



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

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
October 27, 2011

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 27, 2011, in the boardroom of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Melanie Fox presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Melanie Fox
Jody Carreiro
Michael Nellums
Greg Adams
Charles Armstrong
Dianne Curry
Norma Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Morris Holmes, Superintendent of Schools
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Ms. Fox called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. All members of the board were present at roll call. **Faith Speight**, the teacher ex-officio from **Terry Elementary School** was present. The student ex-officio from **McClellan High School** did not attend.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Superintendent's Remarks

Dr. Holmes reminded parents that report cards went home to parents this week. He encouraged them to take the information seriously and to use this opportunity to have a discussion with their children about academic performance and school attendance.

At the agenda meeting, Dr. Holmes introduced Stephen Jones, student at Parkview Magnet High School and his principal, Dr. Dexter Booth. Stephen recently won the Achievement Award in Writing from the National Council of Teachers of English. Only 520 students in the United States were selected this year.

Margo Bushmaier, coordinator of health services, was recognized for receiving the President's Award for outstanding leadership and support of school nursing by the National Association of School Nurses. Ms. Bushmaier serves on the Board and on the executive committee of the Association.

Officer Willie Davis of the Little Rock Police Department, Coordinator of the Our Kids (OK) Program, presented a plaque recognizing Melanie Fox and the Fox Family Foundation for their contribution and support of the OK program.

Faith Speight, teacher ex officio for the month of October, was presented a citation in recognition of her service.

B. Partners in Education

Ms. Milam reminded the board and audience of the upcoming Jane Mendel Reading Day on November 15th. The ViPS office is still accepting volunteer readers for this annual event.

At the agenda meeting on October 13, Ms. Milam presented one new partnership for the board's consideration and approval.

Arkansas Baptist College, represented by *Ms. Arma Hart*, in partnership with **Martin L. King Elementary School**, represented by *Principal Tyrone Harris*

Ms Curry moved to approve the partnership; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion. It **carried unanimously**.

C. Remarks from Citizens

None.

D. Donations of Property

The board was asked to approve the receipt of recent donations to the district. The teacher ex officio, Faith Speight, read the list of donations. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to accept the donations; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Dodd Elementary School	School supplies and food, valued at \$250.00 for annual Back to School Bash	Dodd Elementary PTA Kimia Green, President
	School supplies valued at approximately \$500.00	Employees of Dassault Falcon Jet
	School Supplies valued at approximately \$500.00	Transamerica Worksite Marketing
Fair Park ECC	\$10,000 cash to be used to purchase equipment	The Roy & Christine Sturgis Charitable and Educational Trust

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
LRSD Health Services Department	65 portion plates, valued at \$260.00	Portion Size Matters Deane Peck, MS, RD, LDN
	Equipment and supplies, valued at \$5,000.00 for LRSD health rooms	JALR Children International, Stacy Gravett, Health Services Manager
LRSD Instructional Technology Center	Dell printer and three Fujitsu Netbooks valued at \$1,000	Dr. Archie Hearne, Hearne Family Clinic
Wilson Elementary School	Supplies valued at approximately \$300.00	Mr. Andy Gallawa, Manager, Target
	Supplies valued at approximately \$150.00	Ladies Auxiliary, VFW Post 1316

E. Little Rock PTA Council

No presentation or remarks.

F. Little Rock Education Association

Cathy Kohler welcomed Norma Johnson as the newest board member. She thanked Dr. Holmes for comments made at a public forum earlier in the week, and stated district employees and others in the community are very supportive and thankful that he took a public stand for public schools and public school employees.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Johnson agreed with comments made by Ms. Kohler. She encouraged board members and parents to step up and step out to take a stand for public education.

Mr. Armstrong reported on attending the forum where excerpts from “Waiting for Superman” were shown. He reported that he had been asked many questions about the district’s strategic plan and he asked Dr. Holmes to briefly explain the progress being made toward meeting the goals of the plan.

Dr. Holmes provided a brief overview and stated by the year 2015 the goals of the plan will have been met or exceeded. He admitted the goals are rigorous and set a high target for academic performance, participation and school attendance. However, the plans being implemented will allow the district to make significant and orderly progress.

Mr. Carreiro reported he had attended some of the EAST Night Out programs this week. He was excited by the presentations and was encouraged by the participation in the programs at the schools.

Mr. Nellums had visited J. A. Fair with Dr. Holmes. He had also attended the public forum on public education previously mentioned. He thanked Dr. Holmes for the comments made, and for taking a stand for public education.

Mr. Adams' comments reflected on his first year as a board member. He was most impressed with the level of earnestness in attempts to do a good job at making positive change and progress. He stated belief in the benefits of relationships being built between and among himself and other members of the board and between the board and Dr. Holmes.

Ms. Curry reported on her visit to Cloverdale Aerospace Middle School during a performance by the school spirit groups. She was happy to see the students excited to be there and encouraged by the number of families participating in school activities. She had also attended a PTA meeting at Otter Creek Elementary and had heard their concerns and comments.

Ms. Fox reminded the audience about the upcoming ViPS reading day on Tuesday November 15. She encouraged everyone to sign up to read to a class.

Mr. Adams closed the comments by thanking the current board officers for their term of service, noting the election of officers on the agenda for later in the meeting.

B. PRE Quarterly Report – October 2011

The Quarterly Report, prepared by the office of Planning, Research and Evaluation was provided as part of the board's agenda. The report provided the evaluation designs for four program evaluations to be completed by July 2012. The evaluations will be conducted on Special Education, English as a Second Language, Gifted and Talented, and K-3 Literacy and Mathematics. Dr. DeJarnette was present and briefly reviewed the report and responded to questions.

C. Quarterly Progress Report on District Goals and Initiatives

The district's strategic plan established goals for a five year period, 2010-2015. Of those goals, the board selected five priority goals for the current school year. A report on the progress toward meeting those goals was compiled and presented for the board's review. Dennis Glasgow provided a brief review and discussed the highlights revealed by the data.

D. Technology Update

At the agenda meeting, Mr. Glasgow provided statistical information on the number and type of computers and other technological devices in the schools. It was noted that wireless access is being installed in all schools, and students are provided ample opportunity to access technology in research and classroom experiences.

At the October 27th meeting, Barbara Williams provided an overview of the district's Instructional Technology structure and services. She demonstrated by Powerpoint Presentation and board members participated in an exercise using handheld Smart devices. These devices are used to test students on lessons being taught in the classroom.

Ms. Williams reported the district's required technology plan is due to the ADE in March, and will be presented to the board for approval in January.

E. Update: 2011-2012 October 1 Enrollment Report

The 2011-2012 comparison of student enrollment was provided in the board's agenda. Dr. Holmes reviewed the data and responded to questions from the board. He discussed the trend for increases in enrollment at the elementary level and the loss of students at the secondary level.

F. Update: Attendance and Truancy

At the agenda meeting, Dr. Fields reviewed information regarding the proposed intervention strategies for reducing absenteeism and truancy in the schools. Once the district's Community Truancy Board completes their recommendations for implementation districtwide, the Board will be asked to approve them as an amendment to the handbook, not as a change to district policy.

G. Update: Status of Construction Projects

Wayne Adams provided a project list of current and ongoing school construction and renovation projects. He briefly reviewed the information provided and responded to questions from the board.

Mr. Bailey reviewed the budgetary components of construction projects and how funds are being allocated for required and scheduled improvements.

H. Informational / Discussion: City of LR Land Bank Review

Mr. Hartz reported briefly on the City of Little Rock initiative to provide an opportunity for school district employees to purchase land which has been abandoned or granted to the city. The city is still in the discussion phase of the project, with housing authority and other taxing entities involved in the process. They will also include city employees and others who work for other public institutions in addition to school district employees. Additional information will be provided after the city's November meeting.

I. Informational / Discussion: Real Deal in The Rock Partnership

At the agenda meeting on October 13th, Mr. Whitehorn provided information on *Real Deal in the Rock*, the annual basketball tournament which takes place at various city and school district facilities across Little Rock. Johnny Johnson was also present and at Mr. Nellums' request, a meeting will be scheduled to further investigate establishing a formal partnership with the organization.

J. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker wasn't present; however, his monthly report was printed in the agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Election of Officers

Ms. Fox opened the floor for nominations for the office of board secretary. Mr. Carreiro nominated Mr. Armstrong. There were no other nominations, and Mr. Nellums made a motion to close the nominations and to elect Mr. Armstrong by acclamation. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Ms. Fox opened the floor for nominations for the office of vice president. Ms. Curry nominated Mr. Nellums. Mr. Adams nominated Ms. Curry; however Ms. Curry declined the nomination. There were no other nominations, and Mr. Armstrong moved to close the nominations and to elect Mr. Nellums by acclamation. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried 4-3**, with Ms. Fox, Mr. Carreiro and Mr. Adams voting no.

Ms. Fox opened the floor for nominations for the office of president. Ms. Curry nominated Mr. Carreiro. There were no other nominations, and Ms. Curry moved to close the nominations and to elect Mr. Carreiro by acclamation. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Mr. Carreiro accepted the gavel and thanked Ms. Fox for her service as board president. In addition, Ms. Curry thanked Ms. Fox for her consensus building efforts during her term in office.

B. Board Disbursing Officers

Arkansas Code 6-13-618 requires the Board to designate one member to serve as the primary disbursing officer and one member to serve as the alternate disbursing officer. These disbursing officers are most often the president and vice president of the board, and a resolution supporting that designation was submitted for the board's approval. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the resolution naming the president and vice president as the district's board disbursing officers. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on September 22, 2011, and from a special meeting held on September 29, 2011, were presented for review and approval. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

The board took a brief recess at 7:20 p.m. They returned at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Nellums did not return after the break.

V. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW

A. Board Policy GCQ Reduction in Force – First Reading

The current personnel policies do not include a board approved process for reduction in force for non-certified employees. These are employees who are not covered under a negotiated agreement. Proposed Policy GCQ would provide the guidance for reduction in force, if necessary. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve policy GCQ on first reading; Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. SCHOOL SERVICES

A. Budget for Elementary After School Tutoring

At the agenda meeting, Dr. Mitchell provided an overview of the proposal for providing after school tutoring at all elementary schools. Funding has been reallocated from other sources to ensure high quality after school programs which started in most schools on October 1 with approximately 2,400 students enrolled and participating.

Dr. Mitchell was also present at the board meeting and presented the request from the administration to approve the necessary reallocation of funding. Ms. Fox moved to approve the budgetary request. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

VII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Library Media Specialist Evaluation Instrument

A Professional Library Media Specialist evaluation system was presented for the board's review and approval. Barbara Williams was present to respond to questions. Ms. Williams discussed the need for an evaluation system and instrument to assess the actual responsibilities of library media specialists. Ms. Fox moved to approve the instrument provided. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were provided in the board's agenda. Ms. Fox moved to approve the changes; Mr. Adams seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Budget Update

Mr. Bailey was present, but had no information to report.

B. Financial Reports

July through September financial reports were provided in the board agenda. There was no discussion, and no action was taken.

IX. CLOSING REMARKS

Ms. Fox again reminded the audience of ViPS reading day, and encouraged them to call the ViPS office to sign up to read.

It was announced that the presentation of the district's 2010-11 annual report would be at the November 10 agenda meeting.

X. HEARINGS / STUDENT DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS*

Dr. Debbie Price reviewed student disciplinary information which was provided in the board's agenda.

Several students were involved in an incident at Hall High School involving a handgun. In addition, one student was found in possession of a handgun at Forest Heights Middle School. The weapons weren't loaded and weren't used in a threatening manner. They were however in the possession of a student or students, and under board policy and Arkansas law, students are expelled from the district for a full calendar year any time a gun is involved in an incident.

Board members were provided with background information, safety and security investigative information, and witness statements.

Student #1, DS, was immediately enrolled at Covenant keepers after the expulsion recommendation was made at Forest Heights Middle School. Ms. Fox moved to uphold the recommendation for expulsion. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Student #2, EC, was placed at Pinnacle Point hospital immediately after an incident at Hall High School. His parent indicated he would be enrolled at Covenant Keepers Charter School pending the outcome of this hearing. Ms. Fox moved to approve the recommendation for expulsion; Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Student #3, AH, was involved in the same incident as reported above at Hall High School. It was reported the students passed the gun from one to another and were merely looking at the weapon. Ms. Fox moved to approve the recommendation for expulsion; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Student #4, VL, was also involved in the incident as reported above at Hall High School. Students were found to be guilty of passing the weapon from one to another. Ms. Fox moved to uphold the superintendent's recommendation for expulsion. Mr. Adams seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Student #5, DD, also involved in the above described incident, is a special education student. As such, his planning team at Hall met to determine the recommendations and sanctions. He has been receiving homebound services since the incident, and will continue to receive homebound educational services for a full calendar year in lieu of expulsion. Ms. Fox made a motion to uphold the recommendation. Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Dr. Holmes reported he had met with the district's student hearing officers regarding the process used to conduct hearings, especially those involving handguns, to ensure processes and procedures were in place to hear appeals and make recommendations in a timely manner.

The board took a brief recess and returned at 8:30 p.m. to reconvene the hearing for Beverly Garner Harris which started on October 13, 2011.

Mr. Nellums returned to the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

XI. CONTINUATION OF EMPLOYEE HEARING*

Attorney Arkie Bird recalled Mr. Mark Cebulski to complete testimony that began on October 13. He discussed a conversation he held with Mr. Hartz regarding the grievance hearing and provided copies of an email he sent to Mr. Hartz.

<Employee> was asked to review her employment history with the LRSD. She began in 1993, coming to Arkansas from Louisiana. She worked at King Elementary, Mitchell Elementary, Baseline Elementary, Western Hills Elementary, and Washington Elementary Schools. She reported she was supposed to begin the current school year at Roberts Elementary. She was asked to relate specific instances where she had problems dealing with principals and parents of her students.

<Employee> stated belief that the process used to recommend her termination was flawed, and that Scott Morgan, principal at Western Hills, only wanted to fire her because he wasn't able to hire the person he wanted for the position she was assigned at Western Hills.

At Washington Elementary, <employee> stated her classroom was overloaded with students with special needs. When she tried to discuss this with her principal she stated she wasn't taken seriously. She related an incident with a student who was a disciplinary problem, who was at risk of being removed from the parents, and who was ultimately placed at the ALE by the LRSD hearing officer. She stated that she was never written up for any incidents while she worked at Washington.

Attorney Bird reviewed some of the testimony given at the hearing on October 13. <Employee> refuted some of the responses given at that time by parents and students. She denied the accusations that she had pulled any students' hair or otherwise intentionally caused physical pain to any student.

<Employee> discussed the process she used when communicating with parents and stated she was always accessible to parents by phone and written communication.

Mr. Eddings cross examined <employee> regarding her testimony and regarding several communications from parents who had filed formal complaints about her interactions with their children.

Ms. Byrd also questioned <employee> about the allegations against her and the suggestion that something happened at Baseline Elementary school which affected her reputation and had caused the other principals to not want her in their buildings.

Mr. Eddings briefly asked the board to consider the facts presented at the hearing for <employee>. Under the Arkansas Fair Dismissal Act, teachers may be dismissed for just and reasonable cause. He believed that at these two meetings, the administration had demonstrated and presented appropriate evidence for reasonable cause for termination. He stated evidence had shown <employee> had managed to “slip through the cracks” for at least six years, and that the administration had proven a pattern of abusive behavior toward students. He asked the board to uphold the recommendation for termination.

Ms. Byrd asked the board to consider Ms. Garner’s long tenure as a teacher and not to deprive her of her livelihood. She asked them to consider her long career and to note that for many years <employee> had been an excellent teacher.

The board convened a closed session to deliberate at 11:24 p.m. They returned from executive session at 11:50 p.m. and reported no action was taken.

Allegation 1: <Employee> had engaged in inappropriate physical contact with students while teaching at Baseline Elementary School during the 2005-60 school year.

Ms. Fox moved Item 1 was proven; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion. The vote was **unanimous**.

Allegation 2: During the 2009-10 school year, while <employee> was a second grade teacher at Western Hills Elementary School, she continued to engage in conduct which was physically abusive towards students.

Ms. Fox moved Item 2 was proven; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion, and the vote was **unanimous**.

Allegation 3: <Employee> tried to physically remove a parent from her classroom after a verbal confrontation.

Ms. Fox moved Item 3 was not proven; Ms. Curry seconded the motion. The vote was **unanimous**.

Allegation 4: Several parents requested their students be removed from <employee’s> class at Washington Elementary because of her relationship with them and their students. One parent withdrew her child from Washington Elementary and transferred him to another school as a result of those relationships.

Ms. Fox moved item 4 was proven, and Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. The vote was **unanimous**.

Allegation 5: On or about March 2, 2011, <employee> was involved in a verbal conflict with a student in the presence of the rest of the class wherein <employee> called the student and her family “irrelevant.” <Employee> then used the telephone in the classroom to call the Arkansas Department of Human Services to report the student for truancy in the presence of the rest of the class.

Ms. Fox moved item 5 was proven; Mr. Adams seconded the motion. The vote was **unanimous**.

At the conclusion of the hearing, Ms. Fox moved to uphold the superintendent’s recommendation to terminate <employee’s> employment; Mr. Adams seconded the motion and it **carried** **unanimously**.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 11:54 p.m.

APPROVED: 11-17-11

Originals Signed by:
Jody Carreiro, President
Charles Armstrong, Secretary