



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

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
October 28, 2010

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 28, 2010, in the boardroom of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Charles Armstrong presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Linda Watson, Superintendent
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mr. Armstrong called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call; Ms. Curry arrived at 5:55 p.m. The teacher representative, Amy Wyatt from Fulbright Elementary School, and student representative, Shaun Gains from Hall High School, were also present. At the October 14 agenda meeting, Teresa Farquhar, also from Fulbright Elementary, served as the teacher representative.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Superintendent's Remarks

At the agenda meeting on October 14, 2010, Dr. Watson presented a citation to **Yolanda Shelton**, guidance counselor at Brady Elementary School. Ms. Shelton was nominated for this recognition by Georgiana Soderberg and Brady Principal, Ada Keown. Prior to the start of this school year, Ms. Shelton spent her own personal time working with the Salvation Army and Trinity United Methodist Church to enable 23 Brady students to shop at Target with an \$80 gift card for school uniforms and supplies. Volunteers from Trinity took the students shopping, and Target opened before regular business hours to allow the children to shop without distraction.

Dr. Watson presented a citation to **Deborah Rookey**, a former student at Mann Arts & Science Middle School, who was recently named a semifinalist in this year's **Discovery Education / 3M Young Scientist Challenge**. This is a national science competition, and Deborah was the only student from Arkansas to be honored this year. Deborah's teacher at Mann, **Wendy Welch**, was also present. Deborah now attends Parkview.

Sean Rose, a student at Central High School, was recognized for being one of only eight students in Arkansas to receive the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Achievement Award in writing this year. Nationwide, only 543 students received this prestigious award which honors the best student writers in the country. Students are nominated by their teachers and submit samples of their best work for judging.

Representatives from the Junior League of Little Rock were in attendance to receive recognition for their annual "**Stuff the Bus**" campaign. This effort provides school supplies for students at Baseline, Chicot, Geyer Springs, Stephens, and Watson Elementary Schools. Led by chairperson **Amy Lesley**, a total of \$30,000 in school supplies were collected and distributed. In addition, nearly \$8,000 was received from Windstream, Bank of America, 3M, Southwest Power Pool and Parkview Christian Church to supply backpacks to all 2,429 students in the five schools.

The Advanced Placement program honors students each year who meet certain requirements with regards to taking AP Exams. The highest honor given is **AP State Scholar**, which is awarded to one male and one female student in each state who score a 3 or higher on the greatest number of AP Exams and have the highest average score on all AP Exams taken. Both of this year's Arkansas' AP State Scholars were from Central High School, **Helio Liu** and **Yi Wu**. Neither of these students were present, but Principal Rousseau accepted their certificates.

Ex officio representatives for the month of October were given a certification of appreciation for their service: **Shaun Gains**, student at **Hall High School**; **Teresa Farquhar** and **Amy Wyatt**, teachers at **Fulbright Elementary School**.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Panky Fells addressed the board, reporting that four of her children had graduated from the LRSD. She stated that she had received numerous calls from friends who expressed concern about the nonrenewal of Dr. Watson's contract. She asked the board to provide the facts about why Dr. Watson's contract was not being renewed, stating that she had watched the superintendent interact in social situations with the community and that she was passionate about the children of the LRSD. Ms. Fells stated that she knows parents and classroom teachers support Dr. Watson, and that it takes "a five year plan" to prove that you can handle the position of superintendent.

Adellas Robinson also signed up to speak, but yielded her time to Ms. Fells, who continued with comments in support of Dr. Watson. She related a story about the possible closing of Mabelvale Junior High several years ago. She reported that once the lines of communication were opened and the community became involved, the decision was made to keep the school open. She closed by asking the board to be team players and to try to continue working with the current superintendent.

C. Donations of Property

The board was asked to approve the receipt of recent donations to the district. Student ex officio, Shaun Gains read the list of donations. Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the donations; Mr. Nellums seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Bale Elementary	Donations in memory of Jay McLarty, the late father of Judith Courtney, to the Special Education Department: - \$ 25.00 - \$ 20.00 - \$ 25.00 - \$100.00	Martha Cason Paula Brown Kay Combs Regina Favors
Central High	Knitting yarn, valued at \$500.00 to the Knitting Club	Shawn Leach
Fair Park Early Childhood Center	\$100.00 cash to purchase literacy materials for classrooms	Carol Jenkins Real Estate
Forest Park Elementary	\$1,000.00 cash	Anonymous
Otter Creek Elementary	Two \$100.00 gift cards for purchasing school supplies and student incentives	Wal-Mart, Baseline
Roberts Elementary School	School supplies, valued at approximately \$250.00 to be distributed to needy students \$500.00 cash to the library fund to purchase library books and supplies \$750.00 cash to the activity fund to be used for school activities Lunch for teachers and staff during inservice / work day and a flower arrangement for the front office, valued at approximately \$700.00 Yardsticks, valued at approximately \$20.00 to be used for making signs for arrival and dismissal procedures Lunch, valued at approximately \$350.00 for teachers and staff during check-in and registration Lunch, valued at approximately \$350.00 for teachers and staff during check-in and registration Breakfast and planners for teachers and staff, valued at approximately \$400.00 for first day of school \$100.00 cash to the activity fund for student activities	JPMS Cox, PLLC Mr. & Mrs. Carlton Formby Nabholtz Construction Company Dr. John Cloud, DDS Home Depot Mr. Brad Hegeman Ms. Lisa Brady and Ms. Sandra Ward / AR Democrat-Gazette Bancorp South Ms. M. C. Peck

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Roberts Elementary School	Smoothies and sandwich cards, valued at approximately \$400.00 for teachers and staff during inservice / work day Lunch, valued at approximately \$350.00 for teachers and staff during inservice / workday Lunch and use of facilities, valued at approximately \$200.00 for two PTA meetings held prior to completion of the school building	Tropical Smoothie Café Chick-fil-A St. Margaret's Episcopal Church
Wilson Elementary	\$500.00 cash to assist with parent involvement and student incentives	Mr. George Barge Barnett

D. Little Rock PTA Council

Sandy Becker addressed the board on behalf of Henri Smothers who could not be present. He invited parents and community members to attend the next PTA Council meeting at M. L. King Elementary School on November 9, 11:30 a.m. Mr. Becker reported that each school has a Council ambassador to assist with PTA activities in the schools. Board members and other listeners were encouraged to join the PTA.

E. Little Rock Education Association

Cathy Kohler greeted the board and introduced members of the LREA Board. She reported that she had recently attended the NEA board meeting and the National Summit on 21st Century Readiness, which is a partnership which meets regularly to determine what needs to be done to ensure student success.

Ms. Kohler stated that she was putting the board on notice that the LREA board would be watching and would be questioning every decision made by the board. She expressed distrust in the board members and in the decisions being made. She asked the board to stop and think about their actions, and reminded them that thus far in the negotiations there was no money for raises or for health care. She distributed an announcement from the Arkansas Public Policy Panel regarding a meeting where they will discuss SIG grants and priority schools.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Fox reminded listeners of the upcoming ViPS Reading Day, on Tuesday, November 16th. She encouraged everyone to sign up early and to “go read a book to a child.”

Dr. Mitchell reported that she had been a member of the LRSD board for nearly 22 years, and in that time she had learned a lot about board responsibility, about the role of board members, and how to respect the opinions of other people. She discussed the difference between the role of board members vs. the responsibility of administrators, teachers, and principals. She expressed a desire to ensure student success and to use all available resources to prevent school failure.

Dr. Mitchell also commented on the recently announced Promise Neighborhood Grant and the importance of the collaboration with UALR, the Central Arkansas Library System, AR Children's Hospital and New Futures for Youth in securing this grant. She noted that only twenty of these grants were awarded in the nation, and that the LRSD application was ranked tenth out of all applicants.

Mr. Adams thanked members of the board for their prior service and expressed appreciation to members of the administration who had helped him prepare to take on the responsibility of sitting on the board. He expressed optimism for working together in the days ahead.

Mr. Armstrong welcomed Mr. Adams and Mr. Nellums to the board for their first official meeting.

Mr. Carreiro also welcomed Mr. Nellums and Mr. Adams. He reported that he had addressed the Rotary Club and had spoken to them about all the good things going on in the LRSD. He encouraged his fellow board members to do the same - - to celebrate the good things and to be honest about our shortcomings. He expressed gratitude for the teachers and others who work in the schools serving the children.

Mr. Nellums commented on the service of public school board members, noting that in Arkansas board members are unpaid volunteers. He stated that although board members don't always make the best decision in the public opinion, they do make the best decisions based on the available information. He stated his intent to ensure the LRSD gets as much as possible for the money expended and that he would request a true assessment and review of programs where public tax money is spent.

Mr. Nellums closed by saying that board members have to be mindful and mutually respectful of each other in public meetings. He asked for the board to work together to strengthen partnerships in the community and stated that he was looking forward to the challenge.

The board recessed briefly at 6:08 p.m.; reconvened at 6:18 p.m.

Student Ex officio, **Sean Gains**, expressed his opinion that the LRSD was the best school district in the state. He admitted that he had not been a good student or paying attention for a long time, but that now he was focused and ready to do his best. He thanked Dr. Watson and stated that it was his belief that she had proven herself and was doing a good job as superintendent.

B. Legal Update

Attorney **Chris Heller** was asked to provide an update on the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act. He provided copies of the most recent FOIA handbook and briefly reviewed the requirements of the Act. The FOIA covers meetings and records of governing bodies and public entities in the state specifically related to members of a governing boards when meeting to discuss public business. The Act is intended to ensure that members do not work behind the scenes to decide votes that must be taken in public. On the other hand, if no board or public business is to be discussed, in a purely social setting, it is not subject to the act and the press does not have to be notified. Phone calls and emails which are for the purpose of discussing or deciding public business are also subject to the Act.

Executive sessions are intended for the purpose of conducting hearings for students or employees, but only when discussing employment, demotion, or evaluation of an individual employee. The purpose of the executive session must be stated at the time of the vote to convene in a closed session. Any additional discussion and the vote must be taken in an open meeting following the session.

Only interviews for the top administrative position in an organization may be done in executive session. Attorneys cannot attend executive sessions and board members in a closed session can only talk about the things that were stated as the reason for the session.

The FOIA covers records, but not information. Reports do not have to be created in order to respond to a request for information, only the information or documents as they exist. If the records are available they should be provided at the time of the request. If the record is in active use or storage, three days are allowed in which to respond. As a general rule, personnel records are open, but evaluation records are closed. A public organization can't hire a private firm in order to keep records private; the work they are hired to do is open to the public.

C. Update: Strategic Plan

Dr. Watson provided an updated report on the progress of the strategic plan. She reported that Dr. Carl Cohn would be in the district the following week to hold a retreat with the board. Dr. Randle is planning to be present at the November 18th board meeting to review progress.

D. Update: Community Truancy Board

Dr. Dennis Burrows reported on the progress of the Community Truancy Board. He noted that a representative from the UALR school of justice had attended the last meeting, and that a computerized system for tracking and accounting for truancy was being tested and should be ready in November.

Dr. Burrows reported that the members of the Truancy Board had recommended a new position of truancy coordinator be created to report directly to the board. He stated that the LRSD had appropriate policies in place and that information was being properly reported to the city when required. However it was felt that a central coordinator would best be able to ensure that follow through is done and that the factors that lead up to truancy are addressed and prevented.

Ms. Curry suggested that a current employee be identified to assume responsibilities of the truancy coordinator until it is determined whether a new position is needed.

E. Update: Status of Construction Projects

Mr. Adams provided a status report as part of the board's agenda. He was not present; however, construction manager Steve St. John was in attendance and responded to questions. Specifically regarding completion of the repairs at J. A. Fair, he reported that the current plan is to be finished and ready for students after the winter break. Ms. Fox requested a list of the construction needs in the schools including roofs and other critical facilities issues. Mr. Bailey responded and reported that he had asked principals to provide a list of immediate and long-range needs in their buildings.

Mr. Carreiro noted the estimate on J.A. Fair was \$2.5 million, part of which will be covered by insurance. He asked about the roofing project at Hall and it was reported that there was additional, more intense, electrical work, heating and air and waterproofing to be included. The estimated completion date is July 2011.

Other concerns expressed by the board included water and flooding issues at Chicot Elementary and the lack of parking at Cloverdale Middle School. It was reported that the transportation and safety & security personnel have monitored traffic issues on Chicot Road, and until the city makes that a four-lane road, there will continue to be a traffic flow problem at peak hours.

F. Update: Smartboard Installation

An updated report of Smartboard installations was provided in the board's agenda. It was noted that some delays have been experienced in the schools where construction projects are continuing, specifically at Hall and Fair. The goal is still to have all projects completed as prioritized in the agenda.

G. Update: Review of Standards for Accreditation

Dr. Watson reported that two probationary accreditation cites were being reported as required by Arkansas law. At the ADE Board meeting in July, Forest Heights and Henderson Middle Schools were cited. Both of the issues have been corrected for the 2010-2011 school year. Mr. Hartz responded to questions; one teacher was teaching a course outside of the licensed subject area (career orientation) and the other was cited for having an excessive number (150) of students assigned.

H. Report: Tagging / Data Warehouse

Mr. Bailey provided a written list of progress on the creation of data warehouse.

I. Update: 2010 PRE Quarterly Update

Dr. DeJarnette provided the October 2010 Quarterly Update as an attachment to the board's agenda. She responded to questions regarding the PRE Department and reported that nine programs or classes were being evaluated this school year. She explained the board's process of approving an evaluation agenda in June of each year.

Dr. DeJarnette also responded to questions from Mr. Nellums regarding the role of PRE, stating that it was her responsibility to deliver formal reports to the board and to work with a comprehensive team including parents, teachers, and administrators. She also responded that she does not evaluate grant funded programs as specified by board policy. Grant funded programs are evaluated externally, most often by independent researchers specified within the grant.

Dr. Watson and Linda Young responded to questions regarding the external evaluations of the SIG grants. Under the terms of the grants, the Arkansas Department of Education is monitoring and evaluating the specific requirements for accountability and effectiveness of these grants.

Chris Heller responded to one of the questions regarding program evaluation, noting that the decision in the Lakeview case requires the evaluation of the effectiveness of programs.

Dr. Watson reported that the budget codes on the SIG grants had just been set up and that the expenditures to date had been in the range of 2% – 3% in start up costs. Mr. Bailey responded stating that he would provide updates as the funds were allocated.

Mr. Nellums asked that there be more cooperation between PRE in the evaluation of programs and grants. Dr. Watson replied that she has asked PRE to be involved with the evaluation discussions as grants are written.

J. Update: 2010-2011 October Student Enrollment Report

The 2010-11 October enrollment report was attached to the board's agenda. Dr. Watson reported that total enrollment was down approximately 156 students overall from the same time last year. She also reported that she would check Pre-K enrollment compared to previous year enrollment. It was assumed that the ten-day decrease in enrollment was due to the opening of new charter schools within the LRSD.

K. Internal Auditors Report

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

IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Election of Officers

Mr. Armstrong opened the floor for nominations for the office of board secretary. Ms. Fox nominated Mr. Nellums. There were no other nominations, and Mr. Carreiro made a motion to close the nominations and to elect Mr. Nellums by acclamation. Mr. Adams seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Mr. Armstrong opened the floor for nominations for the office of vice president. Ms. Fox nominated Mr. Carreiro. There were no other nominations, and Mr. Nellums moved to close the nominations and to elect Mr. Carreiro by acclamation. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Mr. Armstrong opened the floor for nominations for the office of president. Mr. Nellums nominated Ms. Fox. There were no other nominations, and Mr. Carreiro moved to close the nominations and to elect Ms. Fox by acclamation. Mr. Adams seconded the motion and it **carried 5-2**, with Ms. Curry and Dr. Mitchell voting no.

Ms. Fox accepted the gavel and thanked Mr. Armstrong for his service as board president. In recognition of his year as board president, Mr. Armstrong was presented with a gavel inscribed with his dates of service.

B. Board Disbursing Officers

Arkansas Code 6-13-618 requires the Board to designate one member to serve as the primary disbursing officer and one member to serve as the alternate disbursing officer. These disbursing officers are most often the president and vice president of the board, and a resolution supporting that designation was submitted for the board's approval. Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the resolution appointing the board disbursing officers. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on September 23, 2010 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 6-1** with Mr. Nellums casting the no vote.

V. ADMINISTRATION

A. Assurances for ACSIP Submission

Dr. Watson reported that the district's ACSIP plan had been submitted electronically just that afternoon. In response to questions regarding the assurances, Mr. Glasgow reported that the list of assurances is received at the end of the submission, and the superintendent is required to sign and submit these assurances to the state. He also reported that there were no major changes over the previous year's assurances, and that if changes were made to the components of the plan, the state would accept amendments as necessary.

The administration requested board approval of the assurances. Mr. Armstrong moved to table action until a special meeting in November. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion to table, and it **carried unanimously**.

B. School Improvement Specialist Position

Under the Arkansas Smart Accountability requirements, schools in Whole School Intensive Improvement Year 4 – 5 or higher, are required to hire a school improvement specialist to assist the principal in school improvement strategies, or to replace the principal if that principal has been there during the entire 4 – 5 year school improvement designation.

The administration, recognizing that Pulaski Heights Middle School and Central High School are both in need of school improvement support, recommended an addition of one school improvement specialist to serve these two schools. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendation and Mr. Nellums seconded the motion.

Mr. Carreiro explained that he couldn't support the recommendation because he wasn't sure that school improvement specialists were required or necessary. He noted that in some of the schools where a school improvement specialist was assigned, they were not required under the Smart Accountability guidelines. He suggested moving them into Central and Pulaski Heights to prevent adding another position.

Ms. Fox also spoke in opposition to the motion. She discussed the requirements listed on the ADE school improvement website and stated her interpretation that the schools which had implemented an intervention program did not have to also have a specialist.

Dr. Watson responded to expressed concerns and said that she had been assured by the state that the school improvement specialists were required as an intervention for school improvement. She promised to discuss this topic again with the ADE, and Mr. Nellums suggested that she request a response in writing.

After discussion, the motion to hire a school improvement specialist failed 3-2-1. Ms. Fox and Mr. Carreiro voted no and Mr. Armstrong abstained. Mr. Nellums was absent at the time of the vote.

VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. America's Choice and Target Teach Proposals for School Improvement Services

The superintendent recommended approval of the proposals for continuing America's Choice and Target Teach. These intervention programs have been used for professional development and improved support for classroom teacher performance. The expected costs were reported as \$1.5 million for Target Teach and \$700,000 for America's Choice. In response to questions, Dr. Watson reported that the cost of these programs are paid through Title programs, SIG grants, NSLA funding.

Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendation; Ms. Curry seconded the motion. Prior to the vote the board expressed concerns and asked for documentation on the evaluation of the programs. Mr. Nellums asked for PRE to involve an external evaluator in the review.

Dr. Watson and Dr. DeJarnette responded to questions, and it was noted that the board had approved the evaluation of Target Teach and America's Choice. The review is currently in progress through the PRE department. External evaluators from the University of Memphis had been previously involved in the review.

Mr. Carreiro expressed concerns that the same remediation strategies weren't being implemented across the board. He also questioned how these two programs are utilized in the schools and whether the professional growth strategies are included in the performance evaluation of the teachers.

Principal Darian Smith was invited to present information regarding Target Teach and how it had been of benefit to the students and staff at Mabelvale Elementary School. He provided a packet of information and explained that the Target Teach strategies were built into the curriculum maps so that it is implemented in some manner in elementary schools across the district. Dr. Watson agreed and assured the board that as the teachers are trained the district's coaches will continue to model and implement classroom strategies.

Leon Adams also noted that as additional tagging is done, there will be more and better data for the evaluation of program effectiveness and success.

The motion **carried 6-1**, with Mr. Nellums casting the no vote.

VII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

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

In addition, the superintendent recommended the appointment of two administrative positions:

- **Barbara Griggs** was recommended for the position of assistant principal at Washington Elementary School. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the recommendation; Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
- **Sherkeyer Jackson** was recommended for the position of coordinator of the Woodruff Early Childhood Center. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendation; Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Purchase of Buses

The administration recommended the purchase of eight buses to replace the 1996 models currently used in the special needs transportation department. The district has an established 10-year cycle for bus replacement and this recommendation is based on that cycle. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the purchase and financing of eight special needs transportation buses. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

B. Data Quality Coordinator Position

Kelsey Bailey asked for approval to hire a data quality coordinator in the information services department. This person would provide data management and accountability, reporting directly to the Director of Information Services. A copy of the vacancy document was provided for the board's review and consideration. Mr. Bailey responded to questions, noting that this was not an additional FTE, but a new description of duties for a vacant position. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the position; Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

C. Budget Update

Mr. Bailey provided a brief update, noting that updates were being made to the budget reports to reflect the new enrollment figures. ADE information received the day of the meeting reflected that Arkansas was one of the few places in the nation where teaching positions had not been eliminated due to the economy.

D. Monthly Financial Reports

The monthly financial reports were provided as part of the board's agenda.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to go into an executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried 6-1**, with Ms. Curry voting no. Ms. Curry left prior to the start of the executive session.

The board returned from executive session at 9:39 p.m. and reported that no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m. on a motion from Mr. Carreiro, seconded by Mr. Nellums.

APPROVED: 11-18-10

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