



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

MINUTES  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
February 26, 2009

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 26, 2009, 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  
Mike 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 5:32 p.m. All members of the board were present at roll call; **Briana Davis**, student at Parkview High School and **Clarissa White**, teacher from Franklin Elementary, were present as ex officio members of the board for the month of February.

Ms. Curry 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**

**Brittni Cochran**, a student at Hall High School, recently attended the state Beta Club convention where she won first place in the colored pencil art category. She will attend the national Beta Club convention this summer representing the state of Arkansas. Students will compete in academics, art, oratory and Quiz Bowl categories.

**Carol Fleming**, a counselor at Pulaski Heights Middle School, was selected as the 2009 President-elect of the Arkansas Speech-Language Hearing Association. This is a professional association for speech-language pathologists and audiologists in Arkansas. She was also appointed to the 2009 Board of Directors for the Council of State Association Presidents, a professional association of state speech and hearing associations affiliated with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Student ex officio **Briana Davis** was invited to address the board about the upcoming meeting of the Arkansas Association of Student Councils. The state meeting will convene on Friday, April 3, at Parkview Magnet High School. Briana serves as the state president.

**Briana Davis**, student ex officio, and teacher representative, **Clarissa White** from Franklin Elementary, received certificates of appreciation from the Board and Superintendent.

## **B. Partners in Education**

Debbie Milam invited audience members to stop by the ViPS table in the lobby to receive information on the annual ViPS *Evening for the Stars*. This event recognizes individuals who provide volunteer service in LRSD schools, and nomination forms were available for submission of names for recognition.

Two new partnerships were presented for the board's review and approval:

- **W.D. "Bill" Hamilton Learning Academy**, represented by *Debbie Boyd* and *Sharon Jones*, partnering with the **Central Arkansas Development Council**, represented by *Charlotte Edwards* and *Linda Spall*
- **Stephens Elementary School**, represented by *Sharon Brooks*, *Margaret Williams*, and *Diane Oldfield* and **First Baptist Church - Highland Park**, represented by *Pastor W. W. Walker*, *Lillie McMullen*, and *Stephanie Webb*

Ms. Fox made a motion to accept the partnerships, Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **C. Remarks from Citizens**

Marsha and Nasirah Younger addressed the board concerning issues related to Ms. Younger's efforts to resolve problems with her daughter at Mann. She stated that she had met with school staff many times, and she believed that her concerns were being pushed aside and not addressed at the school level. Ms. Younger's daughter receives 504 services, but she doesn't feel that the school is appropriately following the 504 plan.

Nasirah Younger stated that she doesn't have help from her teachers and that other students at the school "bother and harass" her. She reported altercations with two female students at school and she indicated that the school staff is doing nothing to prevent these occurrences. Nasirah stated that her assignments were not being modified as required by her 504 plan and that one teacher writes "modified" at the top of her assignments, violating her privacy. She stated that the principal had called her in for a meeting to question her without her mother present. She stated that she was very uncomfortable with this meeting.

Rose Collier, mother of a 7<sup>th</sup> grade special needs student at Mann, addressed issues and circumstances surrounding her child's classes and stated that she was here as an advocate for her child and others at Mann. She stated that she had tried to work with the staff but that they "don't have the best interest of the children at heart." She stated that teachers call her, and she attends conferences at the school, but that they had discussed "many disturbing situations" that don't find resolution. Her child had been diagnosed as ADD, ADHD with bipolar disorder. She has received assistance from Children & Family Services and treatment at Pinnacle Point, but she continues to receive disciplinary notices from math and English teachers who do not take her child's specific IEP into consideration.

#### **D. Little Rock PTA Council**

No report.

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

Peggy Nabors addressed the board briefly, stating that she was serving in Grainger Ledbetter's position at the LR CTA office until a replacement is named. She reported that Cathy Kohler was out of town.

### **IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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

Dr. Mitchell had earlier in the meeting addressed the parents who spoke regarding concerns at Mann Magnet Middle School. She noted that the board was not able to respond or reply directly to their comments during the meeting, but she assured them that their concerns would be addressed by the administration. Ms. Fox echoed the remarks made by Dr. Mitchell and promised that the administration would be reviewing the allegations and would respond to the parents.

Mr. Carreiro agreed with the comments from Ms. Fox and Dr. Mitchell and stated that everything we do in the LRSD every day affects 26,000 students. He thanked the parents who were in attendance, saying "they are passionate about their children."

Mr. Armstrong agreed with Mr. Carreiro's remarks and stated that it is good to hear from the parents and he expressed hope that others would come forward and express their concerns.

Mr. Kurrus encouraged listeners to visit our schools, saying that he enjoys meeting our students, our parents, and teachers. He stated that the students "are so bright, so energetic, and eager to learn . . . I marvel at their innate ability to participate in their education." He stated that the LRSD has a quality product, and that visitors will be positively impressed with our teachers, students, and administrators if they will just take the time to look for themselves.

Dr. Daugherty spoke to the concerns addressed by the parents, stating that coming here usually means that they have exhausted every other avenue. He noted that the same types of concerns heard here are heard in community forums and that they only come to a board meeting because they know board members will hear their concerns and care about what happens to their children.

Dr. Daugherty also noted the passing of Bishop L. T. Walker this week. Bishop Walker had served on the city's safety commission and was a role model for the community. He cared about people, and he served with a positive attitude.

Ms. Curry thanked the parents and the student who came forth tonight with their concerns.

#### **B. Legal Update**

No update provided.

### **C. Districtwide ACSIP Plan**

A brief overview of the districtwide ACSIP plan was provided. Board members requested additional financial information and an overview of the Title I budget which was to be provided at a later date.

Mr. Adams reported that the PowerPoint presentation was a compilation of reports provided by many individuals who work on individual school improvement plans. The overall district plan focuses on core academics, literacy and math. It was noted that the district is designated as "in need of improvement" and the teams work together to make recommendations that are implemented in order to progress out of the "in need of improvement" state designated status. He noted that twenty-six (26) schools failed to make adequate yearly progress. To meet the goals and achieve AYP, schools will work to close the achievement gap that exists among students.

Ms. Curry asked for a report that would identify the number of students within each category and a comparison between the LRSD and the state average.

Lionel Ward reviewed additional data and listed various strategies used to address closing the achievement gap. He listed several components including Target Teach, America's Choice, Scholastic Audit, Read 180, comprehensive literacy, staff development, extended day for remediation and Parent Involvement activities to improve the home-school connection.

Dennis Glasgow reported that the LRSD is in year two of districtwide school improvement. He explained how this designation is given within the organizational levels, i.e., K-5, 6-8 or 9-12, where all subgroups don't meet AYP. He reported that all K-5 elementary schools met state standards. At the secondary level, students with disabilities failed to meet the state standard and this one subgroup kept the district from meeting standards. In order to address this deficiency, the district is planning to accelerate remediation, redeploy the academic coaches, and train the special education staff in how to better use the portfolio assessments.

### **D. Budget Update**

Anne Elfrink reported that the district had received notice of additional property tax funds and additional funding from the state for desegregation funding. These increases put projections up by a little more than \$1 million over the figures used to build the budget. As a result, discretionary funding has been released to the schools and it is expected that summer school funding will be available according to the plans that are being developed by school services.

Ms. Elfrink also reported that additional controls are being placed to ensure that schools and departments don't overspend their budgets, and financial services staff is monitoring overall spending weekly to make sure no one is spending funds that they don't have available. The financial services department is also working on additional account coding projects, systems and processes to make certain that accurate reporting is accomplished.

**E. Internal Auditors Report**

Mr. Becker's report was provided in the agenda. No additional information was requested.

**V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS**

**A. Donations of Property**

The Board was asked to approve acceptance of recent donations to the District. Briana Davis, student ex-officio representative, read the listed donations. Mr. Armstrong made a motion to accept the donations as listed; Ms. Fox seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**. Donations are listed in the following chart:

**DONATIONS**

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Fair Park Early Childhood Center	\$1,000 cash for purchasing literacy materials	Wal-mart / Bowman Road
J. A. Fair High School	\$50.00 for the baseball team \$250.00 for the baseball team \$500.00 for the Counseling Department	Charles & Fran Wasson Arkansas Family Dental Allstate Insurance Company
Otter Creek Elementary	Twelve bicycles valued at \$600.00	Pulaski County Sheriff's Department
Wilson Elementary School	Two six-foot benches valued at \$600.00 \$500.00 cash for purchasing holiday items for students	Wilson Elementary PTA St. Andrews Church
Woodruff Elementary School	\$200.00 cash to purchase incentives and materials for faculty and staff members	Dayspring Behavioral Health Services of AR

**B. Minutes**

Minutes from the regular board meeting of January 22, 2009, were presented for the board's review and approval. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

**VI. BOARD POLICY & REGULATIONS REVIEW**

**A. First Reading: Revised Board Policy DC - Taxing and Borrowing**

The existing Board Policy *DC Taxing and Borrowing* did not include procedures that demonstrate post-issuance tax compliance. It was recommended that procedures be implemented covering all aspects of post-issuance compliance related to the administration of bond proceeds.

The proposed revision of Board Policy *DC Taxing and Borrowing* includes the development and maintenance of a procedural manual that addresses compliance issues related to the administration of bond proceeds. The Post-Issuance Compliance Procedural Manual was submitted to the Board under separate cover.

Dr. Mitchell moved to approve policy DC on first reading; Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

### **B. Second Reading: Revision of IKE – Promotion and Retention of Students**

The board was asked to approve policy *IKE Promotion and Retention of Students* on second reading. First reading approval was granted at the January board meeting. The revision includes language from Arkansas Act 2243 of 2005 which specifies that students who are not proficient on the state Benchmark exam in either math, literacy or science must participate in his/her academic improvement plan (AIP) in order to be promoted from one grade to the next. This policy revision is necessary to ensure alignment with state law.

Ms. Fox moved to approve the policy on second reading; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **VII. ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. Naming the West Little Rock School**

The Little Rock School District Board of Directors approved building a new elementary school in the West Little Rock area. Construction has started and the administration requested authority to begin the process of selecting an official name for the school. In an effort to involve the community, an application was advertised in the paper and on the district website to solicit recommendations for names. Fifty four recommendations were received.

A Committee consisting of parents, teachers, and community representatives was selected to oversee a fair process for the selection of a name. The administration shared a copy of district policy FF, which regulates the process for naming or renaming buildings. A rubric was developed to guide the reading of the submissions. The board was asked to approve the process including the appointment of committee members. Dr. Mitchell moved approval; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried 6-0-1** with Mr. Kurrus abstaining.

### **B. Strategic Planning: 2009-2010**

The District began the Strategic Planning process in 1996 and has continued to update the plan since that time. The board heard a report in December 2008, which provided additional information for consideration of updating the district's plan at this time. The proposed timeline would run from March 2009 through the 2010 school year.

Tiffany Hoffman provided an overview by PowerPoint presentation. The anticipated cost would be between \$35,000 - \$38,000, including consulting fees and costs associated with required committee meetings. The process would take approximately nine months.

Mr. Carreiro asked for an expedited process for planning at the middle school level, where he stated that the needs were immediate and required strong attention.

### **SUSPENSION OF THE RULES:**

Mr. Kurrus made a motion to suspend the rules to move the Strategic Plan from the report agenda to the action agenda. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion to suspend the rules, and it **carried unanimously**.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to move forward with the strategic planning process as outlined by the administration. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

### **C. PRE Quarterly Report**

Dr. Karen DeJarnette and the PRE department staff provides Quarterly Reports which include program evaluations and informal assessments conducted by LRSD staff and external researchers. The February 2009 report enclosed with this agenda item reflected research related to 1) Pre-Kindergarten and 2) Pre-Algebra and Algebra I.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to accept this and the NCLB Accountability report which follows. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

### **D. NCLB Accountability Report**

Dr. DeJarnette provided an overview of the accountability report which was provided as part of the board's agenda. She explained that the intent of Act 35 is to promote student learning at all levels so that all students have an opportunity to demonstrate increased learning and meet expected academic standards.

It was also noted that the 2008 School Report Cards would be released to parents this month and would include the individual school's "School Improvement Designation" and "Annual School Gains Rating." Dr. DeJarnette reminded the audience that the School Improvement Designations have been assigned to schools for the past 6 years but Gains ratings are new and may require additional explanation for parents. The School Improvement Designations are related to the percentage of students in each NCLB subgroup who score proficient or advanced on benchmark or end-of-course exams annually; the Annual School Gains Ratings relate to growth in individual student achievement from one year to the next. The motion to accept this report was included with the previous board action.

*The board took a brief recess and returned at 8:30 p.m.*

## **VIII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

### **A. Federal grant submission: Carol White Physical Education Program**

The administration recommended approval to submit an application to the United States Department of Education (USDOE) for the Carol White Physical Education grant competition which is due on March 6, 2009. The proposal focuses on providing physical education at all elementary schools. In March 2008, the Board approved and the district submitted a discretionary grant application under this competition, but our application was not funded. In the 2008 competition, 663 applications were submitted and 96 were funded.

The proposal, Comprehensive Approach to Physical Education (CAPE), would prepare teachers to assist students in meeting the State standards. The overall CAPE project design is comprehensive and would enhance and support the district's physical education program through:

- enhancing the district-wide elementary physical education curriculum;
- implementing extensive and ongoing professional development;
- purchasing physical education equipment and supplies to implement the curriculum and enable students to actively participate in the physical education activities; and
- incorporating instruction in healthy eating habits and good nutrition into the physical education classes.

If funded, the grant would provide funding over a three-year period in the amount of \$450,000

Dr. Mitchell moved to approve submission of the application; Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it **carried 5-0**. (*Mr. Armstrong and Dr. Daugherty were absent at the time of the vote.*)

## **B. Federal grant submission: Improving Literacy Through School Libraries Grant**

The administration requested approval to submit an *Improving Literacy Through School Libraries* grant application to the United States Department of Education to improve student reading achievement by improving school library services and resources. The proposal is due on March 6, 2009. The district applied for and received this grant in 2007 for Central, Dunbar, King, Franklin, Rockefeller, Stephens, and Washington. The improvements to these school libraries were substantial and made a significant difference in improving the library collection at each site.

The current application will include six schools: four elementary schools including Geyer Springs, Meadowcliff, Mabelvale and Wilson; one middle school, Cloverdale; and one high school, McClellan and would provide \$300,000.

The proposal focuses on four key areas:

- updating the library collections,
- acquiring advanced technology for school library media centers,
- providing professional development for library media specialists, and
- increasing access to school library media centers. One year grant - \$300,000

Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the grant submission; Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **IX. SCHOOL SERVICES**

### **A. Recommended Addendum to the LRSD Student Handbook**

The Arkansas Department of Education State Standards Monitoring Team suggested changes to the LRSD 2008-09 Student Handbook. This addendum will be sent to all parents for signature. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the addendum; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **X. HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **A. Personnel Changes**

Routine personnel matters were printed in the board's agenda Mr. Armstrong moved to approve the recommendations. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

### **B. School Calendar, 2009-2010**

The proposed 2009-2010 school year student attendance calendar was provided in the agenda and approval was requested. Mr. Armstrong moved to approve the calendar; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **XI. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **A. January 2009 Financial Statements**

The monthly financial statements were attached to the board's agenda. No additional information was requested.

### **B. Second Lien Bonds**

The administration requested authorization to issue second lien bonds. These bonds would be repaid with surplus debt service millage revenue. In order to proceed, the District is required to file an application with the State Board of Education. A resolution for approval was attached to the board's agenda.

Ms. Elfrink responded to questions from the board and explained that the proposed second lien bond issue would produce an estimated \$21 million for funding capital projects which have been identified as priority needs of the District and would be used to complete the construction of the west Little Rock school. Debt service payments would be approximately \$1,700,000 annually. The increase in 2008 assessed property value over 2007 should yield sufficient additional debt service millage to fund the bonds. If issued in August 2009 or later, the first payment would be due in fiscal year 2011.

Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the resolution supporting issuance of second lien bonds; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion. Dr. Daugherty left the room, citing a conflict of interest. The motion **carried 6-0**.

### **C. Post-Issuance Compliance Procedural Manual**

As reported earlier in the meeting, the chief financial officer and district auditors recommended implementation of a Post-Issuance Compliance Procedural Manual which sets forth requirements for post-issuance compliance for federal income tax purposes and assigns responsibilities to ensure compliance with those requirements. Compliance with this manual will assist in protecting the district from adverse determinations in IRS audits.

The IRS has increased its efforts to examine the post-issuance compliance of issues of tax-exempt obligations (bonds). The District will comply with tax law requirements by utilizing the Manual to develop and implement procedures and systems to monitor and maintain tax law compliance. Board Policy DC was presented for first reading approval and upon second reading will regulate these efforts. No action was taken.

## **XII. CLOSING REMARKS**

Immediately following adjournment, Dr. Watson requested the board call a special meeting, possibly on Tuesday of next week, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, to discuss the early retirement insurance incentive program. Board members tentatively agreed pending receipt of additional information with their Friday update.

Ms. Curry announced that Mr. Kurrus had agreed to serve as the board's representative on the Strategic Planning Committee.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Armstrong, seconded by Ms. Fox.

APPROVED: 03-19-09

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