

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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
December 15, 2005**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held its regularly scheduled meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 15, 2005, 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
Bryan Day
Katherine Mitchell
Tony Rose
Sue Strickland

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

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. All members of the Board were present at roll call. In addition, Yolanda Joe Hale, ex officio teacher representative from Brady Elementary School, was also present. The student representative from J. A. Fair High School did not attend.

II. PROCEDURAL MATTERS / WELCOMING COMMENTS

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

III. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Superintendent's Citations

Dr. Brooks presented a certificate of appreciation to **Mr. Gus Vratsinas** of Vratsinas Construction Company. VCC donated materials, machinery and labor in excess of \$14,000 to build a new practice field for the Parkview High School marching band.

Members of the Parkview Student Congress were recognized by the Superintendent for winning first place at the Arkansas Student Congress competition - November 6-8, 2005. Members of the team were **Ashton Gilstrap, Maliha Iqbal, Jacob Kauffman, Opal Kelly, Chance McDermott, Karthik Soora, Sarah Walker** and **Josh Young**. Their sponsor, **Patricia Treadway**, was also awarded a certificate of appreciation for her commitment to these students.

Faye Zhao, student at Central High School, was recognized for her selection as one of two AP Scholars from the State of Arkansas. This is an annual award based on scores received on the College Board Advanced Placement exam.

Amanda Compadre, a senior at Central High School, was named a National Hispanic Scholar by the College Board National Hispanic Recognition Program for her performance on the PSAT and National Merit Qualifying Tests.

Rafi Kazi, senior at Central High School was not present at the meeting; however, Dr. Brooks announced that Rafi had been named a semi-finalist in the Siemens Westinghouse Competition in Math, Science and Technology. Only three students from Arkansas were so recognized this year.

Cathy Koehler, media specialist at Baseline Elementary, received a "Read Across America Library Books Award" from the National Education Association, the NEA Foundation and Warner Brothers, Inc. This award provided \$5,000 for Ms. Koehler to use to purchase new books for the Baseline Elementary School library.

Michelle Jackson, a geometry teacher at Hall High School, was recognized for being selected as one of three teachers in the state of Arkansas to receive the 2005 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

Carol Fleming, a speech pathologist at Pulaski Heights Middle School, was honored by the Arkansas Speech-Language-Hearing Association at their annual convention in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Dr. Brooks recognized teachers who recently learned that they had successfully achieved National Board certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. These teachers were:

- **Beverly Cook**, Brady Elementary School;
- **Pam Ruehr**, Carver Magnet Elementary School;
- **Sherry Chambers and Teresa Knapp-Gordon**, Dodd Elementary School;
- **Amy Thompson**, Fulbright Elementary School;
- **Karl-Henry Romain, Louisa Rook and Stacie Thompson**, Hall High School;
- **Gail Harris**, M. L. King Magnet Elementary School;
- **Gary Waldrop**, Mabelvale Magnet Middle School;
- **Jason Finney and Bridget Shinn**, Mann Magnet Middle School;
- **Teddi Cole**, Otter Creek Elementary School;
- **Amelia Farlow, Gail King, Vicki Logan, Debra Murray, and Billie Wallace**, Parkview Magnet High School;
- **Trela Cook and Randy Isely**, Pulaski Heights Middle School,
- **Denise Holley**, Rightsell Elementary School; and
- **H. D. Pruett**, Terry Elementary School.

Mr. Doug Eaton was recognized by the Board and Superintendent for his fourteen years of service to the Little Rock School District. Mr. Eaton was recently selected to lead the Arkansas Department of Academic Facilities and Transportation.

The teacher ex officio representative to the Board for the month of December, **Yolanda Joe Hale**, teacher at Brady Elementary School, was given a certificate of appreciation for her service.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Citizens who wish to address the Board are provided an opportunity to phone the Superintendent's Office and request placement on the agenda. Those who were present included:

- **Dora Wallace** – Ms. Wallace shared with the Board her personal experience of the National Board Certification process. She noted that completing the requirements of the program was difficult, rigorous, very stressful and time consuming. However, she expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate and indicated that completing the assessments was worth her efforts. She thanked the Board for their financial contribution to the program and asked that financial assistance continue to be provided for this purpose.

- **Ruth Eyres** – Ms. Eyres introduced herself as a special education teacher at J. A. Fair High School who achieved National Board Certification in 2002. She shared from her perspective that the experience made her a better classroom teacher. She stated that student engagement in the learning process is the key ingredient to quality results. She also asked the Board to consider continuing financial assistance to teachers who wish to participate in National Board Certification.
- **Judith Murray** – Ms. Murray discussed the benefits of National Board Certification and the rigorous process that brings teachers an opportunity to improve their classroom skills. She shared that the costs associated with becoming nationally certified were prohibitive to some teachers who wouldn't have the opportunity to participate if the District didn't continue financial support.
- **Cathy Koehler** – Ms. Koehler provided more in depth detail regarding the National Board Certification process. Over the course of three years, teachers build a portfolio to assess their teaching style in five core areas. LRSD teachers who successfully complete the process are rewarded by receiving an annual salary stipend in the amount of \$3,000.
- **Sonya McDaniels** introduced herself as a parent of a Central High School student. Ms. McDaniels objected to a play that was part of the drama department's work during December. She also distributed copies of an e-mail message sent to Principal Nancy Rousseau.

C. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Katherine Wright Knight congratulated those teachers and others who were recognized previously during the Superintendent's Citations and Recognitions portion of the agenda. She thanked Dr. Brooks and business office staff for ensuring that all employees had received salary increases and retroactive pay as of December 15, prior to the holidays. Some of these increases were just approved by the Board at the December 8 special meeting.

Ms. Knight advised that this year's efforts had resulted in an additional 22 board certified teachers for the LRSD. The National Board assessments are \$350.00 per section of the test, and she reported that this expense prohibits some teachers from completing the process. She congratulated the teachers who had finished, and encouraged those who had not been successful to keep on trying and to take the retests.

D. Joshua Intervenors

Mr. John Walker, attorney for the Joshua Intervenors, addressed the Board. He congratulated all of the teachers and students who had been recognized previously in the meeting.

Mr. Walker asked the Board to address the correlation between quality teaching and student achievement. He asked Board members to consider his belief that there are separate educational systems within the District which do not provide an equal education for Black students. He encouraged the Board and administration to approach the issue with professionalism and commit District resources to measure student achievement for all children by the same standards.

Mr. Rose left the meeting at 6:17 p.m. and returned at the conclusion of Mr. Walker's comments.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Mr. Rose gave his best holiday wishes to the audience, LRSD employees and fellow Board members. He offered congratulations to the teachers who were recognized for completing the National Boards and noted that the most successful teaching comes from those who can inspire students to learn by teaching self-discipline.

Ms. Strickland also congratulated the teachers who were recognized earlier in the agenda and expressed admiration for those teachers who undertook a most difficult process in order to become better teachers.

Dr. Mitchell reported that she had visited the Fair Park Early Childhood Center. She encouraged others to visit and reminded the audience how important it is to reach children at the earliest age in order to help them be better learners in elementary, middle and high school. She advocated for reducing the number of students in kindergarten through third grade classrooms in order to give teachers more time to work with the younger children one-on-one.

Dr. Mitchell noted that she had also attended a session at St. Mark Church which focused on encouraging parental involvement in the educational experiences of their children. She thanked Dr. Olivine Roberts and Dr. Linda Watson for their participation in this meeting, which provided information for parents regarding the Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) process for students who do not meet proficient levels on the Benchmark exams. She encouraged more partnership building activities between the schools, churches and homes.

Mr. Berkley reported that he had also visited the Fair Park Early Childhood Center. He expressed excitement that the District was setting a standard for the entire state for early childhood educational opportunities.

Mr. Berkley responded briefly to the remarks made by Attorney John Walker by saying that he was certain that huge efforts were made by District teachers to increase achievement for all LRSD students; that it was unfair to say that teachers are not doing a good job for their students.

Mr. Kurrus attended a musical program at Forest Heights Middle School. He was pleased to see a large audience and noted that the choral and band programs had doubled in size over the past year. He was happy to report that positive things are going on at Forest Heights.

Mr. Kurrus commented on the recent publication by the Koret Task Force which predicts a dramatic change in the way public education is delivered to students. Massive change should be expected in the way schools are funded and in the way services are provided.

Dr. Daugherty made brief remarks to his fellow Board members, noting that every issue has two points of view. He stated his personal perspective - - that as a public servant he is duty bound to listen to everyone, whether he agrees or disagrees with the other's point of view. He closed by wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

B. Student Assignment Report

No report.

C. Budget Update

No report.

D. Construction Report: Proposed Bond Projects

The monthly Construction Report was printed in the Board's agenda. There was no additional information presented.

E. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's monthly report was printed in the agenda.

F. Technology Update

The monthly technology report was printed in the Board's agenda.

G. Reorganization Update

Joe Mittiga provided a brief oral report regarding progress made toward the District's reorganization. He noted that effective July 1, 2005, 100 positions had been eliminated from the District's administration. He stated that efforts were underway, six months into the year, to assess and evaluate the process and determine the progress that had been made.

Mr. Mittiga reported that he will coordinate a process to interview all principals and to seek input and feedback on how things are going at the school level from the building leaders' perspective. The intent of the survey is to determine if anything should be done by the administration in order to provide better services to the schools. Principals have been given the authority to identify their needs and secure services they feel are needed in order to best serve their students. Mr. Mittiga will report to the Board once the evaluation is complete.

H. School Improvement Update

Dr. Sadie Mitchell reported to the Board regarding efforts to meet the State's ACTAAP school improvement requirements. She noted that in the 2004-05 school year, twenty-three LRSD elementary schools met the standards required by ACTAAP testing. Eight of the elementary schools are currently designated on "alert status." Five LRSD schools were removed from the School Improvement list because of making the required progress on student achievement tests.

Dr. Mitchell asked several principals to share what was being done in their particular schools to secure the necessary resources, work with students on their areas of deficiency, and develop strategies with their teachers to ensure students are receiving the best possible services. The Board heard from Jane Harkey, principal of Chicot Elementary School, Betty Mosley, principal of Watson Elementary, and Ada Keown, principal of Brady Elementary School.

Mr. Babbs reported on the status of secondary schools; 12 of the 13 middle and high schools are on the school improvement list in one or more areas. Southwest and Cloverdale Middle Schools have been designated as in their third year of deficiency, and the principals of those schools, Freddie Fields and David Smith, were present to review the collaborative efforts that are being made to improve student achievement and test performance.

The board recessed at 7:16 p.m. for a ten-minute break.

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on November 17, 2005, were presented for review and approval. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Rose seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

VI. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW

A. First Reading: Policy IKF – General Education Graduation Requirements, with Regulations

Review of Regulations: ID-R, Student Schedules; IDBDA-R2, Academic Improvement Plan; IHCC-R, Pre-AP and AP Courses, Grades 6-12; and IKR-R, Class Rankings/Grade-Point Averages

The board was asked to approve recommended revisions to Policy IKF, General Education Graduation Requirements and accompanying regulations. In addition, revisions to regulations regarding Student Schedules, Academic Improvement Plans, Pre-AP and AP course requirements for grades six through twelve, and Class Rankings and Grade-Point Averages were provided for the Board's review and comment.

Mr. Berkley moved to approve Policy IKF on first reading. Mr. Rose seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

VII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Proposed Changes in Middle and High School Curriculum Programs, 2006-2007

Pursuant to Board Policy IG, Curriculum Development, Adoption and Review, proposed new courses are to be submitted to the Board for approval in December of each year. A comprehensive review of the District's current course catalog resulted in several amendments and deletions to course offerings in secondary educational programs. The administration recommended approval of the changes submitted. Dennis Glasgow, Senior Director of Curriculum, was present to respond to questions from the Board. Mr. Berkley made a motion to accept the administration's recommendations; Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously.**

B. Elementary Textbook Adoption Timeline Extension

The Board was asked to authorize an extension for approval of the elementary mathematics textbook adoption. By board regulation, this process is to be complete and before the board for approval by the December meeting of each school year. The statewide adoption process was delayed this year; therefore the adoption committee requested additional time to complete their review and selection. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the requested extension. Mr. Rose seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. ADMINISTRATION

A. Guiding Principles and Goals

In October 2005, the Board and District administrators worked collaboratively with consultants, Dr. Dennis Smith and Mr. Robert Klempen, to clearly define the intent of the 2003 Strategic Plan and develop measures of accountability that would gauge achievement of the District's goals. A summary, which included the current LRSD mission statement and proposed guiding principles, was provided for the Board's review; they were asked to approve the recommended Guiding Principles. Mr. Joe Mittiga, Governmental and Public Affairs Officer, presented the recommendation and answered questions from the Board.

Mr. Rose moved to approve the recommendation as submitted. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Otter Creek Attendance Zone Adjustment

A review of enrollment data at Cloverdale, Mabelvale, Watson and Otter Creek Elementary Schools revealed a need to revise the attendance zone for Otter Creek and Mabelvale Elementary Schools. Otter Creek has been operating over capacity for several years and has required the addition of several portable classrooms in order to meet the needs of the student population. Mabelvale Elementary has operated under capacity for several years, with sufficient space to accommodate students who reside in the Merrivale subdivision, or zone blocks 3635, 3654, and 3655. Provisions were included to allow students currently enrolled at Otter Creek to remain there through the completion of their fifth grade year.

Ms. Strickland moved to approve the recommendation presented by the administration. Mr. Rose seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

IX. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel items were printed in the Board’s agenda. Mr. Rose moved to approve the personnel actions as presented and Mr. Berkley seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

X. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Donations of Property

The Board was asked to approve the acceptance of recent donations to schools and departments within the District. Mr. Kurrus read the donation listed as follows:

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Central High School	\$149.27 cash to be used to purchase a tent for the boys’ track team	Marion W. Fulk
J. A. Fair High School	\$500.00 grant to purchase technology in desktop publishing	Walton Foundation / Wal-Mart Store #126
Fulbright Elementary School	Field trip, valued at \$499 for Ms. Gray’s second grade class to see “Dora, The Explorer” October 18, 2005	Alltel Corporation
Jefferson Elementary School	“Agency Hands in the Community” Grant in the amount of \$500.00 to the Stars Program	Allstate Foundation
McClellan High School	Cash donations to the incentive program for students scoring proficient and advanced on the ACTAAP tests in the amount of \$50.00 per contributor	Miriam Bernard / Salon Benefits, LLC, Pike Parker / Parker & Associates Metal Sales, Raymond House and McClellan PTSA
Rightsell Academy	\$710.00 to be used for incentives \$200 cash to be used to purchase rainy day games for students	Second Baptist Church Rightsell PTA

B. Financial Report

Mr. Milhollen presented the monthly review of the financial reports which were printed in the board’s agenda. No action to approve the reports was taken.

XI. CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Brooks notified the Board that two employee hearings were scheduled following the meeting.

Mr. Day requested that the Board determine a set time limit for each of the hearings. Dr. Daugherty suggested setting approximate limits, with time given for each side to present their evidence.

The Board recessed briefly and reconvened at 8:15 p.m. to conduct closed employee hearings.

XII. EMPLOYEE HEARING

Prior to the convening of the hearings Attorney John Walker asked that Sue Strickland and Tony Rose be excused. He then stated that Ms. Strickland should be compelled to recuse due to discussions she had held with the Superintendent regarding the employees who were being heard. Ms. Strickland declined.

A former principal was represented by Attorney John Walker. Mr. Walker was assisted by Attorney Lacey Kennedy. The employee's brother and mother were allowed to remain in the closed hearing. The LRSD Board and administration were represented by Attorney Chris Heller. Deputy Superintendent Hugh Hattabaugh and Director of Personnel David Hartz were also present.

Mr. Heller advised the Board that the hearing was for the purpose of considering issues related to the employee's reassignment. The employee was not recommended for termination or non-renewal. Dr. Brooks' administrative decision was made based on concerns with operations at a school, including staff morale, student discipline, and failure to deal effectively with parents, faculty and students. Mr. Heller noted that evidence would support that she was transferred because the school was underachieving.

Dr. Marian Lacey was called to provide testimony regarding a recommendation to the Superintendent that the employee be offered a transfer to an alternate position. As the associate superintendent for Secondary Education, Dr. Lacey had been the employee's direct supervisor for seven years. Dr. Lacey reviewed documents presented by Mr. Heller and responded to questions from Mr. Walker.

Dr. Lacey stated that she had met on numerous occasions with the employee and had taken steps to assist in efforts to improve the school climate, student behavior and discipline. In addition, staff meetings had been held to address complaints and concerns from faculty and staff. When asked for specifics, Dr. Lacey reported that she had personally observed students mingling in the hallways instead of moving to class, excessive tardiness to class, students disrespectful of adults in authority, use of profanity, and blatant violations of the District's dress code.

Mr. Walker reviewed previous performance appraisal documents for the employee where satisfactory ratings were assessed. He reviewed a memorandum from Superintendent Brooks to the employee dated September 22, 2004 and asked Dr. Lacey if she felt that Dr. Brooks had targeted specific principals for performance evaluations. Dr. Lacey addressed these questions by stating that the Superintendent had a responsibility based on his position to review operations in all schools and make recommendations based on his observations.

The Board took a break at 10:45 p.m. and returned at 10:55 p.m. to complete the hearing. During the break, the Board and attorneys agreed to postpone the second hearing on the schedule due to the late hour.

The employee was called to testify at 11:00 p.m. Mr. Kennedy posed questions regarding her current assignment. The employee stated that she considered the position to be a demotion with additional duties that kept her at the school until 9:00 p.m. several days of the week. The employee stated that Dr. Brooks visited her previous school on numerous occasions and that she felt he was only doing so for the purpose of seeking out reasons to remove her from her position. She admitted serious discipline problems with the students at her former school including lack of respect for adults in authority, bad attitudes and a lack of self-control. However, she stated that she was trying to lead the school and implement the changes suggested by her supervisor, Dr. Lacey.

Mr. Day asked for clarification on the expectations and requirements of the Board at the conclusion of the hearing. Mr. Heller reported that it was the Board's duty to review the issues, determine if there was just and reasonable cause for the recommendation and then to uphold, reject or modify the administration's recommendation.

Dr. Brooks was asked to respond to several questions regarding his evaluation of principals and routine visits to school campuses. Dr. Brooks reported that the principals were evaluated formally by their appropriate associate superintendent and that he did not personally conduct personnel evaluations.

When questioned, Dr. Brooks agreed that he had visited the school often, but that his visits were for no purpose other than to witness personally that the school was not being operated effectively. He reported that complaints had been received from parents, students, faculty members and others, both by telephone and by personal visits. There was no formal record kept of these complaints.

The Board convened a closed session for deliberation and returned at 12:20 a.m.

The board returned from closed session and reported that no action had been taken. The following motions and conclusions to the hearing were based on the three reasons outlined in a letter addressed to the employee from Superintendent Brooks dated April 28, 2005.

Mr. Kurrus made a motion to support the superintendent's recommendation and agree that the employee failed to create a positive and effective school climate. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, Mr. Kurrus, Mr. Day, Mr. Berkley and Ms. Strickland voted in favor of the motion; Dr. Daugherty, Mr. Rose and Dr. Mitchell voted "no." The motion **carried 4-3**.

Mr. Kurrus made a motion to support the superintendent's recommendation and agree that the employee failed to manage student discipline and control. Mr. Rose seconded the motion. The motion **carried 6-1**, with Dr. Mitchell casting the "no" vote.

Mr. Kurrus made a motion to support the superintendent's recommendation that the employee failed to establish staff support and cooperation. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried 5-2**, with Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Daugherty casting "no" votes.

Mr. Kurrus offered a motion to offer the employee a contract for the position she currently holds at the same net amount of pay, including stipends, that she received for the last year. The intent was to make up any difference in the salary that she has received for the current year and to "make her whole" through the end of the current contract year. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion.

Mr. Heller clarified the motion to ensure that the record reflected the motion accurately: the intent is to allow the employee to receive the salary to which she would have been entitled as principal of her school for the current contract year. After this school year, her salary would revert to the amount associated with the position to which she is assigned.

Dr. Daugherty responded to a question from Mr. Walker by stating that it was the intent of the Board's motion to allow the employee the same "soft landing" as employees who were affected by the reorganization. The motion was restated, and **carried unanimously**.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 12:35 a.m. on a motion by Mr. Rose and seconded by Ms. Strickland.

APPROVED: 01-26-05

Originals Signed by:
R. Micheal Daugherty, President
Bryan Day, Secretary