

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

MINUTES  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
February 28, 2008

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 28, 2008, 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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

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 5:35 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call; Mr. Kurrus was absent. Ex officio representatives, Connie Jackson, teacher at Williams Elementary School, and Valerie Valdez, student at Hall 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**

Eleven students from Jefferson Elementary were recognized for illustrating and assisting with the publication of a children's book entitled "Domino." The author, Steve Whisnant, art teacher, *Liz Morris*, and principal *Roberta Mannon* were also present. The eleven young artists were: *Gustavo Freitas, Antonio Golston, Lizzie Fair, Wilson Minshall, Jailyn Carmichael, Collin Gardner, Rachel Allen, Alani Mackey, Schederick White, Nathaniel Ji and Symoan Hardy*. Schederick read the book aloud to the audience.

**Annie Abrams, Dennis Burrows, Shari Hill, Joel Johnson and Sanford Tollette** were recognized for their efforts and assistance with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of the integration of Central High School during the September 2007 citywide calendar of events. The group has ties to Bullock Temple AME Church, across the street from Central at the corner of 16th and Park Streets. One of their major efforts during the September anniversary commemoration was to bury a time capsule containing messages of healing and hope for the future. Dennis Burrows accepted the citation on behalf of the group.

**February ex officio representatives to the board were recognized;** student representative, Valarie Valdez from Hall High School, and teacher representative, Connie Jackson from Williams Elementary School.

### **B. Remarks from Citizens**

No citizens signed up to speak.

### **C. Little Rock PTA Council**

Bernadette Turner thanked Melanie Fox for serving as Chair of the Founders' Day Luncheon. She also recognized other members of the committee and announced winners of the annual PTA awards for administrator of the year, Teresa Courtney, and teacher of the year, Nancy Ivey. These awards will be presented at the state PTA meeting in Springdale, Mothers' Day weekend, May 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Turner announced that the March Council meeting, would be held at J. A. Fair on Tuesday, March 11, 11:30 a.m. She encouraged local school units to appoint their nominating committee and slate of officers for next year.

Ms. Turner closed by expressing concern with the recently publicized events of weapons in the schools and violence in the community. She referenced a recent occurrence where students from two high schools fought after school in a neighborhood park and another incident at UALR where a student was shot. She offered her support and the services of the PTA Council in addressing these issues.

### **D. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association**

Cathy Kohler reported that she had just returned from Washington D.C. where she had met with education leaders to discuss the LRSD community conversations. She noted that the partnership between the schools, teachers and community at large will make a difference in the achievement of students. She reported that one of the greatest needs of teachers is help from the administration in enforcing the student rights and responsibilities handbook. She volunteered to partner with the district to provide professional development, which would help teachers with classroom management and enforcement of the rules provided by the handbook.

## **III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **A. Remarks from Board Members**

Ms. Fox responded to statements made by Ms. Turner regarding the recent reports of school related violent activities. She wanted it to be made clear to parents and to students that Senior "skip day" was not and would not be condoned in the district. School principals must enforce the district's policies and students must know that they will be held accountable.

Ms. Fox closed by thanking Scott Morgan and the teachers at Western Hills for hosting the recent Quiz Bowl. She also thanked the students for participating and the volunteer parents for coaching and supporting their children.

Ms. Curry thanked the students who were here from Jefferson Elementary and expressed pride in the work they contributed for the book. She also thanked Ms. Fox and the PTA Council for the successful Founders' Day luncheon. Ms. Curry voiced concern over the recent reports of violence in the schools and community during the past few days. She urged the community to join with the district in resolving some of the problems and to offer special outreach for some of the students who need additional support and assistance.

Mr. Berkley expressed concern over the lack of discipline in some of our schools and the failure to speak out to our students that violence is never a solution to their problems. He stated that it might not be "cool," but that it was important to make a point, loud and clear, that violence isn't the answer.

Dr. Daugherty responded to previous comments regarding the recent outbreaks of violence, particularly the incident where students from two schools were fighting in a city park. He noted that the children were engaged in an argument; however, the argument didn't escalate into a confrontation involving weapons until adults arrived. He echoed Ms. Fox's comments regarding "skip day," and stressed that skipping school for any reason is not condoned. He continued by saying that the district has an obligation to educate children and that we must be responsible for the children while they are on the school campus. However, he also reminded parents that if they are aware that their students aren't in school, they are responsible for enforcing the rules and ensuring safety for their children. He closed by thanking ACORN for presenting him with a community service award.

Mr. Armstrong suggested that forming partnerships with the community would help us to build hope in the children. He stated that by working together, schools, families and community partners, would turn the negatives into positives. He closed by saying, "Teach our children to read and excel in school and they won't want to skip."

Dr. Mitchell thanked the board and audience members for the cards and calls during her recent illness. She thanked Richard Jones, Director of the Adult Education program, for establishing new partnerships with the community. She also recognized Bill Walker for assisting in getting additional resources through Workforce Education to assist with some of the needs of the adult students in the LRSD. They are working with the prison community, establishing partnerships with the Hispanic community, and setting up more programs to teach adults to read.

## **B. Report: Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission**

Walter Nunn, member of the Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission, introduced Carlette Henderson and other members of the RCDC staff. He also introduced Matt Swaim, president of the RCDC Youth Diversity Council, who addressed the board regarding the annual activities of the youth participants. There are student representatives from all high schools in Pulaski County with funding provided by the Arkansas Department of Education. The students promote positive race relations and endorse cultural and ethnic diversity within their schools. Mr. Nunn stated, "When you bridge the divides within a school, you promote understanding and build a better atmosphere for learning." RCDC activities include World Fest, and an annual "Keeping It Real" conference in conjunction with the Martin L. King celebration in January.

### **C. Legal Update**

Khayyam Eddings provided a written summary report and made a brief presentation regarding the legal issues referenced in that report.

Regarding the case styled *Don Williams v. LRSD*; Mr. Eddings recommended offering a settlement in the amount of \$17,500. The settlement provisions would include a stipulation that Mr. Williams would not ask for reinstatement to the LRSD and would be responsible for payment of his own attorney fees. Mr. Eddings requested a suspension of the rules in order to act on Don Williams' case at this time. No settlement documents were provided for inclusion with the agenda, but were to be provided at a later date.

Mr. Armstrong moved to suspend the rules; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Ms. Curry made a motion to accept the settlement proposed in the Don Williams claim as recommended by attorney Eddings. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion. Under the terms of the stipulated agreement, Mr. Williams would receive \$17,500, be responsible for his own attorney fees, and would not seek reemployment with the LRSD. The motion **carried unanimously**.

### **D. Report: Procedures for Responding to FOIA Requests**

Dr. Daugherty requested a report from the attorneys regarding the procedures used for responding to requests for information under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act. Mr. Eddings provided a written report, which was attached to the board's agenda. The process for responding to these requests includes a review by one of the attorneys at the Friday Firm.

Dr. Daugherty specifically requested information regarding the costs associated with these reviews and asked Mr. Eddings to provide a report of the amounts billed over the past three months that were strictly related to responding to FOIA requests.

### **E. Evaluation of the District's Reorganization**

Dr. Keith Nitta, Dr. Ellen Eddings, and Dr. Joseph Howard, independent evaluators with the Clinton School of Public Service, were present to review the findings of a report prepared in response to a request from the board. The full report was attached to the agenda and a PowerPoint presentation detailing the findings of their study was shown. Dr. Nitta responded to questions from the board.

### **F. Report / Discussion – ESL Programs**

Mr. Armstrong requested Information on the district's services to students in schools with a high population of non-English proficient students. The full report was provided in the board's agenda and Dr. Karen Broadnax was present to respond to questions. She agreed that additional support was needed in some of our schools, but that it was an issue of availability of certified Spanish speaking teachers and also one that required an allocation of additional funding. Dr. Watson suggested that this be included in future budget discussions.

### **G. Update / Status Report: Mitchell Property**

Current information was provided as attachments to the board's agenda. The board previously approved an offer from the Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association to purchase Mitchell School. Stuart Mackey, agent with The Hathaway Group, responded to questions from the board regarding a proposal from Dr. George Blevins to change to the terms of the contract and assign rights of purchase to Dr. Blevins. The proposal also requested information regarding insurance proceeds that may be due on the property.

Ms. Fox asked about an offer than had been verbally proposed by the City of Little Rock, and asked the board to wait until March so that additional information could be developed and brought for the board's consideration. She also asked to hear from members of the Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association regarding the proposed changes to the original contract offered by Dr. Blevins.

The amended contract offered \$60,000 for the purchase; the original offer was in the amount of \$200,000. The appraisal was in the amount of \$990,000. The contract will expire on March 12<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. James Floyd, treasurer of the WANA, addressed the board and stated that their board members had voted to support Dr. Blevins in his attempts to purchase the Mitchell building. They had spoken to the city regarding their proposed uses for the Mitchell building, but would prefer to continue to support Dr. Blevins' proposal.

Dr. Blevins pledged personal financial commitment to the Mitchell proposal and reported that he had assured the WANA that he would continue to work with them. He informed the board that he and his wife were in the process of developing an LLC for the future property development.

Dr. Daugherty spoke in support of the proposal submitted by Dr. Blevins; however Ms. Fox and Mr. Berkley spoke in opposition to taking any action at this time. A suspension of the rules would have been required to take action and no such motion was brought before the board.

Board members agreed to call a special meeting prior to the expiration of the offer if the terms of the contract and sale were ready for the board's action. There was general discussion regarding moving the agenda meeting from Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> if requested to do so by the administration.

### **H. Budget Update**

No report.

### **I. Internal Auditors Report**

Mr. Becker's report was printed in the board's agenda. Board members agreed to schedule an evaluation conference with Mr. Becker.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS**

##### **A. Minutes**

Minutes from the January 24, 2008, meeting of the board were presented for review and approval. Ms. Fox moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

*The board recessed briefly at 8:00 and reconvened at 8:12 p.m.*

#### **V. ADMINISTRATION**

##### **A. March Board Meeting – Date Change**

Board members requested a change in the date of meetings scheduled for March 2008 due to spring break and the upcoming National School Boards Association meeting the last week of the month. Approval would move the agenda meeting to March 6<sup>th</sup>, with the regular meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Berkley made a motion to reschedule the meetings as proposed; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

##### **B. PRE Quarterly Report**

The PRE Quarterly Report was attached to the board's agenda. Dr. Karen DeJarnette provided a brief overview of the report and responded to questions. Ms. Fox requested additional information regarding the costs involved in Compass Learning and Read 180.

In addition to the programs included in the report, Dr. DeJarnette reported that the PRE staff was beginning a review of the remedial support programs at Cloverdale Middle School. She reported that she had met with the staff and would develop an instrument to provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the Saturday and early morning classes.

Dr. DeJarnette also reported that an evaluation of Target Teach and Americas Choice would be conducted to determine the effectiveness and the measurable outcomes of these remedial programs.

#### **VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

##### **A. Arkansas Advanced Placement Teacher Training Incentive Program Grant Award – Parkview Magnet High School**

The board was asked to adopt a resolution in support of Parkview Magnet School's participation in the Advanced Placement Teacher Training Incentive Program. This program would provide grant funds from the Arkansas Initiative for Math and Science with the established intent to increase AP enrollment and double the number of students who pass AP exams. The initiative provides teacher training and financial incentives for teachers whose students score highest on these exams. The five year grant would provide \$724,166; the district would be responsible for providing substitute teachers on training days.

Dr. Daugherty made a motion to approve the grant resolution, Ms. Fox seconded the motion. Dr. Linda Brown, Principal at Parkview, responded to questions from the board. She reported that ten schools in the state were chosen to participate in the initiative, with funding coming from Exxon Corporation. There was a question from the board whether this would require approval from the CTA, and whether it would be considered a merit pay program. Dr. Watson agreed to review the components of the grant with the CTA representatives to determine if it would require a vote of the staff. The motion **carried unanimously**.

## **VII. HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **A. Personnel Changes**

Routine personnel changes were provided as part of the board's agenda. Dr. Daugherty moved to approve the changes as submitted. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried 5-1**, with Ms. Fox casting the no vote.

### **B. School Calendar 2008-2009**

The student calendar for the 2008 – 2009 school year was presented for review and approval. Mr. Hartz reported that he had worked with representatives of the Pulaski County and North Little Rock School Districts to coordinate student attendance days. Also, it was noted that all schools in the district would follow the same schedule, with the extended year schools returning to the regular school year calendar. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the calendar as proposed; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

### **C. Special Salary Adjustments**

Recommendations for salary adjustments from the district's salary review committee were presented for the board's approval. These employees were Michelle Bonds, Charlotte Marks, and Judge Evans.

There was discussion among board members regarding the need to vote to approve these adjustments. Ms. Fox referred to board policies and state law that requires board approval of all salary and contract revisions. Mr. Hartz responded to questions from the board, and Dr. Watson asked for board approval to approve the recommendations.

Dr. Daugherty made a motion to approve the salary adjustments as presented by Dr. Watson. The motion died for lack of second. The board agreed by consensus to honor the adjustments without a formal vote.

## **VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **A. Student Transportation Contract Renewal**

The administration presented a recommendation to approve a five year contract extension with First Student, Inc., formerly Laidlaw Transportation Services. Details of the contract negotiations were provided as part of the board's agenda. Ms. Fox moved to approve the contract as presented; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **passed unanimously**.

## B. 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. Student ex officio, Valerie Valdez, read the items listed in the Board's agenda. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to accept the donated items, Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

### DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Central High School	\$1,000 cash to the Central High Baseball Team	Rodney J. Parham
	\$1,000 cash to the Central High Baseball Team	Walter C. Coleman
	Set of five (5) CD's, valued at \$150.00 to the Central High Library	Channel 7 News Station
	\$6,000 Cash	National Black Caucus of State Legislators Corporate Roundtable
Forest Heights Middle School	\$500 cash for CBI class for student materials and portfolio development	Gregg & Cathie Mueller
	International Baccalaureate Programme Donations:	
	- \$1,200 cash	Chris Alberts / MCA Network Consultants, LLC
	- \$10.00	Dana Gundlach
	- \$25.00	Elaine Gundlach
	- \$25.00	Cathy Matts
	- \$200.00	Gretchen Phillips, MD
- \$50.00	Alfred Walker	
Woodruff Elementary	\$200 cash for incentives and materials for faculty & staff	Day Springs Behavioral Health Services of AR
LRSD	\$1,500 check for Computers for Kids Program	Public Education Foundation of Little Rock funded by the Bank of America Foundation
LRSD	Five (5) automated external defibrillators (AEDs), valued at \$1,500 each for LR high schools	Dr. Jimmy Tucker / Arkansas Specialty Orthopedics

## C. Monthly Financial Report

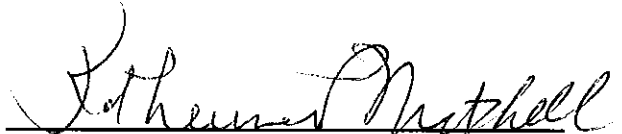
The end of the month financial reports for January 2008 were attached to the board's agenda. No additional information was presented or requested.



## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Dr. Daugherty.

APPROVED: 3.20.08

  
Katherine P. Mitchell, President

  
Melanie Fox, Secretary





**LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**RESOLUTION**

- Whereas,** improving the academic achievement of all students and maintaining an equitable, nondiscriminatory learning environment will forever be the core of the Little Rock School District's mission; and
- Whereas,** despite past efforts, there remain a number of students who are not prepared for or take rigorous college courses in English, mathematics and science; and
- Whereas,** providing AP teacher training and incentive programs to support the implementation of proven strategies to increase significantly the number of students taking and receiving qualifying scores in Advanced Placement Program courses and exams; and
- Whereas,** the Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science, a non-profit corporation affiliated with the National Math and Science Initiative, has established the five-year grant initiative, Advanced Placement Teacher Training Incentive Program, to provide AP teacher training intended to increase the successful participation of students in AP courses; and
- Whereas,** Parkview Magnet High School applied for and was selected to be a participant in the Advanced Placement Teacher training Incentive Program grant initiative; and
- Now, Therefore,** The Little Rock School District Board of Directors hereby endorses and supports the Advanced Placement Teacher Training and Incentive Program by and between Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science, a nonprofit corporation and Parkview Magnet High School.

Adopted and signed this 28th day of February 2008.

  
Katherine Phillips Mitchell, Ed.D.  
President

  
Melanie Fox  
Secretary