal Settlements** was tentatively approved on first reading at the December 13, 2007, board meeting pending the inclusion of clarification regarding board notification of settlement terms. This policy was developed as a result of the board's request to implement guidelines for use by the attorneys in resolving grievances or lawsuits presented for out of court settlement.

At the December meeting, the draft policy was amended to include language that would require prior notification of the board, in writing, of the superintendent's recommendations for settlement. The amended policy was presented for second reading at this meeting. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the policy on second reading; Mr. Berkley seconded the motion.

Dr. Daugherty requested that the amendment approved for inclusion at the December be removed. He stated that it was his desire for the superintendent to have the authority to approve settlements up to the amount specified in order to expedite the settlement process without board approval.

On the second reading as presented, the motion **failed 2-4-1**, with Berkley and Fox voting in favor; Daugherty, Mitchell, Kurrus, and Curry voting against, and Armstrong abstaining.

VII. ADMINISTRATION

A. Superintendent Search – Process and Establishment of Timeline

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the board's search for a permanent superintendent. Ms. Curry stated that it was her desire to advertise nationally and seek qualified candidates, but that she didn't feel it was necessary to pay a consulting firm to conduct a national search.

Ms. Fox made a motion that the board contract with an individual group or firm to carry out a national search for a superintendent. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion.

Dr. Daugherty stated that he didn't feel a search was necessary and that he was comfortable with Dr. Watson's ability to serve as the permanent superintendent.

Ms. Fox reported that the board has funds budgeted for a search, and that it was important to follow through with a comprehensive search to show the community that the board is impartial and working in the best interest of the district and the community. She noted that the community wants to be involved, and that the staff, teachers, and others should be given the opportunity to provide input in the selection of the superintendent.

Mr. Berkley noted that qualified applicants won't come forward if they feel the decision has already been made; that an open process with a national search will provide a stronger position for the district within the community.

Ms. Curry asked that the board invite people from the community to participate in the process, but she felt that it was important for the board to establish the process as soon as possible.

Mr. Armstrong proposed an amendment to the motion: If a search firm is contracted, that the board be given an opportunity to review the applicants before the initial screening by the search firm. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion. After additional discussion Dr. Daugherty withdrew his second, and Mr. Armstrong withdrew the amendment.

The original motion **failed 3-3-1** with Fox, Berkley and Kurrus voting yes, Mitchell, Daugherty and Curry voting no, and Armstrong abstaining.

Ms. Curry made a motion to hire a consulting firm to assist the board with the search process; to have the board conduct their own search with professional consultant services. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion.

It was suggested that the Arkansas School Boards Association be contacted to assist in the search process. Mr. Berkley agreed that a consultant would be beneficial in setting up the process and guiding the board in the selection process. Dr. Daugherty withdrew his second, Ms. Curry withdrew her motion and Mr. Berkley moved to table the issue. Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion to table and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Federal Grant Submission: Smaller Learning Communities – Central High School

The board was asked to approve the submission of a grant application which would provide \$1,500,000 over a five-year period to provide smaller learning communities within Central High School. Central has been working through a similar three-year grant to plan and implement innovative programs including ninth and tenth grade academies with emphasis on career focus programs. The grant also provides transitional programs for ninth grade students and tutorial programs for students who need assistance.

Linda Young was present to respond to questions. Dr. Daugherty moved to approve the submission; Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

IX. SCHOOL SERVICES

A. Felder Charter School Application Renewal

The board was asked to consider the renewal application for the Felder Alternative Charter School. The Arkansas Department of Education approved the three-year charter in 2005 as a partnership between the Pulaski County government, the Pulaski County Juvenile Justice Center and the Little Rock, North Little Rock and Pulaski County School Districts.

Felder provides educational services to students who have been long-term suspended or expelled from their public school and those who are involved in the juvenile courts system. The Pulaski County School District and the Pulaski County government have indicated that they will no longer participate in the partnership, leaving the Little Rock and North Little Rock School Districts responsible for funding operations through existing state ADM and ALE funding per pupil.

The administration recommended board approval of the one-year charter renewal application to the Arkansas Department of Education for the 2008-2009 school year. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the administration's recommendation; Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

X. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel matters were provided in the board's agenda. Earlier in the meeting Ms. Rhonda Hall, Interim Principal of Hall High School, was introduced to the board. Dr. Daugherty made a motion to approve the personal changes as presented. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

XI. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. 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, Afshar Sanati, read the items listed in the Board's agenda. Dr. Daugherty made a motion to accept the donated items, Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

DONATIONS		
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Forest Park	Books for the library, valued at \$424.00	Dr. Rose Berry
Woodruff	\$250.00 Cash for student admission to the the LR Zoo	Priority One Janitorial Services, Inc.
	\$250.00 Cash to provide materials and incentives for staff	Dayspring Services of Arkansas

B. Facilities Master Plan – 2008 / Resolution

Act 1426 of 2005 established the Arkansas Public School Academic Facilities Program. Under the terms of this law, the district's facilities master plan must be presented for the Board's review prior to the submission to the ADE. In addition, a resolution must be included to indicate that the board approved the district's plan. Ms. Fox made a motion to adopt the resolution as required; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Purchase of Property – West 17th Street Stephens School and

D. Revised Purchase of Property – 16th & Jones Streets

The board was presented with two resolutions relating to property matters in the district. One resolution was in support of purchasing a tract of land at 3523 West 17th Street, next to the Stephens Elementary campus and playground.

The second resolution would modify a previously approved purchase across the street from the district's Child Nutrition office. The resolution would support reducing the amount of land purchased, thereby reducing the amount paid for the property.

Dr. Mitchell offered a motion to approve both of these resolutions in support of the administration's recommendations for purchase, and giving the Director of Maintenance and Operations the authority to execute the necessary documents to complete these purchases. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

E. Configuration of West Little Rock School

The board had received information regarding the construction of a new school in west Little Rock and the planning for projected student enrollment at the new school. There were differing opinions among administrators and board members regarding whether the school should serve pre-kindergarten through fifth grade students or pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students. The administration ultimately recommended construction of a pre-kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school with an additional recommendation to develop a facilities plan and determine the need to build an additional school for middle school students.

Dr. Daugherty made a motion to build the new school with the pre-kindergarten through fifth grade configuration. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion.

Mr. Berkley offered an amendment to the motion to include a provision to direct and instruct the administration to begin the search for property for the construction of a middle school in west Little Rock. Ms. Fox seconded the motion. The motion on the amendment **carried unanimously.**

The original motion as amended **carried 6-1**, with Ms. Fox voting no and stating that she wanted her vote to reflect her support for the K-8 school configuration model.

F. December 2007 Financial Statements

The December financial statements were included in the agenda. There was no additional report.

XII. CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Berkley asked that an indicator be placed on the board's agenda to show which items will be considered for action. There has been confusion regarding which items are actually on as report items, and which require a vote of the board.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Armstrong, seconded by Mr. Berkley.

APPROVED: 02-28-08

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

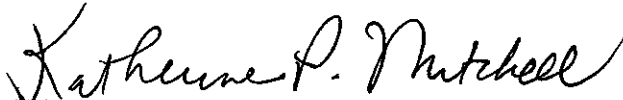
RESOLUTION

TO ADOPT THE LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

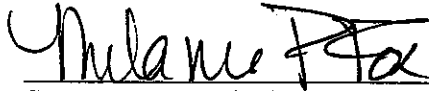
WHEREAS, Act 1426 of 2005 established the Arkansas Public School Academic Facilities Program; and

WHEREAS, Act 1426 requires each school district to submit a ten-year facilities master plan to identify and project facilities improvement projects; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Little Rock School District Facilities Master Plan is hereby approved and adopted by this Board for submission on or before February 1, 2008.



President, Board of Directors



Secretary, Board of Directors

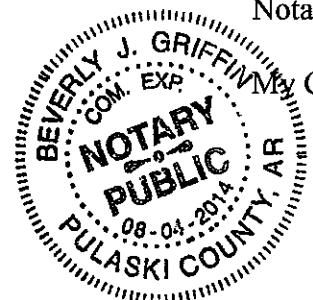
Adopted: 1-24-08

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
) SS
COUNTY OF PULASKI)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24th day of January 2008.


Notary Public

Commission Expires: 8-4-14



RESOLUTION

**AUTHORIZING THE REVISED PURCHASE OF PROPERTY
AND THE EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS
BY THE DIRECTOR OF MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS
FOR THE LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT**

WHEREAS, one (1) parcel of land located at 16th and Jones Streets is offered for sale, and

WHEREAS, the purchase price has been revised to \$101,494; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors designates the executor of documents on behalf of the Little Rock School District;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District of Pulaski County does hereby authorize the purchase of the above named property at 16th and Jones Streets at a revised price of \$101,494 and authorizes the Director of Maintenance and Operations to execute any and all documents necessary to accomplish the purchase of the property.

Katherine P. Mitchell

President, Board of Directors

Melanie Fox

Secretary, Board of Directors

Adopted: 1-24-08

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
) SS
COUNTY OF PULASKI)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24th day of January 2008.

Beverly Griffin

Notary Public

Commission Expires: 8-4-14



RESOLUTION

**AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF PROPERTY
AND THE EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS
BY THE DIRECTOR OF MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS
FOR THE LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT**

WHEREAS, one (1) tract of land located at 3523 West 17th Street is offered for sale, and

WHEREAS, the purchase price is \$2,000; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors designates the executor of documents on behalf of the Little Rock School District ;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District of Pulaski County does hereby authorize the purchase of the above named property at 3523 West 17th Street and authorizes the Director of Maintenance and Operations to execute any and all documents necessary to accomplish the purchase of the property.

Katherine P. Mitchell
President, Board of Directors

Melanie Fox
Secretary, Board of Directors

Adopted: 1-24-08

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
) SS
COUNTY OF PULASKI)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24th day of January 2008.

Beverly Griffin
Notary Public

Commission Expires: 8-4-14

