



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

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
January 27, 2011

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 27, 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, Interim Superintendent
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Prior to roll call, Ms. Fox introduced and recognized Dr. Morris Holmes, who will serve as Interim Superintendent while the board undergoes the search for a new superintendent.

Ms. Fox called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call; Mr. Nellums arrived at 5:35 p.m. Also present were the ex officio representatives for the month of January; **Andrew Culberson**, student at *J. A. Fair High School* and **Jennifer Beranek**, teacher at *Jefferson Elementary*.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Citations and Commendations

At the agenda meeting on January 13, the Arkansas School Board Association *Pinnacle Award* was presented to **Mike Daugherty** for his fifteen years of service on the Little Rock School District board of directors.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Dr. Anika Whitfield addressed the board as a representative of Concerned Citizens of the Little Rock School District. She asked that members of her group be included in the process to fill the superintendent's position.

C. Update: Volunteers in Public Schools

Debbie Milam introduced several members of the Forest Heights Middle School Mentoring volunteers. This group, the Dream Team, focuses on students in the sixth grade and provides mentors who spend approximately an hour each week with their student.

Pat Riley, owner of LR Athletic Club, and one of the Dream Team mentors, reported that he had witnessed a profound impact on the students at Forest Heights who have a mentor. **Myrtle Withers**, Volunteer Mentor Coordinator for the LRSD, reported they set a goal of having 100 mentors at Forest Heights, and they are almost there with 90 mentors currently participating. All mentoring activities take place at the school and members of the audience were encouraged to consider mentoring.

Martha Christie, guidance counselor at Forest Heights, reported that some of the mentors sit in the classroom with their student, read with them, or help with math assignments. **Patty Barker** agreed with previous comments and said that some students just need an advocate, a friend, and someone who will answer their questions. She also noted that she is on her third student, as an example of the mobility of the students in our district and their need for greater stability that can be provided by an adult mentor.

Sgt. Willie Davis, coordinator of the OK program, reported his involvement in the mentoring program as a means to reduce disciplinary and criminal behaviors of young people. He reported that there are two chapters of the OK program in Little Rock: one with students from Dunbar and Central, and the other with students from Forest Heights and Hall.

Wanda Ruffins, principal of Forest Heights Middle School, thanked the mentors for the time and attention they spend to make a difference for the students. She also introduced **Robin Baylark**, assistant principal.

In closing, Ms. Milam read a portion of First Lady Michelle Obama's speech to the National Mentoring Organization. The speech encouraged others to become involved with our young people at a grass roots level.

D. Donations of Property

The board was asked to approve the receipt of recent donations to the district. Student ex officio Andrew Culberson read the list of donations. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to approve the donations; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Baseline Elementary School	\$4,755.80 check to purchase seven laptop computers for use in classrooms	St. Mark Episcopal Church
Carver Magnet School	Health room and classroom materials and supplies valued at \$4,190.00	National Association for the Exchange of Industrial Resources, Inc. (NAEIR)
Central High School	New Yamaha violin with case, bows and shoulder rests, valued at \$1,210.00 to the Orchestra Department	Mr. Scott Isslieb
Forest Heights Middle School	\$25,000 cash to assist in development of student enrichment activities	Robert E. Lyons, Senior VP / COO St. Vincent Health System
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$500.00 cash to the school's garden project in front of the library	Hillcrest Residents Association
Roberts Elementary School	Taski Swingo Auto Scrubber valued at \$8,223.00	Performance Surfaces
Watson Intermediate School	\$840 cash for 4 th grade students to use for field trips	Carrie Stewart AEA Lunch Bunch Charity

E. Little Rock PTA Council

Mr. Becker spoke briefly on behalf of the Little Rock PTA Council, announcing the annual luncheon which is set for February 8, 2011, 11:00 a.m. At the luncheon, the Council will announce and present the American Education Week awards. Tickets are \$5.00 each and can be ordered through February 1, 2011.

F. Little Rock Education Association

Cathy Kohler welcomed Dr. Holmes back to the LRSD. She was pleased to announce that negotiations will continue on next Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. She expressed appreciation for Mr. Hartz and Mr. Bailey, and stated that she was expecting a swift and positive resolution to the negotiations process.

Ms. Kohler also invited board members to attend a showing of the movie ***Road to Nowhere*** at Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church on Sunday evening at 5:30 p.m. The film discusses the sometimes overwhelming pressure faced by students in schools.

She also reported that she had been to Philander Smith College to see Dr. Steve Perry, and was pleased to note that over half of the audience was from the LRSD.

Regarding calls she had received regarding the inclement weather days, she noted that the decision to close school is always made in the best interest of the students. With so many students transported on buses, it's always wiser to err on the side of caution when it comes to the safety of the children.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Dr. Mitchell welcomed Dr. Holmes as the interim superintendent. She offered a public apology to Dr. Watson for treatment she received on her last day of work in the district. She felt that Dr. Watson was not treated with respect when entering the building to clear her office for Dr. Holmes. She suggested the board adopt a policy or procedure, so that future superintendents will know how to proceed when exiting the office.

Ms. Curry also thanked Dr. Holmes for accepting the task of interim superintendent. She thanked the Forest Heights volunteers who were present tonight and she encouraged others to become involved in mentoring students.

Mr. Nellums reported that many parents had contacted him to inquire about the possibility of getting their children enrolled in one of the district's magnet or "favored" schools. He expressed concern with the perception that some of the attendance zone schools are not as acceptable as the magnets. He also noted that school board members cannot help parents to secure a school assignment, but he encouraged the administration to ensure that every school provides a quality educational opportunity to every child.

Mr. Nellums also commented on remarks made by Dr. Steve Perry who spoke recently at Philander Smith College. He agreed with the comments which allowed no excuses for disengaged parents, and no excuses for poor school facilities. He noted that it is the board's responsibility to ensure parents feel their neighborhood school is their best choice, and the board's responsibility to lead the change. He suggested placing the best teachers in the schools where the most change is needed and rewarding them for their performance. "Every public school in the city should have the same caliber of educators as the magnets and charters and every child should have the opportunity to succeed."

Mr. Adams expressed pride in the progress being made at Forest Heights Middle School and appreciation for the Dream Team mentors. He had also attended the program at Philander Smith College and reported that although Dr. Perry wasn't always kind to public education, he did make some entertaining and interesting remarks. Mr. Adams thanked Dr. Holmes for taking the time to lead the district during the transition.

Mr. Armstrong expressed gratitude for the Forest Heights mentoring program and encouraged other parents and community members to be more involved in the education of our children. He agreed with Mr. Nellums' comments that there should be a financial incentive for teachers who want to teach in the lower achieving schools. He also supported the belief that the best teachers should be moved into the schools where the students have the greatest needs. "We have to make sure that all schools are equal . . . every school should be on the same level."

Mr. Carreiro welcomed Dr. Holmes and thanked the mentors at Forest Heights. In addition, he congratulated Athletic Director Johnny Johnson for being inducted into the University of the Ozarks Hall of Fame. He welcomed Coach Rod Stinson as the new football coach at Hall High School.

Mr. Carreiro read a list of the various honors awarded to the district's band programs over the weekend at the all-region competitions. He also reported that elementary and middle school principals had held forums on the middle schools to provide information for the Middle School Task Force in addressing needs at that level.

Ms. Fox closed the board member comments section of the agenda by thanking the mentors for the impact they are making on the students at Forest Heights.

B. Update: Salary Negotiations

Mr. Hartz provided a brief overview of the status of the salary negotiations. He reported that the negotiating committees would meet again next Wednesday and he hoped to come to the table with a proposal within a few weeks.

C. PRE Quarterly Update

Dr. Holmes reported that he had met with Dr. DeJarnette to gain perspective on the process of program evaluation. Dr. DeJarnette provided an explanation of the report and the reasons for providing the information for the board to review on a periodic schedule.

Dr. Mitchell and Ms. Fox asked for greater follow up to the concerns and requests included in the reports and asked that additional emphasis be placed on implementation of the recommendations. Ms. Curry asked that the information and data provided in the reports be presented in chart format so that board members can better understand the process of implementation and identification of strengths and weaknesses. She also requested more detailed cost analysis and the impact on the budget based on the success of the programs used for student support.

Mr. Carreiro was pleased with the additional data, and encouraged that more information was being used to track progress or lack of progress in the LRSD.

D. 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 December 16, 2010, and from special meetings held on January 6, and January 13, 2011 were presented for review and approval. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

V. GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

A. Resolution – Superintendent Search

A resolution outlining the board's intent to move forward in the process for selecting the next superintendent of schools in the Little Rock School District was attached to the board's agenda. Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the resolution as presented. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion.

Mr. Adams made a motion to amend the resolution which was a simplified version of the resolution previously reviewed by the board. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion to amend.

Ms. Fox read the amended resolution as moved by Mr. Adams. The motion to amend the resolution **passed 6-1**. Dr. Mitchell voted no.

The motion to approve the original resolution as amended also **carried 6-1**, with Dr. Mitchell voting no.

B. Discussion and Action: Engagement of a Search Firm

The executive search firm of McPherson & Jacobson made a presentation at the January agenda meeting. They detailed the various stages that would provide a methodical process for assisting the board in the search for the next superintendent. It was estimated that a complete search would cost approximately \$32,000. However, that amount could be less based on the proportional amount of services required by the district.

Mr. Nellums asked that other search firms be considered prior to securing the services of McPherson & Jacobson. Numerous search firms are available to school districts, and Ms. Curry agreed with Mr. Nellums that a comparison should be done prior to taking action. Ms. Fox agreed to contact other firms; however both Ms. Fox and Mr. Carreiro expressed concern about unnecessary delay. They asked that the board move swiftly to begin the process. The board reviewed the line-by-line proposed recommendations for services. Dr. Mitchell expressed reservations about using a search firm at all.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to hire McPherson and Jacobson and to ask them to provide the services detailed as Items 2, 3, and 4 of their proposal. The board would reserve the right to adjust the necessary services as the process begins. Mr. Adams seconded the motion, and it failed **3-4**, with Ms. Fox, Mr. Carreiro and Mr. Adams voting in favor; Mr. Armstrong, Ms. Curry, Mr. Nellums and Dr. Mitchell voted no.

Mr. Armstrong moved to table action. The **motion to table failed** for lack of second.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to seek information from other search firms, and to hear from them at a special meeting on Thursday, February 3, 2011. Mr. Nellums seconded the motion, and it **carried 6-1**, with Dr. Mitchell casting the no vote.

VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Southern Regional Education Board / Services for Pulaski Heights Middle School

Dr. Huddle provided a brief background and purpose for submitting an application for 1003a grant funding for SREB services at Pulaski Heights Middle School. It was noted that securing the services of the Southern Region Education Board would remove the requirement to place a school improvement specialist at Pulaski Heights Middle School.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the application; Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

VII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

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

VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. GAAP Financial Statements and Audit Report for June 30, 2010

Auditors from the accounting firm of Hudson & Cisne were present along with Mr. Bailey to present the district's annual audit report for the board's review and approval. Mr. Carreiro serves as the board's representative on the audit committee, and he reported that they had voted unanimously to recommend approval of the audit to the board.

It was reported that there was one finding related to compliance with federal programs and the requirement to complete semi-annual certifications of all employees who are paid with federal dollars. Mr. Bailey reported that management had met with all grant managers to ensure that these semi-annual certifications are completed as required

Mr. Carreiro expressed appreciation to the members of the audit committee and read the names of those who had served. He then moved to accept the audit as presented. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Monthly Financial Reports – December 2010

Mr. Bailey provided a brief overview of the required monthly budget reports as requested by Dr. Holmes.

C. Budget Update

Mr. Bailey responded to questions regarding the budget, and Ms. Fox asked him to develop a budget calendar so that the board is aware of the budgetary requirements.

CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Holmes discussed the reason he encouraged additional explanation on reports presented to the board. It was his intent to make sure the listening audience is aware of the information provided for the board to review and approve. His observations from watching the meetings on television were that many times the topics were not fully discussed in open meetings, and that it was important for the audience to understand what was being discussed.

Ms. Fox announced dates for open enrollment, January 24 through February 4. February 9th is set aside for school counselor appreciation. She also notified the board that Dr. Carl Cohn would be here on February 7th to conduct a Governance worksession with the board. The meeting to hear from other search consultants was set for February 3, at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Carreiro announced that board members were invited to visit all seven LRSD middle schools beginning at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 2. Mr. Babbs, Dr. Holmes and any board members who are available were invited to participate.

Mr. Hartz provided a statement regarding the inclement weather makeup days. On the day of the meeting, students had 2.5 days to make up. Any days will be added at the end of the school year calendar. There had been no discussion about using previously scheduled conference days or teacher professional development days to make up lost student time. The state laws require 178 student contact days. For half-day make ups, elementary students must attend until 1:30 p.m. and secondary students must attend until 2:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

APPROVED: 02-24-11

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