

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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
August 23, 2001**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held its regularly scheduled meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 23, 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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sue Strickland

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. Six members of the Board were present at roll call; Ms. Strickland was absent. There were no ex-officio representatives to the Board due to the summer break.

II. PROCEDURAL MATTERS / WELCOMING COMMENTS

Dr. Mitchell greeted the audience and welcomed District employees and patrons to the meeting.

III. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Remarks from Citizens

No citizens signed up to address the Board.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

August 23, 2001

Page 2

B. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Frank Martin, representing the Classroom Teachers' Association, commented briefly on the successful opening of schools. He noted that teachers remain fully committed to helping students learn and he stated that everyone was willing to cooperate fully to that end. He did note a couple of concerns as being 1) the number of portable buildings and the number of teachers who move from one classroom to another. He stated, "every teacher wants to have a classroom, a desk, and a file cabinet with a lock on it." 2) The upcoming expiration date of the three-year contract and the need to review the five year average of operating funds which was to impact the amount of teacher salaries, and 3) the rumors regarding a lay off of instructional aides. He asked that the CTA be notified as soon as possible if there were to be any cuts in support staff.

C. Joshua Intervenors

John Walker addressed the Board on behalf of the Joshua Intervenors. He stated that he was present tonight, in part, because he does not feel that the Board is adequately and accurately informed as to the reasons we are in Court at this time. He stated that the District's previous Superintendent may have led the Board to believe that he met regularly with Mr. Walker and that our attorneys may have led the Board to think that they were in constant contact with Joshua's representatives.

Mr. Walker provided a history of the Desegregation lawsuit, relating back to 1956 and the constitutional right of Black children to receive an equitable education in Little Rock. He feels that "good faith" has been broken and that the District has been negligent in meeting its' goals and objectives. He asked the Board to direct the administration and our attorneys to "pull down" the motion before the court at this time and try to resolve some of the issues he is concerned about, including the District's plans for involving Drs. Ross and Roberts, our consultants on Desegregation matters.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Mr. Kurrus commented briefly on Mr. Walker's remarks and stated that we all need to work to address the issues. He noted that this litigation is counter-productive to moving forward and that in order to move past the years of lawsuits we will all need to work to build a vision of what will be good for all of us, which will result in success for all of our students.

Mr. Kurrus asked the community to take a hard look at the progress of the LRSD. On this first day of school, he wanted people to notice that we are cleaning up our campuses and making improvements as promised in the bond issue. He invited people to consider us as a good option for the education of their children.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

August 23, 2001

Page 3

Mr. Rose agreed with Mr. Kurrus' comments and noted that all had gone well today for first day opening of school. He expressed appreciation for the "good people doing good work for all our kids."

Dr. Daugherty thanked the voters of Zone 2 and Zone 4 for allowing he and Mr. Kurrus the opportunity to serve another three-year term on the Board. Both of them are unopposed for their seat on the Board of Directors of the LRSD. He also thanked Dr. James for the comments made in his address at the LRSD employee convocation regarding the way in which adults speak to our children. He noted that this was a reminder that the little things we say and do can make a difference in the life of a child.

Ms. Magness thanked everyone who had a part in getting the new school year off to a good start. She commended the employees who had participated in staff development over the summer months on their own time. She also reported that she had attended a teleconference at the Arkansas Department of Education regarding the SIP Program. She asked that we make certain that the ADE knows that we support the second chance given to our students who need the SIP as a method of maintaining their eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

Ms. Magness noted that this was to be Mr. Gadberry's last official Board meeting and she thanked him for his many years of service to the District.

Dr. Mitchell reported that she had visited a staff development workshop at Washington Magnet School for the District's instructional aides. They received a lot of good information that they will be able to use in making sure our students are getting all the help they need to succeed. She thanked Marion Woods for coordinating this inservice. She had also attended the new teacher luncheon sponsored by the L.R. Classroom Teachers' Association and thanked them for providing an opportunity for these teachers to meet each other.

She also acknowledged the hard work that went into preparing for the convocation. She had heard a lot of positive feedback, especially on the new location, and she complimented Crystal Boyd, a Parkview Magnet School student, who sang the National Anthem.

Dr. Mitchell encouraged parents to get involved in their children's education, take a few minutes to visit the school, meet the teacher and let them know that you want to be involved and informed in your child's education.

B. Desegregation Update

Mr. Babbs was present and reported briefly on the recent and up-coming hearings on the desegregation case before the Court. He noted that Dr. Terrance Roberts has been here for two days in August, during which time he met with several administrators.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

August 23, 2001

Page 4

The West Little Rock school site committee met on August 16, and is scheduled to meet again on September 13. The members have been assigned areas of responsibility for review and study and are to report back to the committee with recommendations and suggestions.

Mr. Babbs noted that the first day of school count was up by three students from the same day last year. A five-day and ten-day count will provide more accurate enrollment information. He noted that many students wait to register during the first week of school, and oftentimes enroll after the Labor Day weekend.

C. Budget Update

Don Stewart reported on the current year budget projections and noted that adjustments are being made daily as teachers are moved from one site to another to accommodate the students as they are enrolling. Allocations adjustments are being made as needs arise, and positions are being added and deleted in order to make the best possible use of our resources.

He also reported that another QZAB application had been approved and that we would receive \$1.4 million of the \$1.9 million requested. Another application will be made for approximately \$600,000 to bring us up to the original amount requested.

D. Construction Report: Proposed Bond Projects

Mr. Eaton was present to provide the construction report in Mr. Goodman's absence. The written report reflects a summary of the first year of construction activities and bond projects across the District. He noted that the portable buildings at Mann were ready for student occupancy on the first day of school, with a few on-going activities, such as fencing, covered walkways, and some sidewalks to be completed within the next few days. He also noted that the contract for construction of the Technology Center had been signed and that it was anticipated that project would soon be underway.

E. Internal Auditors Report

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

F. Report / Update: Tax Increment Finance Districts

Dr. James reported that he, Baker Kurrus and Don Stewart were scheduled to meet with the Mayor and City Manager to discuss our concerns related to the proposed Tax Increment Finance Districts. He invited Mr. Kurrus to provide additional information on the TIF proposals, which are now before the City Board. It is anticipated that the City Board of Directors will vote on this issue at their next meeting.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

August 23, 2001

Page 5

Mr. Kurrus provided copies of state statutes which regulate school revenue and expenditure processes and explained tax increment financing as it was intended when it was passed by the last legislature. The intent was to provide relief for “blighted” areas in order to make improvements to increase the value of declining properties, therefore increasing the taxable value of the properties. He suggested that use of TIF could be a good thing when and where it is used appropriately, but that the plans set forth by the City are too drastic and would be detrimental to progress for the LRSD.

Dr. James stated that it is important to note that he does not believe the city of Little Rock fully understands what the impact would be on the LRSD. More TIF issues will be proposed across the state, and more fine-tuning will be necessary to protect local school districts.

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on July 26, 2001, and from a special meeting held on August 9, 2001, were presented for review and approval. Ms. Magness made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

A. Second Reading: Policy IBA – Waivers, with Regulations

The Board approved policy IBA, Waivers, on first reading at the July meeting. This policy will govern and regulate waivers from federal or state laws or regulations and from Board policies. By this policy, the Superintendent is authorized to approve waivers from administrative regulations or administrative directives after the school principal and the Campus Leadership Team have approved the request. Dr. Lesley was present to respond to questions from the Board. Ms. Magness made a motion to approve the policy as submitted on second reading. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it was **unanimously approved**.

B. Administrative Regulation – IKEC-R3, Credit by Examination

Administrative regulation IKEC-R3, Credit by Examination, was provided for the Board’s review and approval. Ms. Magness made a motion to approve the regulation as presented. Mr. Rose seconded the motion. Prior to the vote, there was discussion regarding the proposed revisions, and the **motion failed** on a roll call vote of 3-2-1, with Mr. Kurrus and Dr. Daugherty voting “no,” and Dr. Mitchell abstaining.

Mr. Kurrus asked for the regulation to be brought back to the Board after clarification on issues relating to use of the credits earned in the computer laboratories.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

August 23, 2001

Page 6

C Program Evaluation Agenda, 2001-02

The proposed Program Evaluation Agenda was presented for the Board's review and approval. Dr. Lesley had provided a written report detailing the schedule for submission of evaluation reports and their anticipated dates for completion. Mr. Kurrus made a motion to approve the proposed agenda for evaluation of District programs. Mr. Rose seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

D. Weighted Credit for University Studies Courses at Hall High School

The Board was asked to approve a recommendation from the administration and the Vice Chancellor at UALR to allow weighted grade points for grades earned in the approved University Studies courses at Hall High School. This action would serve as an incentive for students to enroll and succeed in the courses being offered at Hall. Dr. Lesley was present to respond to questions from the Board. Mr. Rose made a motion to approve the recommendation as presented. Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

The Board was asked to suspend its' own rules in order to consider action on a revision to current regulation IKC-R, which governs Grade Point Average and Rank in Class. Ms. Magness moved to suspend the rules; Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

E. Revision to Administrative Regulation IKC-R: Grade Point Average and Rank in Class

Dr. Lesley presented a proposal to revise the current Regulation IKC-R, Grade-Point Average and Rank in Class. The changes were recommended to give students an opportunity to re-take courses that they failed and have the new grade count when calculating the grade-point average and rank in class. Previously adopted policy counted the "F" in calculating the GPA, and was a detrimental factor when motivating students to re-take courses in order to improve their grades. Mr. Rose made a motion to approve the revision as presented. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried 5-1** with Dr. Daugherty casting the "no" vote.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

August 23, 2001

Page 7

F. Grant Proposal – Teaching United States History

The Social Studies staff presented a recommendation to the Board for approval of a grant submission to the United States Department of Education. The application request in the amount of \$868,000 would fund a three-year training program for U. S. history teachers in grades 4, 5, 8 and 11. Staff development activities would emphasize “justice, domestic tranquility, common defense, general welfare, and liberty” as their theme. Ms. Magness made a motion to approve the grant for submission; Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

G. Technology Literacy Challenge Fund Grant

Lucy Neal presented a request for approval of a grant application in the amount of \$184,000 to the Arkansas Department of Education. If funded, the grant would provide mobile computer labs to support the Reading/Writing Workshop at Cloverdale and Forest Heights Middle Schools. Funding for professional development in use of these labs would also be provided for the English teachers at these two schools. Ms. Magness moved to approve the submission of the grant application. Mr. Rose seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

H. 2001-02 Consolidation Application for Special Education and Related Services

The 2001-02 consolidated VI-B Budget was presented for the Board’s review and approval. The request, in the amount of \$2.492 million, was based on the distribution per pupil served, census allocations, and poverty allocations. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the submission as presented. Ms. Magness seconded the motion and it **carried 6-0**.

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. Mr. Berkley made a motion to approve the personnel changes as presented. Mr. Rose 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. Mr. Kurrus made a motion to graciously accept the donations. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. Mr. Kurrus read the list of items as noted in the following chart:

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Franklin Elementary School	\$1,000 cash for the playground fund	Children International "Share America" Program

B. Financials

The monthly financial reports were printed in the Board's agenda. Dr. Stewart reported that the report did not include amounts for the month of July, and was, therefore, the same report the Board received at the July meeting. Mr. Berkley made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried 6-0**.

C. Draft 2001-02 Budget

The 2001-02 budget is in draft form at this time and will be provided for the Board's review and additional discussion at the September agenda meeting. It will need to be approved at that time in order to meet the filing deadline established by the State.

IX. SCHOOL SERVICES DIVISION

No items for Board action.

X. DISTRICT OPERATIONS

No items for Board action.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

August 23, 2001

Page 9

XI. CLOSING REMARKS

A. Superintendent's Report:

Dr. James reported that he had visited nine schools this morning, the first day of the 2001-02 school year. He found that excitement was high among students and teachers at elementary, middle schools and high schools. He has plans to visit the other campuses as time permits over the next few weeks.

The Superintendent called the opening at Mann Magnet Middle School "miraculous," given that they were operating out of numerous portable buildings and were still working there to create a positive learning environment for all of the students on that campus. He gave credit to all the people who worked hard over the summer months to get all the schools up and running for the first day.

Dr. James reported on plans to take a group from the LRSD to visit the TAP Academy in Phoenix, Arizona in October. Several Board members, representatives from the CTA, administrators and building principals will be included in the visit, which is sponsored by the Milken Foundation. He is hoping that the LRSD will be identified as a TAP Model District for the state.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, Ms. Magness moved to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

APPROVED: 09-27-01

Original documents signed by:

Katherine Mitchell, President

Judy Magness, Secretary