

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

**MINUTES  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
September 27, 2001**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held its regularly scheduled meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 27, 2001, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Katherine Mitchell presided.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Katherine Mitchell  
Baker Kurrus  
Judy Magness  
Larry Berkley  
Micheal Daugherty  
Tony Rose  
Sue Strickland

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**ALSO PRESENT:**

T. Kenneth James, Superintendent of Schools  
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

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

President Katherine Mitchell called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. All members of the Board were present at roll call. Wanda Varady, teacher at Badgett Elementary School and ex-officio representative to the Board for the month of September, was also present.

**II. PROCEDURAL MATTERS / WELCOMING COMMENTS**

Dr. Mitchell introduced Judge Chris Piazza who administered the oath of office to Board members Micheal Daugherty and Baker Kurrus. They ran unopposed for zones 2 and 4, respectively, in the September school elections. Copies of their executed oaths of office are attached to these minutes.

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING

September 27, 2001

Page 2

### III. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

#### A. **Partners in Education: New Partnerships**

Lee Ann Matson was present to recognize and announce new partnerships between the business community and the schools. In addition, Ms. Matson announced the annual VIPS Reading Day to be held on Tuesday, November 13, 2001. Cards will be mailed to all volunteers from last year. Anyone interested in reading in the schools is asked to contact the VIPS office.

The VIPS / Partners-In-Education Parent Involvement Day will be held on Saturday, October 27 at J. A. Fair High School. Parents will be encouraged to attend a variety of workshops throughout the day, which are intended to assist them in helping their children learn. Board members were invited to drop in anytime during the day.

Newly established partnerships were:

**Pulaski Heights Middle School**, represented by *Nancy Rousseau, Principal*, in partnership with the **UALR College of Education**, represented by *Dean Angela Sewall*

Mr. Berkley made a motion to approve the partnership. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

#### B. **Superintendent's Citations**

Dr. James recognized several District employees who contributed to the successful opening of school at Mann Magnet Middle School. *James Matthis, Assistant Principal; Jim Fullerton, Principal; Andy Jackson, Custodian; and Vernon Smith, Facilities Services Construction Manager*, were given citations in honor of their hard work and dedication to the task of getting the school's portable classrooms ready for student occupancy on the first day of the school year. Students will attend classes in the portable buildings until the construction of the new building is complete.

A certificate of appreciation was presented to *Wanda Varady*, counselor at Badgett Elementary School, for serving as the ex officio representative to the Board for the month of September. The student representative was unable to attend.

#### C. **Remarks from Citizens**

*Phyllis Perry*, PTA President at Rightsell Elementary School, addressed the Board concerning the reduction of instructional aide positions at her school. She presented copies of petitions signed by parents, teachers and students at Rightsell, asking for reconsideration of the placement of these aides. She stated that these employees are "vitally important" to the success of the program at Rightsell.

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING

September 27, 2001

Page 3

*Mary Ann Hansen*, the music specialist at Rightsell, spoke to the same concerns regarding elimination of instructional aide positions. She indicated that the aides work in small groups of students, provide one-on-one attention to students who need reinforcement, and are a vital part of the instructional program at Rightsell. She asked for the Board's assistance in getting these positions reinstated.

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

*Frank Martin*, representing the Classroom Teachers' Association, congratulated Baker Kurrus and Micheal Daugherty on their re-election to the Board. In addition, he discussed the CTA's opposition to the formation of Tax Increment Finance Districts as proposed by the City of Little Rock. He noted that Mr. Kurrus and Dr. James have done a good job of making the District's position on this issue well known in the community. He stated that teachers would "mobilize" across the state to lobby against TIF districts, and that the CTA would work with ACORN community organizers in their opposition to TIF.

### **C. Joshua Intervenors**

No report.

## **IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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

*Dr. Mitchell* thanked her fellow Board members for working together over the past year of her tenure as President. She noted that the Board members had developed respect for each other, and that even though they sometimes had varying ideas and points of view, they were able to "disagree without becoming disagreeable." She felt their most challenging success was the selection of Dr. James as Superintendent, and she expressed confidence in his leadership abilities.

*Mr. Berkley* congratulated District employees for a very successful opening of school and he expressed appreciation for the dedication and effort it took to make this the best opening in a long time. He thanked Dr. Mitchell for her successful year as President of the Board.

*Ms. Magness* invited the public to visit the Central High Memorial Garden across the street from the school and the Visitors' Center. A ceremony was held last week to turn over the operation of the Visitors' Center and the Memorial Gardens to the National Parks Service. She thanked the public dignitaries for their participation in the ceremony, including Senator Dale Bumpers, Rett Tucker, Mark Abernathy, and others. She also thanked Dr. Mitchell for her outstanding leadership over the past year.

## **REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**September 27, 2001**

**Page 4**

*Mr. Kurrus* stated that he had also attended the dedication service at the Memorial Gardens at Central High School. He was touched by the fact that all segments of the community were represented at the ceremony and it served, to him, as a reminder that we must remember where we have been and be mindful that we don't want to go back to one-race schools.

### **B. Desegregation Update**

Mr. Babbs reported that Compliance Committee meetings are continuing to be held weekly with the District's attorneys in preparation for future court sessions. He noted that Dr. Terrance Roberts was still visiting periodically, and that he was here last week, to provide "Coping With Differences" training for two additional employee groups.

He reported some problems had been encountered in Information Services providing the actual and official enrollment counts over the past couple of weeks. Districtwide and statewide computer problems were to blame, and he expects these problems to resolve within the next few days so that accurate student counts can be made.

### **C. Budget Update**

Dr. Stewart reported that the Budget document approved at last month's meeting had been submitted to the State ahead of the deadline. All aspects of the budget are continuing to be monitored and refined, and administrators are continuing to look at staffing patterns to identify areas where long-term financial benefits can be achieved. He stated that he is convinced that the financial welfare of the District depends on us becoming "leaner" and he asked for the Board's understanding when they receive complaints in this regard.

### **D. Construction Report: Proposed Bond Projects**

Mr. Goodman reported on the bond project summary provided in the agenda. In addition, a progress report on the current electrical upgrade projects was included. He reported that construction projects at Watson and Jefferson Elementary Schools had come in under budget and he was assuming that was a sign that the construction market had improved.

### **C. Internal Auditors Report**

Mr. Becker's report was printed as a part of the Board's agenda; no other information was provided.

**D. Report / Update: Tax Increment Finance Districts**

Dr. Mitchell expressed appreciation to Dr. James and Board Member Kurrus for the time they have expended on behalf of the District in opposition to the tax increment finance issue. They have spent countless hours researching the impact this would have on the District, meeting with representatives from the City, and speaking to community groups so that others would understand the stake we have in this.

Dr. James remarked that the dialogue between our Board and the City of Little Rock Board at last Monday night's joint meeting was very beneficial. He felt that it was very important for the City Board members to understand where we are on the TIF issue and for the community to hear relevant discussion between the two Boards.

Mr. Kurrus was gratified that both Boards reacted gracefully and that our staff has responded professionally in the discussions on TIF. He noted that we now know so much about tax increment financing that we are in a good position to understand the concepts the city had in mind when they made their initial proposals. They now understand that in the future it will be to their advantage to discuss issues before proposals are in final form or presented to the public. He noted, again, that the Constitution of the State of Arkansas supports the school district's position that our funds are to be spent only on education.

Mr. Kurrus also stated that he was proud of the City Board for stepping back to reassess and reconsider their position on the proposed Districts. Where they started with five proposed TIF districts, they are now considering only one district to benefit the downtown area. The City Board and the LRSD Board, working together, will make a powerful team.

Mr. Rose commended the community groups and their individual members for expressing their support for the LRSD on this issue.

Mr. Berkley agreed with the comments of his fellow Board members and noted that interactions with the City Board members have been positive and cooperative. He stated that we are starting to "move in the right direction."

**V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS**

**A. Election of Officers**

Dr. Mitchell opened the floor for nominations for the office of President of the Board. Mr. Berkley nominated Baker Kurrus; Dr. Daugherty seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations, Mr. Berkley moved that the nomination be approved by acclamation. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. The gavel was passed to Mr. Kurrus, who continued the election of officers.

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING

September 27, 2001

Page 6

Mr. Kurrus opened the floor for nominations for the position of Vice President. Mr. Rose nominated Judy Magness for the position; Dr. Mitchell seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations, Mr. Rose moved that the nomination be approved by acclamation. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Mr. Kurrus asked for nominations for the position of Secretary. Dr. Mitchell nominated Tony Rose. Ms. Magness seconded the motion. There being no other nominations, Mr. Rose was **elected unanimously**.

### **B. Minutes**

Minutes from the regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on August 23, 2001 and from a special meeting held on September 11, 2001, were presented for review and approval. Mr. Berkley made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Strickland seconded the motion. Ms. Magness requested a correction on the final page of the minutes, which was noted by the recorder of the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes as corrected **passed unanimously**.

## **VI. INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES DIVISION**

### **A. Revisions to IKEC-R3: Credit by Examination**

IKEC-R3, regulations governing policy IKEC, Credit by Examination were provided for the Board's review and discussion. District staff, in collaboration with high school principals, developed the amendments to the regulations to bring the program into compliance with state accreditation standards. Since the policy has been implemented, and the regulations are administrative, no action was required.

### **B. ACTAAP Results**

Dr. Lesley presented a review of the Districts Grades 4 and 8 Literacy and Mathematics Benchmarks Examinations. The Powerpoint slide presentation highlighted results of the April 2001 testing, indicating areas of improvement and areas of concern.

Areas of significant improvement in mathematics at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level were noted at Baseline, Bale, Fair Park, Franklin, Fulbright, Terry, Badgett and Booker Elementary Schools. Jefferson Elementary was the highest performing school at the 64% level. 59% of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students districtwide scored below basic in mathematics in 1998-99, compared to 51% in 2000-01.

In Literacy scores, Jefferson and Fair Park Elementary Schools were the most improved, with Jefferson scoring at the 95% level. Fulbright and Forest Park Elementary Schools scored at the 74% and 71% levels, showing minor improvements over the previous years' scores.

Concerns were noted with our 4th grade scores when our students' mathematics results were compared to statewide scores, or to students in NLR and PCSSD. Improvements in literacy scores were also reduced from 42% in 1999-00 to 35% in 2000-01.

Dr. Lesley provided a copy of the presentation slides for the Board members to review and offered to provide additional information on request. Board members expressed concerns over the poor performances and Mr. Berkley asked about disparities in lower SES students.

Mr. Rose requested information that would indicate whether the lower SES students are benefiting from our new curriculum and from other strategies to improve their performance.

Dr. Daugherty also expressed concerns about the test results, especially the disparities between student groups. He stated that he would formally withdraw his support for our request for unitary status due to these circumstances.

**VII. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION**

**A. Personnel Changes**

Personnel items were presented as a part of the Board's agenda and the administration recommended Board approval. Ms. Magness made a motion to approve the personnel changes as presented. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

**VIII. BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION**

**A. Donations of Property**

The Board was asked to approve acceptance of recent donations to the District. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to graciously accept the donations. Ms. Magness seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. Dr. Mitchell read the list of items as noted in the following chart:

**DONATIONS**

<b>SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DONOR</b>
Rockefeller Elementary School	\$2,500 grant to be applied toward the installation of a new electronic school sign	East Broadway Neighborhood Association
	\$2,500 cash to be applied toward the installation of a new electronic school sign	Rockefeller Elementary PTA

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**September 27, 2001**  
**Page 8**

**DONATIONS - continued**

<b>SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DONOR</b>
Romine Elementary School	\$2,500 cash to be applied to the purchase of a school sign	Westbrook Neighborhood Association
	\$1,000 cash to be applied to the purchase of a school sign	Wal-Mart Foundation
Stephens Elementary School	Titmus vision machine, Omron digital blood pressure machine, and digital scale with height rod, valued at \$2,112.00 for use in the health room	UALR Share America Program and UAMS

**B. Financials**

The monthly financial reports for the period July 1 – 31 were printed in the Board’s agenda. Dr. Stewart reported that the reports for August and September would be provided at the next meeting and noted that the districtwide computer problems have impacted preparation of the financial reports. Mr. Berkley made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

**IX. SCHOOL SERVICES DIVISION**

No items for Board action.

**X. DISTRICT OPERATIONS**

No items for Board action.

**XI. CLOSING REMARKS**

**A. Superintendent’s Report:**

Dr. James reminded Board Members that the Arkansas School Boards Association Region 8 meeting would be held on Thursday, October 4, at the North Little Rock High School. All Board members were encouraged to attend.

The Superintendent remarked that he felt the in depth discussion on curriculum and instruction held during tonight’s meeting was very beneficial to our work and that it was of utmost importance to keep the instructional process at the forefront. He thanked everyone for their patience and attention, but stressed that he was excited that we spent an entire hour talking about instruction. He will ask for periodic reports from the curriculum divisions for presentation at future Board meetings.

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**September 27, 2001**  
**Page 9**

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, Ms. Magness moved to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

APPROVED: 10-25-01

Original documents signed by:  
H. Baker Kurrus, President  
Tony Rose, Secretary