

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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
March 23, 2006**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held its regularly scheduled meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 23, 2006, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Robert M. Daugherty presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert M. Daugherty
Baker Kurrus
Larry Berkley
Tom Brock
Katherine Mitchell
Tony Rose

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Bryan Day

ALSO PRESENT:

Roy G. Brooks, Superintendent of Schools
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Dr. Daugherty called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Six members of the Board were present at roll call, Mr. Day was absent. In addition, teacher ex officio, Cherry Norman from Cloverdale / Watson Elementary School, and student ex officio, Graham Campbell from Parkview High School, were also present.

II. PROCEDURAL MATTERS / WELCOMING COMMENTS

Dr. Daugherty welcomed the audience and asked Dr. Brooks to proceed with citations and commendations.

III. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations

Dr. Brooks introduced *Meredith Mitchell*, a senior at Central High School. Meredith was recently named one of Arkansas' top two youth volunteers for 2006 by The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Meredith will receive \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion, and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC, in May.

Rocio Hlass and members of the **Amigos Program** were presented with certificates of appreciation for their efforts to improve and support the academic skills of students who speak English as a second language. The program, coordinated through the Arkansas Department of Volunteerism, has 52 mentor tutors working with LRSD students.

Mark Shelton, District Manager from Wal-Mart, presented a check in the amount of \$15,000 to be used to support programs and services in the LRSD. Mr. Shelton introduced the store managers from three Wal-Mart stores in Little Rock.

Members of the **Parkview Magnet High School Patriots** men's basketball team were recognized by the Superintendent for their recent victory in the State 5-A high school basketball championship. Coach **Al Flanigan** and Assistant Coach **Nathan Clayburn** were also present. Dr. Linda Brown, Parkview's principal, made brief remarks thanking Coach Flanigan for his commitment to the team. She noted that this was Parkview's third state championship during his tenure.

Dr. Brooks introduced members of the Parkview debate team who recently won the statewide Debate Mock Trial championship. These students will travel to Oklahoma City to represent Arkansas in the national Mock Trial championships: **Ashton Gilstrap Jacob Kauffman, Opal Kelly, Chance McDermott, Karthik Soora, Sarah Walker** and **Josh Young**. Their coach, **Patricia Treadway**, was also recognized.

Felicia Hobbs, principal of Gibbs Magnet School, was given a superintendent's citation in recognition of Gibbs' recent selection as a Magnet Schools of America **School of Distinction**. Ms. Hobbs will travel to the annual Magnet Schools of America conference in Omaha, Nebraska in April. Ms. Hobbs introduced members of the Gibbs faculty, **Vicki Gonterman** and **Teresa Richardson**; Gibbs students, **Blair Johnston** and **Aneesa Purifoy**; Broker, **Mattie Ruth Tipton**; and PTA President, **Leah Greenfield**.

J. A. Fair students recently placed second in the UALR College of Information Science and Systems Engineering Institute for Practical Robotics competition. The Fair Botbal team competed against ten other robotics teams from across the state. As part of the competition, they were required to build and program two robots and complete documentation for posting at the team's website. The team placed 2nd in the Seeding Round, 2nd in Double-Elimination and won Judges' Choice for Best Defensive Robot. Dr. Brooks presented certificates of recognition to the team sponsors: **Dennis Jones, Nancy Klais** and **Martha Nahlen**. Team members also received certificates; **Justin Cross, Cornelius Davis, David Donald, Joe French, Rick Holthoff, Antonio Howard, Bradley Klais, Andrew Seel, Stacia Smith, Francisco Solano** and **Terricka Thomas**.

The teacher and student ex-officio representatives for the month of March were presented with superintendent's citations: **Cherry Norman**, who teaches now at Watson but was representing teachers from Cloverdale Elementary School, and **Graham Campbell**, student from Parkview Magnet High School.

B. Central High School – 50th Anniversary

Representatives from the Central High School 50th Anniversary Celebration Commission were present to report on their progress before the LRSD Board. Central's principal, Nancy Rousseau, and co-chairman, Virgil Miller, made a brief PowerPoint presentation, and introduced other members of the committee who were present: **Annie Abrams, Cynthia East**, and U. S. Parks Superintendent **Mike Madell**. Committee meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month, 3:30 p.m., at the City of Little Rock Neighborhood Resource Center. The celebration is scheduled on September 25, 2007, with related activities during the week preceding the anniversary date. More information is available at www.centralhigh50th.org and www.arkansasglobecoming.com.

C. Partners in Education

Prior to recognizing the new partnerships, Debbie Milam introduced Cynthia East and Mary Robertson who provided information to the Board and audience regarding the annual **VIPS Evening for the Stars**. This year's event will be held on April 25th at 5:30 p.m. at the State Fairgrounds.

The new partnerships were introduced and are listed below. Dr. Mitchell moved to accept the partnerships; Mr. Rose seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Cloverdale Magnet Middle School, represented by *Freddie Fields & Angee Butcher*, in partnership with the **University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service-Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program**, represented by *Bridgette Youngblood*

Metropolitan Career and Technical Center, represented by *Mike Peterson*, in partnership with the **Arkansas State Police**, represented by *Sergeant Alex Finger* and *Corporal Alvernon Rogers*

Washington Magnet Elementary School, represented by *Katherine Snyder*, in partnership with the **Arkansas Forestry Commission**, represented by *Jim Grant*

Romine Interdistrict Elementary School, represented by *Lillie Scull*, in partnership with the **Arkansas Association of University Women**, represented by *Barbara Yarnell, Diana Glaze, and Mary Robertson*

D. Remarks from Citizens (persons who have signed up to speak)

Brenda Wilson introduced herself as a twenty-year veteran teacher. She expressed concern about the proposed pay for performance plan and wondered how such a plan would impact teaching and learning in individual classrooms. She stated that there were many good teachers in the LRSD and many would be left out if the proposed plan were implemented. She stated that it was "filled with gaps - - with so much money going to so few teachers when so many contribute to a student's education." She closed by saying that a teacher's success should not be compensated by numbers on a page.

E. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Katherine Wright Knight expressed concerns regarding the relationship between the Classroom Teachers Association and the LRSD Board. Noting that there had been many up's and down's over the past forty years, she stated that there had always been a "collective focus on providing the best education for the children of Little Rock." She continued by saying that the union is being confronted by openly hostile administrators and board members and that there is evidence that the upcoming negotiations will be difficult and distasteful. She stated belief that the current contract will be allowed to expire in order to force out the CTA. She pledged her intent to do everything possible to prevent this from happening, and stated that only through cooperative efforts will the LRSD become a "national lighthouse."

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Mr. Rose responded to comments made by Katherine Wright Knight. He expressed extreme disappointment in the union and distaste for information provided to teachers directing them to disregard directives and instructions from the administration. He provided examples of union hand-outs regarding filing grievances related to after hours training sessions and posting of grades to EdLine. The flyer stated the union's position that teachers could not be penalized for failure to comply with the administration's request to post grades to EdLine and included a notation that the issue would be a part of future contract negotiations.

Mr. Rose continued by asking why a teacher who is absent or who otherwise fails to vote on the pay for performance project should be counted as a "no" vote. He challenged comments made by Ms. Knight and acknowledged that she had cast dispersions upon the board and administration by stating that the current administration would "leave a mess." Previous accusations of racism against the board were reason enough for board members and the administration to have unpleasant feelings toward the current union leadership.

Dr. Daugherty called for a break at 6:54 p.m.

Mr. Rose completed his statements to the board and the audience by saying that the time for portraying "the union as doing something good for teachers is over. Their time is rapidly drawing to an end."

Mr. Kurrus thanked Mr. Rose for his passionate comments and responded to statements made by Katherine Knight by assuring her that neither the board nor the administration is trying to destroy the union. He stated that there was no concerted effort to do anything other than help kids, and that the teachers union would have to change the way it operates in order to do anything positive for this district or for the children. He noted that what was most needed was a collaborative relationship.

Mr. Kurrus briefly noted that the legislature would begin a special session within the next few weeks and may consider a bill that would regulate school superintendents' contracts. He stated opposition to this measure or any other legislation that would remove authority of local school boards.

Mr. Kurrus congratulated the Forest Heights Middle School MathCounts team for placing 2nd in recent competition. He noted that the LISA Academy team placed first, and he congratulated LISA students for their success. However, he criticized LISA administrators for deception in their application for a charter school and the state for approving the charter. He noted that LISA students are those who are easy to educate and who would do well no matter where they went to school. The school's original application requested a charter based on location in central Little Rock and appeal to lower socio-economic students. The school eventually landed in west Little Rock without provisions for transporting the students from lower income families.

Mr. Berkley agreed with Mr. Kurrus' comments on the LISA Academy, stating that their fraud was not a mistake, but was intentional in order to gain approval from the state for their charter. He also directed a response to comments from the CTA, saying that the board has the ultimate responsibility for making decisions and that those decisions would be based on the desires of the parents and the community. He noted that he is most influenced by the people in the schools who work their hearts out to make things better for kids. He and people in the community see the union as a problem when it prevents the board and the administration from dealing effectively with ineffective teachers. *"When the CTA is the reason why we can't deal with ineffective teachers – that is a problem."*

Dr. Mitchell congratulated students who were recognized earlier in the meeting. She expressed respect for the administration and Dr. Brooks, noting that when she disagrees with the superintendent or other board members they are able to "disagree in a peaceful way." She also expressed respect for the people who work for the district, especially teachers, because she knows what is involved in being a classroom teacher. She expressed great concern about student achievement and a need to focus more on children's problems and not so much on the problems of adults. She pledged to repeat at every meeting her belief that the achievement issue could best be addressed by reducing primary level class size to 18 with a certified teacher and a teachers' assistant in every class. She expressed specific concerns about Chicot Elementary School, in its' fourth year of school improvement, and asked for more specific information on what we are going to do there to improve student achievement.

Graham Campbell, the student ex officio, questioned the issue mentioned by Mr. Rose regarding teachers' reluctance to enter grades on EdLine. Speaking for his fellow students, Graham expressed support for EdLine, stating that it is of great benefit to be able to self-monitor grades and progress. The system also provides parents an opportunity to see how their students are doing in school on a daily basis. He said that it didn't seem unreasonable to ask teachers to update grades twice a week and that some teachers have resisted going through the simple process of learning how to input data to EdLine. He closed by saying, "If there weren't penalties some teachers wouldn't take the time to post the grades."

Mr. Brock reported that he was continuing to visit schools and had recently visited Bale Elementary where he witnessed volunteers in the halls, mentoring and tutoring students. He encouraged volunteerism in our schools, especially retirees and those who have time to spend giving students a boost. Mr. Brock also reported that he had read the teachers' contract and was "appalled at some of the conditions" contained in that document. He asked the CTA to remember that we are here for the benefit of students, not the teachers union. He asked union representatives to "tone down the passions" and remember that we are all here because of the students.

Cherry Norman, teacher ex officio representative, stated that she was not planning to vote in favor of the pay for performance / merit pay issue because she is not a classroom teacher, but a media specialist who also works every day with students. She expressed support for Dr. Mitchell's comments regarding limiting class size at the primary grades, noting that classrooms in southwest Little Rock have grown over the past two years due to school closings and student reassignments.

Dr. Daugherty thanked his fellow board members for their comments and for their passion. He expressed admiration for Mr. Rose, and asked the listeners to realize that board members are also parents & community members; "from a parent's viewpoint, we only want what is best for our children and all children." He announced that the April agenda meeting would be held at McClellan High School; after the agenda meeting an hour or so would be allowed for public comment.

B. Student Assignment Report

No report.

C. Budget Update

No report.

D. Construction Report: Proposed Bond Projects

The monthly construction update was provided as an attachment to the board's agenda.

E. Internal Auditors Report

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

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on February 23, 2006, were presented for review and approval. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the minutes as presented, Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Technology Plan, 2006-2009

The Arkansas Department of Education requires all school districts to revise their Technology Plan every three years. The LRSD Technology Committee met from October 2005 through January 2006 to develop the plan presented for the board's review and adoption. The plan will be in effect for the 2006 through 2009 school years. Lucy Neal was present and introduced members of the committee. Mr. Berkley made a motion to approve the plan as presented. Mr. Brock seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Revision of EDCA-R /Regulation: Authorized Use of Computer Networks

The revision of regulation **EDCA-R** was included in the development of the districtwide technology plan, and was included in the recommendation for approval of that plan. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the regulation as presented, Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion, and it **carried 5-0-1**, with Mr. Rose abstaining.

C. Policy Revision –Second Reading: Policy BBBE – Unexpired Term Fulfillment / Vacancies

District policy for filling board vacancies was out of line with state law in that the Pulaski County Board of Education is no longer a governing entity in the State of Arkansas. The administration recommended a revision that would bring us into compliance, which was approved on first reading at the February board meeting. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the revised BBBE on second reading. Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

D. Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Grant Proposal (ABCSS)

Early Childhood Department staff presented a grant proposal which requested \$4.5 million from the Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. The district's match of 40% is allocated from general operating funds for Pre-K programs across the district. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the submission; Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

E. ADE – Grant Submission: Mathematics and Science Partnership Program

The board was asked to approve an application to the Arkansas Department of Education for \$175,000 over a three year period to fund mathematics and science professional development programs. Dr. Olivine Roberts was present to respond to questions. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the application for submission; Mr. Brock seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

F. U.S. Dept. of Education – Grant Submission: Advanced Placement Incentive Program

The Advanced Placement Incentive Program would provide \$2.25 million over three years to increase participation in Advanced Placement English, mathematics and science courses at the secondary schools. Funding would also be allocated to support the International Baccalaureate program planned for implementation at Forest Heights Middle School and Hall High School for the 2006-2007 school year.

Mr. Rose made a motion to approve submission of the AP grant proposal. Mr. Brock seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

G. U.S. Dept. of Education – Improving Literacy Through School Libraries

The U. S. Department of Education offered an opportunity to apply for a \$300,000 grant to improve school library services and resources. Seven schools were selected to participate in the program based on their needs for additional library materials and technology resources. If funded, the libraries at Central, Dunbar, King, Franklin, Rockefeller, Stephens and Washington would update their materials and technology in the media centers and provide professional development for media specialists. Mr. Brock moved to approve the application as submitted. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the changes as submitted; Mr. Brock seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. School Calendar 2006-2007

The proposed 2006-2007 school year calendars for regular and extended year schools were provided for review and board approval. A committee of teachers, parents, principals and administrators developed the calendar and presented their recommendations for consideration. Mr. Kurrus moved to approve the calendars as presented; Mr. Brock seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Baker Kurrus exited the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Annual Audit Report

Under Arkansas statute, school boards are required to approve an annual financial audit prior to submission to the state.

Mr. Don Smith, CPA from Thomas & Thomas, was present to respond to questions. Mark Milhollen briefly review the highlights of the audit report and requested the board's approval. Mr. Berkley made a motion to approve the audit report as submitted. Mr. Rose seconded the motion and it **carried 5-0**.

B. Payroll Reduction (Employer Pick-Up) Resolution

Approval is required by the Internal Revenue Service to authorize employees who have elected to be non-contributory to change their status on July 1 of each year, and to have additional contributions made through payroll deduction. The administration requested board approval of the required resolution in order to remain in compliance with IRS regulations. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the resolution presented; Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion. It **carried 4 – 0 – 1**, with Mr. Rose abstaining.

C. 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. The student ex officio read the items listed in the Board's agenda. Mr. Rose made a motion to accept the donated items, Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Brady Elementary	\$44.00 cash to assist students displaced due to hurricanes	ETA PHI BETA Sorority, Inc. Gamma Nu Chapter
Central High School	Pamphlets entitled "After a Death", valued at \$200.00, to assist students who are dealing with grief	Ms. Marcene Block
Chicot Elementary	\$500.00 check to help finance a new KaBoom! playground for students	Children International
	\$2,000.00 check to help finance a new KaBoom! playground	Chicot PTA
	\$500.00 check to help finance a new KaBoom! playground	First United Methodist Church
	\$450.00 check to finance a field trip to the Arkansas Arts Center	J.A. Riggs Tractor Company

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Little Rock School District	Three (3) checks totaling \$15,000.00 to be used at the discretion of the District	Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

D. Financial Reports

Mr. Milhollen presented the monthly financial reports; no formal action was taken.

XI. CLOSING REMARKS:

A. Announcements & Reminders

Dr. Brooks announced that schools would be closed on Friday, March 24, and the week of March 27th – 31st for spring break. In addition, he noted that the pay for student performance pilot project vote would be held in the board room all day on Friday, March 24th.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. on a motion by Dr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Brock.

APPROVED: 04-27-06

Originals Signed by:
Robert M. Daugherty, President
Bryan Day, Secretary