

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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
October 23, 2008**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 23, 2008, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Dianne Curry presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dianne Curry
Charles Armstrong
Jody Carreiro
Robert M. Daugherty
Melanie Fox
Baker Kurrus
Katherine Mitchell

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Linda Watson, Superintendent
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Ms. Curry called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. Five members of the board were present at roll call; Dr. Daugherty arrived at 5:50 p.m. Mr. Armstrong arrived at 6:00 p.m. **Megan Reed**, teacher at Chicot Elementary School, and **Carissa Kelly**, student from Central High School, were present as ex officio members of the board for the month of October.

Ms. Curry welcomed members of the audience and invited Dr. Watson to proceed with the citations and commendations.

III. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations

Dr. Watson introduced **Judith Warren** and the members of the Quiz Bowl team from Parkview Magnet High School. These students won the Arkansas Governor's Quiz Bowl Association 6-A state championship in the spring; their second consecutive victory at the state level. The team members were: **Seemaab Ali, Silas Altheimer, Mason Allen, Christian Bradford, Eric Carter, Max Roy, John Sykes, Connor Thompson, Cameron White, Georgeanne Yehling**, and **Hannah Yoder**. Not all students were present as some were 2008 graduates.

Debbie Capps and Gifted & Talented students from M.L. King Elementary were recognized for winning first place over all other elementary, middle and high school groups in the *Racial & Cultural Diversity Commission's WorldFest Global Village*. Their display and musical performance highlighted Mexico.

The students who participated in the WorldFest project included: **Calvin Allen, Sam Bassham, Cassandra Howell, Johnathan King, Michelle O'Neal, Aditya Srivastava, Tucker Andrews, Mallory Baker, Herman Bright, Katie Clements, Jomia Hampton, Jaelyn Juniel, Hannah King, Joshua Pointer, Johnathan Davis, Caylin Allen, Emani Archie, Lameca Peer, Anna Pridmore, Tipton Robinson, Mary Van Dusen, Zoe Watson, Zoi Campbell, Hannah Cozart, Charles Creggett, Landon Rogers and Latisha Criss**

Rachael Borné, a senior at Central High School and **Temple Price** a senior at Hall High School were recently named winners of the Achievement Award in Writing from the National Council of Teachers of English. This award is presented to a select few high school seniors who are judged to be the best student writers in the country. Dr. Watson and the board offered their congratulations.

Dr. Watson introduced **Peggy McDaniel**, the music teacher at Bale Elementary, who was recently named Mentor Teacher of the Year by the Arkansas Association of Teacher Educators. She was honored at the organization's fall conference.

Dr. Watson introduced **Dr. Danny Fletcher** who presented certificates of recognition to outstanding music educators in the Little Rock School District. These certificates were presented by the National Staff Development Council through a *Professional Development for Music Educators* grant. This grant provided \$2 million over the past six years for specialized training for the district's music and art teachers. The group included: **Anna Lloyd, Cynthia Buehling, Janie Heffington, Sandra Young, Latitia Milton, Elizabeth Morris, Sharon Boyd-Struthers, Karen Lawson, Christian Hulsey, Cheryl Gilstrap, Vicki Colby, and Irma Jean Routen.**

The student ex-officio for October, **Carissa Kelly** from Central High School, and the teacher representative, **Megan Reed** from Chicot Primary School, were also given certificates in recognition of their service for the month of October.

B. Legal Update

Chris Heller addressed the board regarding the ADE attorney's response to a settlement proposal recently submitted by the LRSD and other school districts in Pulaski County. Board members had received a copy of the letter, and Mr. Heller reported that he would be preparing the district's response to this communication. In addition, he had plans to meet with the other school district attorneys, representatives of the Joshua Intervenors and attorneys from the State to determine how best to proceed.

Mr. Heller also reminded the board that the state board hearings on pending charter proposals would begin on November 3, 2008. He stated that he would continue to take the position that the way in which charters are granted and funded has a significant impact on the LRSD and other public schools in Pulaski County. He asked the board to consider further discussion and review of forming in-district conversion charters in cooperation with outside entities to convert some of our schools to charter schools. In this way, funding for innovative educational programs could be returned to the district through charter programs.

C. Remarks from Citizens

Students and parents of Central High Cheerleaders yielded their time to **Mark Hayes**, who introduced himself as a parent of Central High School students and an advocate for the cheer group. He reported to the board that the cheerleaders had been restricted to cheering only at home games, and that they weren't allowed to practice or participate in competitions representing their school. His belief was that there was a "disconnect" in the way that the decision was made to take this action. He asked the board to intervene to insure that there is a level of fairness, and that the rules for the students are applied and enforced evenly among all Central High students. He asked the board and the administration to speak to the cheerleaders, individually or as a group, and to intervene to provide an opportunity for fairness.

Judy Garner followed Mr. Hayes and stated that it was "sad and shameful" that the students were being discriminated against and that their rights were being violated. She expressed concern that the school was dissolving the highly successful cheer program because one student "is a bully." She asked the board to enforce the district's bullying policies and provide assistance to the students who only want to actively participate in the cheer program.

Keonia White, cheerleader at Central High, reported to the board that the cheerleaders had been told that it wasn't safe for them to go to away games because of circumstances outside their control. She stated that the cheer group didn't understand why they were being punished. She asked the board to consider the hard work, dedication and effort of the cheerleaders and closed by saying, "all we want to do is cheer."

Tony Dillon introduced himself as a Central High School supporter and booster club member. He reported that his son was a junior this year and a varsity football player. He reported that his son was attacked when he was a freshman leaving a high school football game and that he was certainly concerned about safety of CHS students. He commended Principal Rousseau for her commitment to the safety of the students at Central; however he expressed concern that all the cheerleaders were being punished as a group because of the action of one. He closed by saying that it goes beyond fairness to let it continue.

Mr. Carreiro asked the administration to investigate and provide a report for the board's information. He asked if board policies were being followed and whether the handbook was being enforced. Dr. Watson reported that the cheerleading handbook had not been completed, but that in the interim the schools operated under the guidelines of the student handbook.

Mr. Carreiro asked that the board receive a report next month; Dr. Daugherty asked that the administration complete the investigation and provide the results of the investigation prior to any additional board action. Dr. Watson reported that she would contact Mr. Hayes regarding the investigation of the issues.

D. Little Rock PTA Council

Patty Barker, president of the PTA Council, welcomed Mr. Carreiro and congratulated Ms. Curry on her election as president of the board. She thanked Mr. Carreiro for making a generous donation to the PTA Council for their Founder's Day luncheon when he donated the unused balance of his campaign funds.

Ms. Barker thanked the district for continuing to offer a membership incentive of \$1.50 per membership at each school. These funds are used for school activities at the local level. She reported that the LR PTA was up to 9,000 members at this time and was continuing to enroll members. She thanked Lisa Hope for producing the annual PTA Council directory.

Upcoming events included the joint effort between the LRSD and the PTA Council to hold a recruitment fair on Sunday, November 2, at J. A. Fair High School. She reported the theme for the annual American Education Week contest: *Public Schools - Our Right and Our Responsibility*. She encouraged teachers to have their students participate in the art and writing competitions associated with the annual event.

E. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Cathy Kohler publicly thanked Grainger Ledbetter for his five years of service and dedication to the success of the district and the Classroom Teachers Association. She quoted scripture from Galatians, "do not grow weary of doing good." Ms. Kohler reported that she would attend the November 3 charter school hearings at the ADE, and that she would be working with the district on the upcoming Closing the Achievement Gap committee meeting.

Ms. Kohler reported that the CTA membership had met on the previous night and had ratified the proposed PN Agreement which was on the board's agenda for approval. She thanked the negotiating teams and stated belief that the LRSD administrators had done everything they could to come up with the \$20 per employee for insurance benefits. Ms. Kohler closed with a written statement which addressed concerns about the contract language, but stated belief that all parties had negotiated in good faith.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Remarks from Board Members

Mr. Kurrus thanked the Central High School parents, students, and supporters who spoke earlier in the meeting. He reported that he had attended many Central High football games and other athletic events across the district. He stressed the importance of participation in cheering and athletics and he noted that we as a district face great challenges in keeping our programs viable. He asked that the administration listen to the parents and the students when making decisions.

Dr. Mitchell commended the students recognized earlier in the meeting. She stated that the LRSD has promoted quality programs which produce quality students and she expressed appreciation for the dedication and devotion of people who work with our students. She noted that there were many challenges to face, but that our people are committed and dedicated to the students.

Dr. Mitchell reported that the LRSD is the only district in the state which is a member of the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE). A lot of the issues addressed by CUBE are relevant to the work that must be done in the LRSD, and she reported her attendance last month at the annual CUBE conference. She closed by stating that we must all work together to successfully address our problems, including the major work to be done in the area of parental involvement.

Mr. Carreiro congratulated the students who were recognized earlier in the meeting and congratulated the music teachers who were recognized for their achievements in the area of professional development. He reported that he was invited to Henderson to recognize their top performers in math and that the students would be receiving graphing calculators for their achievement.

Mr. Armstrong encouraged parents to become involved at their schools. He thanked the PTA Council for continuing to support the district's efforts to motivate parents. He announced that Ms. Curry and Mr. Kurrus received awards at the Region 8 meeting last week in Bryant, and that he would be delivering their certificates.

Ms. Curry thanked the parents who were present at the meeting and congratulated the students and teachers recognized earlier in the evening. She reported that she had recently attended the ASBA new board member training.

Dr. Daugherty commended the staff at Hall High school for making students aware of the legislative act (2243) which will require an end of course exam in order to receive a diploma in the year 2010.

B. Legal Update

None.

C. Board Report: Midtown Advisory Board

Mr. Kurrus provided a written report on the Midtown Advisory Board which was commissioned by the city of Little Rock to make recommendations for the development of Midtown Little Rock. Mr. Kurrus serves as the LRSD board's representative on this commission, and he stated that it was very important to work toward planned growth and improvements to midtown. The taxes paid on the properties along University Avenue make a significant difference in the amount of revenue received by the district. When properties are de-valued, revenue is reduced.

D. Field House Study for Quigley Stadium

Athletic Director Johnny Johnson and Mr. Drake Hawkins made a brief presentation on a grass roots effort to update and restore Quigley Stadium. A group of private supporters commended the school district for the renovations and upkeep of Central High School, but their interest is in preserving and restoring the stadium and field house. The effort would be titled the "Q-Project" and their intent would be to build a new state of the art field house at the north end of Quigley stadium, renovate the dressing rooms, coaches' offices, and restrooms and install synthetic turf on the field. Mr. Hawkins and Mr. Johnson reported that sponsors and donors would be solicited and that individuals would write grants to fund the renovations, with their intent of funding the project totally by outside sources. Board members were provided a copy of the initial study and drawings for review and comment.

E. Student Registration – October Enrollment Report

The annual October 1 official enrollment report was provided for the board's review. Ms. Fox questioned Dr. Watson regarding the loss of students and asked her to determine and report on the specific causes for the loss of enrollment. She asked that the board identify strategies to increase enrollment and address the dropout rate. Board members asked if an exit survey could be developed to identify why people are choosing to leave the LRSD. Dr. Watson reported that Lisa Black and the Public Education Foundation had offered to assist with such a survey and that she would have Dr. DeJarnette work with the foundation to develop an instrument and recommend a method of gaining the information.

Mr. Carreiro commented on the consistent return of students after middle school, stating "They come back after the 8th grade." He asked for a review of the dropout rate to see if there is a specific problem to be addressed by the high schools and a review of why so many students leave the district to attend middle school elsewhere.

F. Report: Annual Discipline Summary Report 2007-2008

The annual discipline summary report was included in the agenda. Dr. Daugherty expressed appreciation for the report and Ms. Fox commented on the quality of the information and on the statistics provided by the annual Safety & Security Report.

G. Report: Elementary Summer School

A summary report on the Elementary Summer School programs was provided in the board's agenda. Dr. Sadie Mitchell responded to questions from the board and board members asked administration to develop a way to encourage more students to attend summer school once they are identified as eligible. Dr. Mitchell reported that students who are still not performing at grade level are now enrolled in after school tutoring programs at their schools.

H. Report: Tutoring 2008-2009

A report on the availability of tutoring programs across the district was provided which indicated the various programs offered at each school. Dr. Mitchell was available to respond to questions; however the number of students participating at each site had not been determined at the time of this report. Each individual school will administer pre- and post-tests to measure student achievement levels and progress. Students with greatest need will be selected to participate in additional opportunities including summer programs in 2009. Target Teach implementation across the district is expected to significantly impact the achievement of students and measures will be in place to monitor progress.

I. Update: Bond Projects

Wayne Adams provided a list of bond projects completed and in progress. He responded to questions from the board.

J. Update: West LR School Construction

Steve St. John, construction manager, provided an update on the west Little Rock school construction. He reported that we had entered into a contract for street improvements, curbs & gutters, traffic signals and a required right hand turn lane.

In addition, there will be a project to widen the intersection of Taylor Loop and Forest Lane and drainage issues are to be addressed at that time. He reported that the overhead power lines would be moved underground. His report indicated that progress is being made and that the preliminary work was going according to schedule and should be complete by February 2009, when actual construction will begin.

Brad Chilcote reported that the architects and engineers were refining and developing the design of the project, and it was his belief that construction would progress on schedule for opening in August 2010. He reported that Nabholtz Construction was finalizing the budget for review by the design team.

Ms. Fox asked Dr. Watson to work with Stephens, Inc. to determine the appropriate timing for sale of bonds. She also asked for information on the development of attendance zone maps.

K. Discussion: Cell Phone Policy & Procedure

Board members had asked for information on the enforcement of the district's cell phone policies. Dr. Watson provided the policy, which is a part of the student handbook, and which mirrors state law. She agreed that some of the district's schools are not as diligent about enforcing the policy, but that principals had been instructed to follow the sanctions for possession of cell phones and other electronic devices. Mr. Armstrong asked for stronger regulations to be developed to consistently enforce the cell phone policy. Dr. Watson agreed to gather input from administrators to better monitor and enforce the cell phone policies in the secondary schools.

L. Budget Update

No report.

M. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's report was provided in the board's agenda.

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

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. Student ex officio, Carissa Kelly, read the items listed in the Board's agenda. Ms. Fox made a motion to accept the donated items, Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Hall High School	\$5,000 cash to purchase a TI Navigator Classroom Learning System	Shareef Adbur-Rahim
	\$100 cash donation toward the purchase of a golf cart for use by security officers	Geri Anderson, U-Haul International, Inc.
	\$500 cash toward the purchase of a golf cart for use by security officers	Lisa Walker, Parent

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Hill High School	\$100 cash toward the purchase of a golf cart for use by security officers	Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Crumly, parents
Williams Magnet School	Ceramic tile, valued at approximately \$2,000 for use in the art department for construction of a mural	Brian Byrd, American Restoration Tile, Inc.
Wilson Elementary	\$500 cash to purchase uniforms and supplies for the Wilson basketball team School supplies valued at approximately \$629.00	St. Andrews Church Kroger Store

B. Minutes

Minutes from the September meeting of the board were presented for review and approval. Mr. Armstrong moved to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

VI. ADMINISTRATION

A. Board Policy CC – Administrative Organization

Dr. Watson presented the district’s revised organizational chart for review as requested by Ms. Fox. She had asked that the exhibit which follows board Policy CC be updated and attached to the district’s policy manual. Board members also asked that the Academic Coaches be added to the appropriate department and included on the chart. There were a few items where the job titles didn’t match the organizational chart approved by the board in June and Dr. Watson agreed to make the revisions and present the chart for posting to the agenda.

VII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. School Improvement – School Improvement List and District Plan

The Arkansas Department of Education released a preliminary list of the school improvement status of our schools. Although some appeals have been filed and have not yet been acted on by ADE, the preliminary list is not expected to change significantly. In addition, because the district is in year 2 of school improvement, a District Improvement Plan has been developed and recently was submitted to ADE. A summary of the plan was attached to the Board’s agenda. Dennis Glasgow responded to questions from the Board, and additional information will be provided once the state submits its’ response to the district’s appeals.

VIII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. LRSD & CTA Agreement

Mr. Kurrus moved to suspend the rules to consider the CTA / LRSD professional negotiations agreement. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Hartz provided a brief overview of the negotiations process and expressed appreciation for the negotiating teams. He invited Mr. Ledbetter to assist in responding to the board's questions.

The major issues with the negotiations revolved around the district's projected revenue and the expectation of a severely limited budget. If additional funds become available, the contract includes language that would allow for the reopening of negotiations for allocation of the funds.

Mr. Carreiro asked whether the board would be required to act to transfer money to provide for the funds to fulfill the language of the contract. After a brief discussion, it was determined that the board would be notified of any necessary budget transfers. Mr. Kurrus then moved to approve the agreement *along with any necessary budget transfers to carry out the agreement*. Mr. Armstrong seconded.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that additional language to the proposal would include "negotiations" in item number 6 of the proposal. Mr. Eddings agreed that it would make the document clearer. Mr. Hartz agreed to make the necessary edits. Mr. Kurrus withdrew his motion and Mr. Armstrong withdrew his second.

Ms. Fox then made a motion to amend the agreement to include the word "negotiations" in the proposal. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion to amend, and it carried unanimously.

Ms. Fox moved to accept the agreement with the language in line 6 modified to read: "and to negotiate to distribute any additional funds." Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The board took a brief recess and reconvened at 8:50 p.m.

B. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were provided in the board's agenda. Mr. Carreiro moved to approve the changes as submitted. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried 6-0**. *Dr. Daugherty was absent at the time of the vote.*

Dr. Watson presented a recommendation to appoint Anne Elfrink as the district's Chief Financial Officer. Ms. Elfrink is relocating from Tulsa, but would be available to begin working in the LRSD as of November 1st. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the appointment. Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried 6-0**.

IX. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Monthly Financial Statements – July, August, September

The monthly financial statements for July, August and September were provided as part of the board's agenda. Joel Richards responded to questions from the board.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Fox and seconded by Mr. Carreiro.

APPROVED: 11-20-08

Originals Signed by:
Dianne Curry, President
Jody Carriero, Secretary