

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

**MINUTES
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
January 15, 2002**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held a special meeting on Tuesday, January 15, 2002, 6:00 p.m., in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Baker Kurrus presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Baker Kurrus called the special meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. All members of the Board were present at roll call. Teacher ex-officio representative, Dorothy Doolittle, from Brady Elementary School, was also present. The student representative did not attend.

II. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The special meeting was called for the consideration of school closing options for the 2002-03 school year.

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III. ACTION

Dr. James reviewed documents provided for the Board's consideration regarding potential school closures for the 2002-03 academic year. Board Policy FBC governs procedures and requirements for closing a school site:

- *Excessive cost of operation due to enrollment;*
- *Excessive cost of renovation and repair due to age and physical condition of the facility;*
- *Inability of the District to deliver the required curriculum in the facility;*
- *Any applicable federal court orders.*

It was also noted that the policy requires a twelve-month public announcement of the closure except in cases of *extreme emergency*.

After a brief discussion, Dr. James recommended taking Dodd and Fair Park out of consideration for closure at this time and to allow those two schools to remain open for the 2002-2003 school year. Mr. Kurrus stated that allowing schools to remain open should not require any official Board action, and unless there was some interest by other Board members to take a formal vote, then the meeting would proceed with the understanding that these two schools are not a part of the recommendation for closure at this time.

The Superintendent continued discussion of the recommended closure of the Residential Charter Program. Current enrollment in the Charter School was eighty-one (81) students as of January 14, 2002. Dr. James recommended that the Board revoke the Charter for this facility. Of the 81 enrolled, 33 are fifth graders and would be moving into a middle school in 2002-03. Forty-eight students are currently enrolled in first through fourth grades and the recommendation was to place these students back at their attendance zone / area school.

Mr. Berkley made a motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to close the Charter School Program housed at Badgett Elementary School. Mr. Rose seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Dr. James proceeded with the recommendation to close Badgett Elementary School at the close of the current, 2001-02 academic year. He stressed the importance of making the decision to close the facility as soon as possible so that next year's registration and assignment process can be achieved smoothly and effectively.

Dr. Mitchell noted that she was concerned that 78% of the students who currently attend Badgett Elementary School are transported there, negating concerns about it being strictly a "neighborhood" school. A number of the students who live in that area are currently bused out of the attendance zone, and only 45 of the students who attend there actually "walk" to school.

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Mr. Kurrus noted that he had recently driven from Badgett to Rockefeller, to Carver, and to Washington Elementary Schools to see for himself if there was a significant concern regarding transportation.

Dr. Daugherty spoke in opposition to the closing of Badgett Elementary School. Regarding Dr. Mitchell's comments on current busing statistics, he noted there must be something significant to attract parents and students to that school, he noted the strong family support for the school, and stated there would be a burden of busing on these children. He also noted consideration for the neighborhood if the building is allowed to remain empty and decay.

Mr. Rose asked the Board to emphasize that students who are reassigned from Badgett to another LRSD School will continue to be cared for in their new school and that we have the best interest of the children at heart.

Ms. Magness made a motion to uphold the Superintendent's recommendation to close Badgett Elementary School for the 2002-03 school year. After brief discussion, and at the instruction of the District's Counsel, Ms. Magness offered an amendment to the motion to ensure clarity in the motion's intent, that the motion include the following excerpt from the **Revised Desegregation and Education Plan, Section 3.7, Modification Standard:**

The LRSD Board of Directors determines:

- (i) that the educational benefits expected from such action substantially outweigh any adverse effects of the proposed action,*
- (ii) that no practical alternative to the proposed action exists which will accomplish the educational objective, and*
- (iii) that to the extent practicable measures will be initiated to counteract any adverse affects of the proposed action.*

Ms. Strickland seconded the amendment to the motion, and after brief discussion, the original motion was reworded to state specifically that Badgett Elementary School would be closed at the end of the 2001-02 school year. Ms. Strickland seconded the original motion as amended. A roll call vote was taken; the **motion carried 6-1**, with Dr. Daugherty casting the no vote.

IV. **ADJOURNMENT**

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Berkley noted that the Board would be required to look at additional budgetary reductions. He asked the Superintendent to discuss options for accomplishing this. Dr. James stated that a series of budget sessions would be held in conjunction with the regular agenda sessions. He noted that the meetings are held in public and are in the format of study sessions for the Board's deliberation.

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There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Rose, seconded by Ms. Magness.

APPROVED: 01-24-02

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