

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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
October 26, 2006**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 26, 2006, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Robert M. Daugherty presided.

Prior to the call to order, Judge Marion Humphrey administered the oath of office to newly elected zone 7 board member Dianne Curry. The original oath of office was filed with the Pulaski County Clerk's office, and a copy will be made a part of these minutes.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert M. Daugherty
Baker Kurrus
Charles Armstrong
Larry Berkley
Dianne Curry
Melanie Fox
Katherine Mitchell

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 5:35 p.m. All members of the Board were present at roll call. Ex officio representatives for the month of October were also present: Akeia Bass, student from J. A. Fair High School, and Teresa Richardson, teacher from Gibbs Elementary School.

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

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations

Superintendent Brooks recognized six LRSD students who recently received Achievement Awards in Writing from the National Council of Teachers of English: **Samuel Baxter, Diana Leon, Michael McBroom** and **Megan Strickland**, from Central High School; **Jung Kim** from Parkview Magnet High School; and **Jazmine Armstrong** from Hall High School.

The Little Rock School District recently participated in the annual **Susan B. Koman Race for the Cure**. Dr. Brooks thanked the employees who volunteered their time to coordinate the annual event and gave special recognition to **Katherine Snyder, Rose Barnes, Suellen Vann, and Tyrone Harris**. The LRSD was acknowledged for having the largest team to participate in the race, with 560 entrants raising \$11,495 for breast cancer research.

Dr. Brooks presented **Superintendent's Quality Service Awards** to employees who were nominated for this recognition by their peers or members of the school community.

- **Tommie Shelton**, the district's Supply Center Supervisor, was nominated by Suellen Vann and Carolyn Wallis
- **Jeff Baggett**, the Building Engineer at Central High School, was nominated by Ms. Cindy Baggett and Principal Nancy Rousseau
- **Cherise Jones**, a paraprofessional at Forest Park Elementary, was nominated by Leigh Scanlon and Principal Theresa Ketcher
- **Chris Forster**, a new teacher at Forest Park, was nominated by Melanie Fox and Principal Teresa Ketcher

Ex-officio board representatives for October were presented a citation in appreciation for their service to the board, **Teresa Richardson**, teacher from Gibbs Magnet Elementary School, and **Akeia Bass**, student from J.A. Fair Magnet High School.

Dr. Brooks provided a brief report to the board regarding Dr. Mitchell's request to develop an evaluation tool to evaluate the effectiveness of the 2005 districtwide reorganization. He had met with professors from the Clinton School of Public Service, UALR and UCA who will examine the original reorganization goals and devise an evaluation plan that will provide an independent overview of the progress of the reorganization.

In addition, Mr. Kurrus had requested a comparison of administrative costs for the LRSD and other school districts in Arkansas of comparable size. Mr. Milhollen will provide that information once it becomes available from the state.

Dr. Brooks addressed a request from Dr. Daugherty regarding strategies and activities in the district's schools that are designated on the Arkansas School Improvement list. Sadie Mitchell, Junious Babbs, and Olivine Roberts are preparing a comprehensive overview which will be provided to the board on Friday, October 27.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Terrence Bolden, member of Concerned Citizens United, asked the board to make a more focused effort to engage parents and community based groups and to highlight the issues most important to the community. He stated that early childhood programs were vitally necessary to student success and that the community should demand leadership from the superintendent and board members. He concluded by stating that "great minds fight for children."

Claudius Johnson introduced himself as a long time resident of Southwest Little Rock. He reported that his niece attends McClellan High School, and he commended the board and Dr. Brooks on the positive changes that have been made since Dr. Todd-Hamilton was appointed as principal. He was pleased that more than thirty parents had attended the last PTA meeting which he considered to be a significant improvement over previous years. He encouraged the board to ask for input from all corners of the community to encourage and foster diversity.

C. PTA Council

Patty Barker, representing the Little Rock PTA Council, expressed appreciation to Suellen Vann for her assistance to the PTA Council and wished her success in her new position. She recognized and welcomed Dianne Curry and congratulated her on her election.

Ms. Barker announced that the week of November 13 – 17 was designated as American Education Week, and reported that schools will be conducting art and essay contests in celebration of the theme: “What Makes Your School Great?” She thanked Dr. Brooks for hosting a PTA Presidents breakfast meeting, and thanked other district administrators for assisting in the planning of a Middle School recruiting activity on Sunday, November 19, 2006, at Hall High School. Representatives from all middle schools will attend to answer questions and offer assistance to parents of students who will move to the middle level next school year.

D. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Katherine Wright Knight introduced Wanda Hamilton who had addressed the board earlier in the meeting during the swearing in of Dianne Curry. Ms. Hamilton is the widow of Bill Hamilton who served on the LRSD board for many years.

Ms. Knight announced that the CTA was hosting a reception immediately after the board meeting in honor of new board members Curry and Armstrong. She congratulated the recipients of the Superintendent's Quality Service Awards and she encouraged Dr. Brooks to include more teachers in recognition, especially those who have been in the district for a long time. She stated a commitment to students, to the community, and to parents, to provide a quality education for all and she encouraged the school board and administration to listen to patrons, employees, teachers, and support staff.

E. Public Education Foundation

Lisa Black and members of the Public Education Foundation Board were in attendance to formally present the 2006 Innovative Grant Award to the LRSD. They provided an update on the Foundation's overall progress and accomplishments and introduced foundation board members. \$1.8 million has been raised for the LRSD over the past three years; Foundation secretary Steve Strickland presented a mock check in the amount of \$70,800 for the 2006 school year.

F. School Board Zone Forums / Town Hall Meetings

Dr. Daugherty requested placement on the agenda of a discussion item and recommended that individual board members host a community forum in each election zone. He stated his intent to provide a means to reconnect with the community. Mr. Berkley and Ms. Fox agreed that this would provide an opportunity for open communication with the community; Mr. Berkley stressed the importance of coordinating the meetings with appropriate district staff members to provide support and assistance. Dr. Mitchell encouraged parents to attend and to take advantage of the opportunity to gain information on new laws, policy changes, and procedures that impact our students.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Curry thanked the CTA membership for their support during her campaign and thanked the voters in zone 7 for their support. She asked her fellow board members to work toward a united front and to move forward.

Mr. Kurrus thanked Suellen Vann for her service to the district and wished her well in the future. He thanked Ms. Hamilton for the remarks she made earlier in the meeting, noting that there is nothing more dangerous than the possibility of Little Rock returning to a segregated school system. He spoke to the actual enrollment figures in the district, stating that "we stand at the verge of having segregated schools - - when the court decided Brown, they found that the schools were academically good, but that they were inherently unequal." Mr. Kurrus expressed disappointment in the fact that the board is in a position to become divided, but he stated hope that the individual board members would work together to build bridges across racial and community lines.

Mr. Kurrus continued by relating personal experiences in meeting dropouts in prison and young people on inner city basketball courts. "It doesn't matter how or when we disagree - - we can't forget that we are brothers and sisters. If we forget that we will fail."

Ms. Fox thanked the PTA council for hosting and planning the upcoming middle school recruitment activity on Sunday, November 19th, 2006, at Hall High School. She commended Tony Rose for his service to the board, and expressed respect and admiration for his passion for the teachers and the kids in the LRSD, and for having the courage of his convictions. She referred to Winston Churchill's comments on courage: "You can possess countless qualities, but unless you have the courage to put them out there they won't be realized."

Mr. Berkley thanked Mr. Bolden for ideas he presented earlier in this meeting, and he also thanked Mr. Johnson for acknowledging the improvements at McClellan High School. He commended Mr. Rose for the time he served on the board and expressed regret that insinuations were made regarding race as a determining factor in decisions that have been made by the Board. He expressed hope in the future and stated his intent to work hard to move beyond the allegations of racial division on the board.

Dr. Mitchell thanked the citizens who spoke earlier and stated the board's intent to listen and consider the things that are shared by citizens. She thanked Dr. Brooks for moving forward with developing an evaluation tool to measure the effectiveness of the reorganization, and asked that someone from UAPB or Philander Smith College be invited to participate on the team. She was pleased that the professor from the Clinton School of Public Service had agreed to participate and stated that he would be an asset to the research.

Dr. Mitchell continued by saying that the best way for the LRSD to prevent a return to segregated schools is to focus completely on student achievement. She stated her opinion that the district had been "off focus" for a few years, and that a return to a focus on student achievement would provide benefit in improving school operations. Dr. Mitchell commented that some of the schools lack critical resources needed to support student achievement and that it would take a concentrated effort to reach out and motivate those children who don't have as much support as they need at home. "Some of our students need to know that at school someone cares that they are learning." She asked that we "put our differences behind and come together in the best interest of our children."

Mr. Armstrong asked the board to unite and move forward; to look across racial and economic lines to make the LRSD one of the best school districts in the country. "Unite as one - tonight - or we will fall."

Dr. Daugherty related personal experiences of growing up in a segregated school and receiving used textbooks and outdated materials. He reported that at that time students were determined and motivated by their teachers and by their parents. They did not allow racial division to be a hindrance. He pledged to ensure that none of the children in the LRSD experience inequity. "Every child in the district is our responsibility."

Dr. Daugherty closed by publicly thanking Mazie Phillips who passed away last school year. He related that she took him under her mentorship in 8th and 9th grade science and encouraged him to do his best and to be successful in life.

B. Budget Update

Mr. Milhollen was present but did not have a formal presentation.

C. Student Assignment Report

Dr. Watson provided a copy of the October 1 enrollment report as part of the board's agenda; Dr. Brooks provided brief remarks. The district's enrollment at this time last year was 26,524. The highest student enrollment in the district's history was in the 1987-1988 school year, when there were 26,580 students enrolled. The current enrollment of 26,691 is significant in that the community is watching and they are pleased with the progress being made in the LRSD.

D. Construction Report – Bond Projects

Mr. Goodman's report was printed in the board's agenda. Ms. Curry requested information about the projected dates for completion of projects and Mr. Goodman responded.

E. Internal Auditors Report / Sandy Becker

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

F. Update: Mitchell School / Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association

Dr. Blevins, President of the Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association, provided background information on Mitchell Elementary School. He reiterated that the Mitchell community had supported the district's bond issue in 2000, at which time they believed that Mitchell would be kept open as a viable school. He expressed concerns on behalf of the community regarding future use of the building and he asked for more time to develop a re-use proposal, possibly using the building as an artists' residence or school. Dr. Blevins asked the board to wait until March, 2007, in order to develop a comprehensive proposal. Dr. Daugherty asked that the item be listed under the reports agenda at the next agenda meeting.

G. Update: America's Choice

At the request of Mr. Armstrong, Dr. Olivine Roberts provided a brief report regarding America's Choice. Schools on Year 3, 4 or 5 of the state's school improvement list are required to participate in America's Choice, which was designed to address the needs of students who are behind 3 or more years. Seven additional staff allocations have been made at Cloverdale Middle, Brady, Chicot, and Watson Elementary Schools. The district provides ongoing professional development after school, working with teachers in analyzing student data, identifying strategies for instruction and designing effective lessons. Emphasis is placed on bringing about increased learning and student achievement.

H. Update: Human Resources - Staffing Shortages

David Hartz prepared an update requested by Dr. Mitchell: There are currently twenty-one (21) classroom position vacancies; based on the October 1 report to the Arkansas Department of Education, there are currently 2,072 classroom teachers currently placed in the district. Mr. Hartz reported this to be a 1% teacher vacancy rate. Seven of the vacancies are in special education; five are new positions in math, three positions in physics, and three in the alternative education program for English teachers. Mr. Hartz reported that the district participates in recruitment activities in and out of state, and that progress is being made to implement an on-line application process to attract people who don't currently reside in our area.

I. Update: Safety & Security Procedures

Ms. Fox requested an update on the district's safety and security procedures. Hugh Hattabaugh provided a brief overview and reported that procedures have been reviewed and updated in light of recent national attention to violence on school campuses. Policies are in place regarding visitors to schools and classroom interruptions. Regulations are being reviewed and updated and trained security personnel are provided in all high schools, all middle schools and several elementary schools. Five mobile security officers provide assistance at bus stops and whenever needed on school campuses. Violence prevention programs are in place in all schools, and extracurricular programs contribute to student engagement and involvement in the daily routine which prevents tendencies to become involved in violent activities.

The board took a brief recess at 7:30 p.m. and returned at 7:40 p.m.

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS:

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on September 28, 2006, and from a special meeting held on October 12, 2006, were presented for the board's review and approval. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the minutes as written; Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Election of Officers

Dr. Daugherty opened the floor for nominations for the position of board secretary. Mr. Armstrong nominated Mr. Kurrus. Mr. Kurrus declined the nomination. Ms. Curry nominated Ms. Fox. Mr. Armstrong seconded the nomination.

Mr. Kurrus moved the nominations closed; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion. Mr. Berkley moved that Ms. Fox be elected by acclamation; Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Dr. Daugherty opened the floor for nominations for the position of vice president. Ms. Fox nominated Dr. Mitchell for the position of vice president. Dr. Mitchell declined the nomination. Ms. Curry nominated Mr. Armstrong. Ms. Fox nominated Mr. Berkley. Ms. Curry moved that the nominations cease. Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Mr. Berkley moved to expunge the vote and remove his name from nomination. He further moved to elect Mr. Armstrong by acclamation, Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Dr. Daugherty opened the floor for nominations for the position of president. Mr. Berkley nominated Mr. Kurrus. Mr. Armstrong nominated Dr. Mitchell. On a roll call vote, Dr. Daugherty, Mr. Armstrong, Ms. Curry and Dr. Mitchell voted for Dr. Mitchell; Mr. Kurrus, Mr. Berkley and Ms. Fox voted in favor of Mr. Kurrus.

Mr. Kurrus moved to expunge the vote and remove his name from nomination. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion. Mr. Kurrus moved to elect Dr. Mitchell by acclamation. The motion **carried unanimously**.

Dr. Mitchell accepted the position of president and spoke briefly. She expressed a desire to continue to operate in a way that is equitable to all in the district. She stated that she looked forward to working with the administration in a positive way in order to bring success in student achievement. She said that there were "no axes to grind, just a desire to get back on course." She closed by thanking Dr. Daugherty for his year of serving as president of the board.

VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Year One Magnet Evaluation Report

The Magnet Schools and Magnet Programs Evaluation Report was attached to the board's agenda. Dr. Brooks reported briefly, reminding the board members and the audience that this evaluation report was not part of any court-ordered compliance remedy, but was undertaken out of a desire to know more about the effectiveness of the district's magnet programs. The external evaluator who collaborated in the preparation of the report, Dr. Jeanne Dreyfus, was present to respond to questions from the board.

Dr. Mitchell suggested the board meet to review the evaluation reports with staff of PRE and other administrators prior to the scheduled December 18, 2006 court hearing. She stated the importance of knowing more about the evaluations.

VII. SCHOOL SERVICES

A. Fiscal Impact Statements for Learning for Life Academy Charter Application and for

B. Covenant Keepers Academy Charter Application

The board was asked to suspend the rules to consider action on two fiscal impact statements which have not previously been included on a board agenda. Mr. Kurrus moved to suspend the rules, Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Dr. Brooks asked the board to approve formal letters of opposition to the Arkansas Department of Education for two pending charter school applications. The district's opposition is based upon financial implications to the operation of the LRSD. He asked Mr. Kurrus to address any comments or questions from other board members, as he has been actively speaking out in opposition to the formation of new charter schools in the Central Arkansas area. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the submission of fiscal impact statements to the Arkansas Department of Education; Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion. It **carried unanimously**.

VIII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel matters were provided in the board's agenda. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the items submitted. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

B. Salary Proposal: 2006-07 for Negotiated Groups

The proposal presented for board approval provided a 3% salary increase and a three-year contract agreement for the district's Security Officers. Ms. Fox moved to approve the recommendation. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Dr. Brooks reported as a reminder that the final negotiations for School Psychologists and Transportation employees are expected to be presented for board approval in November.

VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Monthly Financial Reports

Mr. Milhollen was present to respond, but there were no questions regarding the monthly financial reports.

IX. CLOSING REMARKS

A. Announcements & Reminders

Dr. Brooks announced that there would be a farewell reception honoring Suellen Vann who accepted a position with Acxiom Corporation. The reception was held at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, October 27, in the LRSD Board Room.

Dr. Mitchell reminded the audience to contact the ViPS office and to sign up to read on Tuesday, November 14th, 2006.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Berkley, seconded by Ms. Fox.

APPROVED: 11-16-06

Originals Signed by:
Katherine P. Mitchell, President
Melanie Fox, Secretary