



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

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
August 28, 2014

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 28, 2014, in the boardroom of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Greg Adams presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Greg Adams
Norma Johnson
C. E. McAdoo
Jody Carreiro
Dianne Curry
Leslie Fisker
Tara Shephard

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Dexter Suggs, Superintendent of Schools
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of the Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Mr. Adams called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call; Ms. Curry arrived at 5:36 p.m. The teacher ex-officio, Guadalupe Martinez from Baseline Elementary School, and the student representative, Mykala Sinclair from Parkview Magnet High School were also present.

The student ex officio was asked to read the Cultural Imperatives of the LRSD. The teacher ex officio read the Board Goals.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Remarks from Citizens

Toni Green, representing the Institute for Community Rehabilitation, addressed the board on an upcoming project, "*1,000 Shoes for Kids*." The main event will occur on October 11th at Philander Smith College. Partnerships have been established with Philander Smith, the Arkansas Department of Health, Arkansas Minority Health Commission, Baptist Health, and others. The Omega fraternity is supporting the event with volunteers. Ms. Green asked if donations could be taken at each LRSD school.

John Walker addressed the board regarding the right of citizens to speak before the board without exceptions to the topic presented, and their right to receive an answer. He stated there wasn't any way to restrict speech, and if he wanted to speak about the superintendent, he should be able to do that. He called the board's goals "fake." He commented on the board's vote to retain reading recovery, but stated funding wasn't provided to fund reading recovery teachers except through the school's auxiliary funds. Mr. Bolden ceded his time to Mr. Walker, and he continued by addressing the topic of closing schools, saying the focus should be instead on providing an education to the students who attend the schools the board is considering for closure. He called Hamilton Learning Academy a "stepping stone to prison," and called the LRSD "dysfunctional."

Carla Coleman spoke on behalf of the McClellan High school community. They have asked the board not to move McClellan, but to rebuild the school on the current site. She encouraged the board to focus on educational facilities, and not on a sports complex.

Troy Laha also addressed the board regarding the Cloverdale Middle School and McClellan High School community. He stated his children attended both Cloverdale and McClellan, and he questioned the thinking behind moving Cloverdale to the McClellan site. He asserted the community would continue the downslide if the schools were removed from the area.

Pam Adcock, president of SW United for Progress, also expressed concern about moving McClellan High School. The community members want McClellan and Cloverdale to stay where they are currently located. She stated the teachers need support to provide a good education for the children; and if given the materials they need the students will learn.

B. Donations of Property

Mykala Sinclair, student ex officio, read the list of recent donations to the district. Ms. Curry made a motion to accept the donations; Ms. Fiskens seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. The donations are listed in the following chart:

DONATIONS

| SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT | ITEM | DONOR |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Central High School | \$10,000 cash to the Sunshine Committee | Christopher and Julie Keller |
| Chicot Primary School | Donation of 5 ipads with otterbox cases, 1 Apple Macbook with Magic mouse, wireless keyboard and case with a total value of \$4966.64 | ADE |

C. Little Rock PTA Council

Greta Freeman, PTA Council president, reported on attendance at this year's summer PTA leadership training. She reminded the board of the ongoing campaign for increasing PTA membership; and the theme of this year's efforts, "Be-A-PIG" or Be a PTA in good standing. Additional training will be held in October at J.A. Fair High School. Each unit should have filed their audit by August 10th, and if not, Mr. Becker and Ms. Hopson are available to assist.

D. Little Rock Education Association

Ms. Kohler reported on an article she had read over the summer from the July 21, 2014 issue of the *New Yorker*, and she provided copies for the board members' review. The article was about a teacher who had made a choice to falsify test results, and was caught. The story detailed his decision, and the focus currently not on teaching and learning, but on testing. He admitted his decision wasn't ethical, and he has suffered the consequences, along with his entire school and district. It's important for teachers and administrators to "talk about our shared responsibility." She thanked Dr. Suggs for removing Pearson from curriculum development in the district, and expressed appreciation on behalf of high school teachers for removing the SOAR testing.

Ms. Kohler questioned the board about taking action on important issues during special board meetings. She expressed the importance of listening to the community prior to taking votes that affect the education of the children, and including all stakeholders in any decision to hold a millage campaign or make decisions on the recommendations from the facilities study. All topics of this nature should involve input from the community and the teacher's organization, and be discussed openly and freely.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Shephard thanked the audience, and remarked on the successful start of school. She thanked the employees and the parents who work in the schools to prepare for the students' return. She said her position on the board sometimes makes her "feel like a sitting duck," but she assured the audience she thoroughly studies information provided before she makes a decision and before she votes on any issue. "If we continue to do business as we always have, how can we move forward?"

Mr. Carreiro also commented on the good start to the school year. He expressed excitement over the good start of school and the feedback from those whose children returned to the classroom. He thanked Ms. Koehler for the article she provided. He also provided a brief update on the Arkansas House and Senate task force on insurance. They are studying the pros and cons of combining state and school health insurance benefits. He expressed agreement with the comments from Ms. Koehler, that keeping "cooler heads" and working together will get us further.

Ms. Johnson welcomed the audience, and stated she had been involved in the District for the past 15 years. She was a dedicated parent and volunteer in the schools where her child attended, and she remains committed to support all of the students in all of the schools. When discussing the decisions the Board makes, she noted everyone won't be happy; however, the board has to make decisions based on the best information, especially on the district's investments and facilities. She encouraged everyone to do their homework, ask questions, request information, read, study, and make your own decisions. "Are you doing what you can do to help or are you focusing strictly on the negative?"

Mr. McAdoo expressed excitement about the start of school, and reported plans to visit all the schools in his zone. He then read an excerpt from *Black Boy* by author Richard Wright. He encouraged everyone to have self-awareness, and to remember that not every decision is going to be what everyone wants.

Ms. Fiskien welcomed everyone back to school, and thanked the parents and school employees for their part in getting the doors open on the first day.

Ms. Curry welcomed the audience. She spoke about some of the challenges facing the District and stated she wanted to make sure to take the things that are successful and build upon them through collaboration. She thanked the speakers and those in the community who speak up about their concerns. It is all about improving conditions for the students in the district, and making sure everyone is at the table when the decisions are made.

Student ex officio Mykala Sinclair thanked Ms. Koehler for the article, and agreed that too much focus is placed on testing and not enough focus on instruction and learning.

Teacher ex officio Ms. Martinez encouraged working together to get all children reading on grade level. She asked listeners not to point fingers, but to work together as a community.

Mr. Adams congratulated the fathers who participated in the Dads Take Your Kids to School FB activity. The top winner received 800+ votes, and the top 50 Dads will have lunch with the superintendent.

Mr. Adams briefly spoke about changes in State school financing rules over the past four years and the LRSD's current budgetary situation. "We know we have to earn the trust of our community . . ." by working well together, focusing on a common vision, and inspiring confidence from the public. If we work together, meet the differences with courage, we can make a difference and make the changes that need to be made to move this district forward. "It is not the critic who counts . . . credit belongs to those who are actually in the arena."

B. Update: Forest Heights STEM Academy and Geyer Springs Gifted and Talented Academy

Dr. Mitchell reported on the opening of Forest Heights STEM Academy and the work that took place over the summer to prepare. She stated that they were encouraged by the transformation of the schools, and were looking forward to a remarkable year, working together to ensure students achieve success. Curriculum training was completed over the summer. Currently, Geyer Springs has 211 students; and at Forest Heights, 688 students are enrolled.

Mr. Bailey was asked to report on the costs involved in the conversion of Geyer Springs and Forest Heights.

C. Update: Reading Initiative

Sabrina Stout provided information on the district's reading initiative. The intent is to ensure we meet the needs of all elementary students by assessing their reading levels and customizing their instruction. Community involvement of reading tutors, increasing

parental involvement, and assessing the needs of families is a major component. She noted the Rockefeller Foundation is working to identify additional community partners in reading. There is a reading teacher in every elementary school and reading facilitators in identified schools. Progress reports will be provided after the necessary time to assess progress.

D. Act 1280 Digital Learning Act of 2013

Mr. Glasgow and Karl Romaine reported on the requirements of Act 1280 of 2013. The law is in effect now, beginning with current ninth grade students. Under the requirements of the law, all districts will have to offer at least one on-line course before a student can graduate from high school. Mr. Glasgow reported the goal was to have enough courses available on line to offer services to students outside the LRSD.

Currently several projects are being implemented with courses in social studies, civics and economics. They are investigating a fine arts course, and are working with the ESL department to create a distance learning class with students off campus.

E. Elementary Division Summer Programs Update

At the agenda meeting, Dr. Mitchell, Shoutelle Richardson, Karen Broadnax, and Sabrina Stout provided an overview of the summer programs. *Camp Can Do*, held this year at Bale, provided reading interventions for ESL students. The City of Little Rock summer programs worked with LRSD students in academic support, and UALR held a program at Booker Magnet. A full report was included as an attachment to the agenda.

F. Secondary Summer Programs Update

Dr. Whitehorn provided a brief overview of middle school summer programs, Mr. Burton responded to questions regarding the high school credit recovery programs. Reports were attached to the agenda.

G. Update: Facilities Review – Fanning Howey

The monthly review was presented at the agenda meeting on August 14th. At the August 28th meeting, the Board reordered the agenda to allow the review of the Fanning Howey Facilities Master Plan. Action will be reported as the item was presented in the agenda.

V. CONSENT ITEMS

There were no objections to the consent agenda, and it was **approved** as presented.

A. Minutes

Minutes from meetings held on July 22nd, July 24th and August 14th were presented for review. They were approved with no objections.

B. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's monthly report was removed from the consent agenda to allow for discussion. After Mr. Becker responded to questions, Mr. McAdoo moved to approve the auditor's report. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. ADMINISTRATION

A. Establishment of Millage Campaign Steering Committee

A proposal for the establishment of a millage campaign committee was provided as a part of the Board's agenda. The committee would include community members from each election zone, LREA and PTA representatives. Ms. Curry moved to approve the establishment of a steering committee for the millage campaign. It was specified there would be the addition of LREA and PTA leadership. Mr. McAdoo seconded the motion. Each board member is to submit the names of two individuals from their zone along with the name of an alternate. The motion **carried unanimously**.

VII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Contract with The Learning Institute (TLI) for Interim Assessments

Mr. Glasgow was present at the agenda meeting to respond to questions regarding the contract to be approved for District use of SOAR assessments.

The Learning Institute (TLI) has provided interim assessments for teacher use in assessing student progress in math and literacy. For 2014-15 the district will only use TLI at the elementary level. The superintendent recommended approval. Mr. McAdoo moved to approve the contract presented; Ms. Shephard seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Contract with Pearson for Professional Development for Principals and Instructional Facilitators

Mr. Glasgow reported at the agenda meeting regarding the decision to reduce the amount of the contract with Pearson Education Services, based on an amendment to the ESEA Flexibility Plan which was recently approved by the U. S. Department of Education. The new rules allow the use of locally-hired school improvement specialists instead of an external provider. The recommendation presented included contracting with Pearson to develop training in lesson planning, rituals and routines, and rigor and relevance.

The superintendent recommended approval of the contract presented. Mr. Carreiro moved to approve the recommendation; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. It **carried unanimously**.

VII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. In addition, a listing of appointments to positions of assistant principals was attached.

The assistant principals appointed were:

- Morgan Ealy, Washington Magnet School
- Shana Loring, Dunbar Magnet Middle School
- Jimmy Smith, Henderson Middle School
- Laura Strickland, McClellan High School
- Alicia Troutman, Mabelvale Middle School

Ms. Fiskien moved to approve the changes as submitted. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

VII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Budget Update

Mr. Bailey provided a brief budget update and an overview of the fund balance report. The Board was reminded of the worksession scheduled for next Friday evening to go into further detail with the budget. Part of the budgeting process includes cleaning up the personnel files to ensure all budget function codes are accurate. Title allocations are being distributed to the schools at this time.

The annual budget will be presented for the board's review and approval in September.

B. Minority and Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) Monthly Report

The monthly MWBE reports were included in the Board's agenda.

C. Monthly Financial Statements

The monthly budget reports were attached to the agenda.

D. Acceptance of LRSD Facilities Master Plan

The agenda was reordered, and action was taken on this issue earlier in the meeting.

Troy Glover addressed the board and presented the plan overview. A summary document was provided as part of the board's agenda. The process used to develop the recommendations was explained in detail, and the recommendations presented were categorized. Carl Baxmeyer reviewed the recommendations in detail and responded to the Board's questions.

Ms. Fiskien made a motion to accept the report with the understanding modifications may be necessary. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. Mr. Carreiro, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Adams spoke in favor of the motion. It **carried unanimously**.

VIII. CLOSING REMARKS

A. Announcements & Reminders

At the agenda meeting, listeners were reminded of the first day of school and the Dads take your Child to School Facebook contest. The top 50 vote-getters will have lunch with the superintendent and are eligible to win prizes.

The Districtwide Convocation video is running on LRSD tv. Calendars were distributed at the schools with registration information, and all upcoming dates are included.

The Board was reminded about their worksession, scheduled on Friday, August 22, starting at 3:30 p.m. Topics on the agenda include the budget and academic distress strategies. Angelia Tolbert with the Community Dispute Resolution Center will serve as the facilitator.

B. Announcements

At the Board meeting, Ms. Smith announced the grandparents contest beginning on Monday, September 8th. Grandparents who have lunch with their children on Grandparents Day are to submit photos to the FB page to be eligible for lunch with the Superintendent. Prizes will be awarded to all participants. An upcoming contest is being planned for Moms in February.

The United Way kick-off breakfast is set for Friday, September 12th, 7:30 a.m. at Embassy Suites Hotel.

Open House for middle schools is September 18th, and high school open house is September 23rd.

The Race for the Cure this year is October 4th, and a Three Miles of Men team is forming. Registration is on line with the LRSD team.

C. Executive Session

The board convened an executive session for a personnel matter at 9:09 p.m. They returned at 10:49 p.m. and reported no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:49 p.m.

APPROVED: 09-25-14

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