

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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
December 13, 2007**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 13, 2007, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Katherine Mitchell presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Katherine Mitchell
Charles Armstrong
Melanie Fox
Larry Berkley
Dianne Curry
Robert M. Daugherty
Baker Kurrus

ALSO PRESENT:

Linda Watson, Interim Superintendent
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Dr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call; Dr. Daugherty arrived at 5:45 p.m. Ex officio representatives, Sita Montgomery, teacher at Watson Intermediate School, and Steven Baker, student from McClellan High School were also present.

Dr. Mitchell welcomed members of the audience and asked Dr. Watson to proceed with the citations and commendations.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations

Dr. Watson introduced twenty four new National Board Certified Teachers, bringing the total to eighty four (84) nationally certified teachers in the LRSD. Introduced were:

Hollace Beard-Hunting, Mabelvale Magnet Middle School; **Carolyn Blome**, Gibbs Magnet Elementary; **Cathy Cagle**, J.A. Fair Magnet High School; **Kathleen Church**, Watson Elementary; **Barbara Griggs**, Washington Magnet Elementary; **Susanne Hughes**, Pulaski Heights Middle School; **Michelle Jackson**, Hall High School; **Marilyn James**, Baseline Elementary; **Misty Janski**, Geyer Springs Elementary; **Mary Lawson**, Brady Elementary; **Natasch Lindsey-Acker**, Mann Magnet Middle School; **Esther Luckadue-Jones**, Romine Elementary; **Christine Mignot-Bugeya**, Forest Heights Middle School; **Catherine Morgan**, Gibbs Magnet Elementary; **Amy Moss**, Booker Magnet Elementary; **Judith Murray**, Parkview Magnet High School; **Jennifer Nash**, Terry Elementary; **Jerri Ramsey**, Rockefeller Elementary; **Sondra Strong**, J.A. Fair Magnet High School; **Carol Thompson**, Central High School; **Dora Wallace**, J.A. Fair Magnet High School; **Lapara Washington**, J.A. Fair Magnet High School; **Barbara Williams**, Director of Instructional Technology; **Janice Wolfe**, Booker Magnet Elementary

Annie Mukunyadzi was introduced as one of two Central High School students selected to receive the Achievement Award in Writing from the National Council of Teachers of English. Dr. Watson reported that only eight students in Arkansas received this prestigious award, and that the district's other winner, **Brent Sodman**, was unable to attend the meeting but will be recognized at a future board meeting.

Dr. Dexter Booth, Assistant Principal at Parkview Magnet High School, was recognized for receiving the 2007-08 Administrator of the Year award from the Arkansas Association of Student Councils. He will be formally recognized by this organization at an awards banquet in the spring.

Millie Farlow, Billie Wallace, Amber Sierra and **Principal Dr. Linda Brown** were instrumental in writing the grant application that resulted in Parkview's selection as part of the National Math and Science Initiative through the Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math & Science, Inc. Parkview's selection as one of ten schools in Arkansas to participate was announced at a press conference at the State Capitol on December 11. This program is designed to increase student participation in Pre-AP and AP classes and will provide extensive training for all Pre-AP and AP science, math and English teachers and incentives for students who score a 3 or above on AP Exams.

The ex officio representatives, **Steven L. Baker** and **Sita Montgomery**, were presented with certificates of appreciation for their service during the month of December.

B. Partners in Education – Debbie Milam

Debbie Milam presented new partnerships for the board's review and approval:

Central High School, represented by *Nancy Rousseau* and *Sheila Wright*, partnering with the **Little Rock Zoo**, represented by *Pam Swift* and *Mike Blakley* and with **Ozark Waffles**, whose representative could not be present

Terry Elementary School, represented by *Sharon Anderson* and *Becky Ramsey*, partnering with *Allen Kerr, Marlisa Kerr* and *Lindsey Hart*

Williams Magnet School, represented by *Mary Menking* and *Nancy Morton*, in partnership with **Casa Manana, La Palapa** and **Casa Manana Taqueria**, whose representatives could not be present

Mr. Armstrong moved to accept the new partnerships; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Remarks from Citizens

No one signed up to address the board.

D. Little Rock PTA Council

Bernadette Turner addressed the board, reporting on the PTA Council Meeting at Terry Elementary School. She thanked Tiffany Hoffman for discussing the updated Accelerated Reader database. She reminded the board that the January Council meeting would be held at Dunbar Middle School on Tuesday, January 8, 2008. She encouraged parents of middle and high school students to visit and remain visible in their children's classrooms, noting that their presence in the schools reminds students that they are accountable for their success in school.

Ms. Turner announced the date of the annual Founders Day luncheon - February 12, 2008 at Second Presbyterian Church, Pleasant Valley & Cantrell. Ms. Fox is chairman of the planning committee.

E. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Cathy Kohler addressed the board regarding the difficult and intense process involved in becoming a National Board Certified teacher. She thanked Katherine Wright Knight and Lou Ethel Nauden for their continuing support in working with the candidates who are involved.

In addition, Ms. Kohler discussed planning for the next community conversation, scheduled for Monday, January 28, 2008. Dinner will be served at 5:00 p.m. and the small group discussions and breakout sessions will begin at 6:00 p.m. The NEA is underwriting the cost of the guest speaker, and it will be held at St. Mark Baptist Church.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Fox wished the audience a restful happy holiday, and Mr. Armstrong asked that we remember this as the season for giving and look for ways to help the less fortunate.

Mr. Kurrus stated that he had visited Central High School and he thanked Ms. Rousseau for her dedication to the operations at the school. He was impressed with the behavior of the students and with the cleanliness of the building and grounds. He commended the staff for taking pride in what they do. Mr. Kurrus also reported that he had attended the annual meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, stating that the LRSD will have to engage more of the citizens in our community in order to be successful. He pledged to work to broaden the range and scope of the district to encourage the community to stay engaged.

Ms. Curry reported that she had visited Henderson Middle School and was mentoring a student at Henderson. She issued a challenge to others to participate in programs that get them involved in the middle and high schools.

Dr. Mitchell reported that she had visited Fair Park for their holiday program and that she had attended the Arkansas School Board's Association fall conference. She thanked the city of Little Rock for sponsoring a reception for the district's national merit scholars.

B. Discussion: Superintendent's Position / Establish Timeline and Criteria

Ms. Fox made a motion to have the board president appoint a two-person board committee which would produce and design an outline of options for carrying out a superintendent search. The committee would present these options at the retreat and would seek community input and ideas for the search. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion.

Dr. Daugherty and Mr. Armstrong asked for additional discussion instead of including this as an action item and requested a suspension of the rules to consider the item for action. Dr. Mitchell objected to considering the motion at this time and stated her preference to consider the issue as a full board at the upcoming retreat.

Ms. Fox withdrew her motion, but asked the board to collect information to be used to make decisions regarding a search firm or other details that would be needed to select the next superintendent.

C. Update: Legal Issues

Khayyam Eddings and Chris Heller were present to provide an update on pending legal issues and to respond to questions from the board. Mr. Eddings reported that he had met with John Walker regarding pending employee lawsuits, including the negotiated settlements between the district and Jodie Carter and Jimmy Mosby.

Although the board had previously voted on these agreements, Carter and Mosby had rejected the board's offer. They were now willing to accept the agreement previously agreed to by the board. Mr. Eddings asked the board to reconsider their previous settlement offer and vote to affirm the payment of \$25,000 to Mr. Carter and \$17,500 to Mr. Mosby.

Mr. Berkley made a motion to suspend the rules to reconsider the previous settlement offer and to reorder the agenda to move item **VII. A. Approval of Negotiated Settlement** to this point in the agenda. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

On the Carter & Mosby settlements, Mr. Berkley moved to re-issue the settlement offers previously stipulated. Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

Action on item **VII. A. Approval of Negotiated Settlement** was taken at this point in the agenda, but will be reported in the order published in the agenda.

D. Interventions for Elementary & Secondary Schools

Information was provided in the board's agenda. Dr. Mitchell was present to respond to questions. Additional information will be provided at the board's retreat if there are additional questions or concerns.

E. Proposed West Little Rock School Preliminary Planning

Information was provided in the board's agenda and additional discussion will be presented at the upcoming retreat.

F. Update: Safety & Security Report

Mr. Bobby Jones provided copies of the summary reports as attachments to the agenda.

G. Budget Update

No report was presented.

H. Student Assignment Report

No report was attached to the agenda.

I. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's report was attached to the agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the board meeting held on November 15, 2007, were presented for review and approval. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

V. BOARD POLICY & REGULATIONS REVIEW

A. First Reading: Policy BDGA – Legal Settlements

At the board's request, settlement guidelines were developed and have been reviewed over several months. Once the guidelines were presented for approval the board asked that they be used to develop an official board policy. BDGA incorporates the language included in the less formal guidelines and was presented for review and first reading approval.

Mr. Armstrong moved to accept the recommended policy on first reading; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion.

Mr. Berkley made a motion to amend the motion to include wording within the policy that would require notification of the board, in writing, of the recommendations of the attorneys. Once the policy is established, the board would be notified, in writing, of any settlements authorized by the superintendent prior to executing the settlement agreement. Ms. Curry seconded the amendment. The motion on the amendment **carried 5-0-2**, with Dr. Mitchell and Mr. Armstrong abstaining.

On the motion as amended the vote was **5-1-1**, with Dr. Mitchell abstaining and Mr. Kurrus voting no.

VI. ADMINISTRATION

A. Approval of Negotiated Settlements

The district's attorneys presented a draft settlement agreement for former employee, Laura Gately. Under the terms of the agreement, the trial would be delayed for a one year period. During that year, Ms. Gately would seek another position outside of the LRSD, and if she is successful in finding employment elsewhere, she will dismiss her suit against the LRSD. Mr. Armstrong moved to accept the agreement with Ms. Gately; Ms Curry seconded the motion and it **carried 6-0-1**, with Ms. Fox abstaining.

Attorney Clay Fendley reviewed the settlement agreement in the case of Jalisha Vandiver against the LRSD and the former principal at Hall High School. Ms. Vandiver was recommended for termination, was arrested for terroristic threatening, and ultimately resigned from the district. The agreement negotiated with Ms. Vandiver would pay a full and final settlement in the amount of \$12,500, subject to approval by the trustee in Ms. Vandiver's bankruptcy petition. Although Mr. Fendley expressed confidence that the district would prevail at trial, the cost of going to trial would be more than the recommended \$12,500.

Dr. Daugherty moved to accept the recommended settlement; Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried 6-0-1**, with Dr. Mitchell abstaining.

VII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Approval of New Courses

The administration requested approval of changes to the current course offerings including the addition of three new courses: Voices of Civil Rights: Oral History Research and Public History Projects for High School Students; Latin American Economics; and Asian Studies.

In addition, recommendations were presented to change the number of credits to be earned, the grade level, or changes to the names of courses. These recommendations don't significantly impact the curriculum or the course. Dennis Glasgow was present to respond to questions. Dr. Daugherty moved to approve the recommendations; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Elementary Social Studies Textbook Adoption

The district's social studies textbook committee presented a recommendation for K – 5 social studies textbook adoptions. Copies of these books were available for review by the board, and the administration recommended approval. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to approve the recommendation; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Extended Year Schools

The Planning, Research and Evaluation Department presented information regarding Mabelvale, Stephens, and Woodruff Elementary Schools. These schools operated on a year-round calendar for the past several years, and after analysis of the data and after considering input from parents, faculty, and the campus leadership teams, the administration recommended a return to the standard calendar for the 2008-2009 school year. Mr. Armstrong moved to approve the recommendation; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Extension of CTA Reporting Requirement

The Classroom Teachers Association requested an extension to provide the membership report, which is due annually on or before December 1st. The AEA building sustained water damage and they have been unable to prepare and present their annual membership report in a timely manner. Ms. Curry moved to approve the requested extension; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel matters were printed in the board's agenda. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to accept the personnel changes presented. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

IX. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Donations of Property

The Board was asked to approve the acceptance of recent donations to schools and departments within the District. The donations are listed in the following chart. Ms. Fox read the items listed in the Board's agenda. Dr. Daugherty made a motion to accept the donated items, Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

DONATIONS		
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Brady Elementary School	\$2,750.00 cash to be used for supplies, clothing and other items for the holidays	Anonymous donor on behalf of Ms. Andrea Schinker
Fair Park Early Childhood Center	\$15,000.00 cash to be used to purchase furniture and equipment	Roy & Christine Sturgis Charitable and Educational Trust

B. Monthly Financial Report

The monthly financial reports were printed in the board's agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Kurrus.

APPROVED: 01-24-08

Originals Signed by: -
Katherine P. Mitchell, -President
Melanie Fox, Secretary