



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

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**  
**May 27, 2014**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held a Special Board Meeting on Tuesday, May 27, 2014, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. The meeting was convened immediately following a facilities worksession. President Greg Adams presided.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Greg Adams  
Norma Johnson  
C. E. McAdoo  
Jody Carreiro  
Dianne Curry  
Leslie Fiskien

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Tara Shephard

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Dexter Suggs, Superintendent of Schools  
Lisa Muldrew, Recorder of Minutes  
Stephanie Branton, Court Reporter

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

Mr. Adams called the meeting to order at 8:20 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call; Ms. Shephard was absent.

**II. PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

The meeting was called for the purpose of holding an employee hearing.

**III. ACTION AGENDA**

**A. Employee Hearings**

The hearing was requested by employee <KD> in response to a letter from the LRSD to non-renew her contract. Attorney John Walker represented <the employee> and expressed his intent for the hearing to be closed. The purpose of the hearing was to appeal the nonrenewal of <the employee's> contract for the 2014-15 school year.

Attorney Chris Heller represented the LRSD. He stated that <the employee> was hired as a result of a court order which required monitoring of desegregation programs during the desegregation litigation. Since the district is no longer under a desegregation order, the position is no longer critical or necessary. The letter of non-renewal was based on the elimination of that position due to budget restraints.

Attorney Terrence Cain assisted Mr. Walker, and stated this hearing was not in compliance with the Public Employee Fair Dismissal Act. This hearing is the second attempt to hold a hearing for <the employee>. He contended the first attempt was scheduled past the 10 day time limit for holding a hearing and any result of that hearing would have been void.

Mr. Heller responded to Mr. Cain's statement regarding the non-renewal notice and notification to <the employee>. The parties had received notification of the cancellation of the hearing previously scheduled; he referenced a 1998 court case, and agreed to send that court finding to Mr. Walker by email. Substantial compliance is the standard of operation under the Public Hearing Fair Dismissal Act. This hearing was scheduled at the earliest opportunity and he doesn't believe the District is in violation of the law.

Mr. Walker made a statement regarding other positions which are being eliminated, including Reading Recovery teachers and four other administrators. He noted the individuals who had not yet received job reassignments were women. He continued discussing other factors related to the desegregation case, and stated <the employee> was being singled out for termination.

Mr. Heller commented on the district's *Covenant for the Future* as the basis for the decisions being made by Dr. Suggs. The Covenant promised the district would continue to operate without discrimination whether or not the courts were involved. There is no requirement to retain <the employee> to monitor the district's compliance with court orders.

Mr. Heller asked Dr. Suggs to explain his decision and rationale for revising the district's organizational chart. As Superintendent of Schools, it is Dr. Suggs' intent to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the District's administration. He found the district to be "top heavy," and in some areas redundant. As a result, he required each employee to complete a job profile to determine where there was room to combine positions to become more effective and cost-efficient. This process began as soon as he accepted the position of superintendent. It was noted that he had asked <the employee> to complete a job profile and she had never responded. There is no job profile for the Director of PRE included within the file of other positions collected.

In addition, Dr. Suggs reviewed the district's overall budget alignment, as well as the job descriptions, profiles, position justification forms, and organizational charts. This information was reviewed and discussed in Cabinet meetings, and as a result of those discussions, <the employee's> position was labeled as "nonessential."

Mr. Walker questioned Dr. Suggs regarding the decision to eliminate <the employee's> position. Dr. Suggs responded by saying the position held by <the employee> was eliminated due to the budgetary factors. During questioning Mr. Heller clarified that <the employee> was being recommended for non-renewal, not termination.

Mr. Walker's questioning continued regarding the elimination of Reading Recovery and assignment of reading teachers, the elimination of other positions in the PRE department, the reassignment of other individuals who were previously in the PRE department, budget documents which had been requested under an FOIA request, and the desegregation order from Judge Wilson. Mr. Walker also questioned Dr. Suggs regarding a document which was created by Mr. Burton prior to July 1, which outlined the realignment of staff in the PRE Department.

<The employee> was called to briefly discuss reports she had written and submitted as part of her responsibility to monitor the middle schools.

Dennis Glasgow was called and questioned by Mr. Walker regarding his responsibilities as the Director of Accountability. He was asked about his interactions with the supervision and evaluation of <the employee>.

Mr. Heller clarified the responses to Mr. Glasgow's questions regarding the state requirements for certified personnel to be responsible for the functions of testing director. He also discussed the monitoring of schools in academic distress and assistance from the administration in conducting the monitoring.

<The employee> was questioned regarding her educational background and employment with the LRSD. She also responded to questions regarding her previous responsibilities monitoring the desegregation programs

Responding to questions from Mr. Walker, <the employee> stated she never received the job profile form to complete. She believed Dr. Suggs had intentions of firing her even before he was in the District as the full time Superintendent. The budget for the PRE department was eliminated from the beginning of the year. She was not given responsibility for completing any of the evaluations she previously completed for the courts. She hasn't attended any of the curriculum and instruction meetings, and is unaware of information provided to other employees.

Mr. Heller questioned <the employee> about her responsibilities in completing the evaluations. Two of the reports Mr. Heller provided for her to review were completed by outside evaluators, Dr. Catterall and Dr. Ross. Dr. John Kirkendall completed the most recent middle school evaluations. It was also noted that without the requirements from the court for program monitoring, the functions of the PRE Department were no longer necessary in assessing compliance with court orders.

In closing, Mr. Heller stated to the Board that Dr. Suggs was acting within the expectations of a Superintendent to realign staff to become more efficient and fiscally responsible. In addition, the recommendation to reassign or eliminate positions is within his right as a Superintendent.

Mr. Walker closed by asking the board to consider the recommendation to non-renew <the employee> and to allow her to continue in her role as an evaluator of the district's schools and programs. He said there was no justification for upholding the superintendent's recommendation other than "rubber stamping" anything Dr. Suggs recommends.

Mr. Walker further asked the board to reconvene on another night so that all board members can participate in the deliberation.

The board recessed for deliberation at 11:47 p.m. and returned at 12:24 a.m. Mr. Adams reported no action had been taken. One of the board members was unable to stay until the end of deliberations; therefore the board agreed by consensus to finish deliberations after the next board meeting on May 29.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 12:24 A.M.

APPROVED: 06-26-14

Originals Signed by:  
Greg Adams, President  
C. E. McAdoo, Secretary

## **NOTE:**

Deliberations in this employee hearing resumed on Thursday, May 29, 2014, after the regular board meeting. An executive session was convened at 8:49 p.m.

Ms. Fisken made a motion to uphold the Superintendent's recommendation. Mr. Carreiro seconded. The motion **failed, 3-2-1**, with . . . Ms. Fisken, Mr. Carreiro and Mr. Adams voting in favor. Mr. McAdoo and Ms. Curry voted no, and Ms. Johnson abstained.