

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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
November 16, 2006**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 16, 2006, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Katherine Mitchell presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

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

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Dr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. All members of the Board were present at roll call. Ex officio representatives for the month of November were also present: Kala Brown, student from McClellan High School, and Carmen Walker-Knowlton, teacher from Jefferson Elementary School.

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

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations

Dr. Brooks introduced Marty Rhodes and Bob Burnside, members of the Downtown Rotary Club who coordinated this year's Rotary Club 99 literacy project. Rotary members distributed dictionaries to every third grade student in the Little Rock School District and spent time reading to students in classrooms across the district.

Superintendent's Quality Service recognitions were awarded to:

- **Sylvester Lang**, Security Officer at the LRSD Adult Education Center. Mr. Lang was nominated by Director Paulette Martin and by Kenya Robinson and Paula Harris for exceptional service and for his concern for the safety and well-being of students, patrons, parents and staff. He was commended for his cheerful attitude and willingness to help whenever needed.
- **Judy DaSanto**, secretary in the Child Nutrition Department, was nominated by Rita Waller. Ms. Waller, a parent of students who attend the LRSD, stated in her nomination form that Ms. DaSanto greeted her promptly and responded to questions and concerns in a sensitive and caring manner. The nomination was supported by the Director of Child Nutrition, Lilly Bouie.
- **Leslie McCruel**, custodian at Williams Magnet Elementary School, was nominated by faculty members Mary Jo Bradberry, Anna Leigh Maddox, Holly Brown and Principal Mary Menking. In part, the nomination stated “. . . he is a gentleman with an exceptional work ethic and outstanding character traits. He's the kind of person we all would like to have in our schools and the kind of person you can always count on . . . like a good friend.”
- **Denise Brown**, administrative assistant to the Director of Human Resources, was nominated by Superintendent Brooks. His recommendation applauded her cheerful, pleasant, friendly, and dedicated efforts to serve the people who walk through the doors or telephone the district's Human Resources Department.

Ex-officio representatives for the month of November were awarded certificates of appreciation; **Carmen Walker-Knowlton**, teacher at Jefferson Elementary School, and **Kala Brown**, student at McClellan High School.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Dr. Lynette Bryant addressed the board regarding the loss of students at the middle grade level, overcrowded conditions at Terry and Fulbright, and concerns about meeting the educational needs of lower income, African-American and Hispanic students. She asked the board to consider the proposal to purchase the land for a new school in west Little Rock to relieve the problems of overcrowding and to attract some of the families who have left the public schools for a private education. She advocated the addition of Kumon to the district's mathematics curriculum to strengthen student achievement and performance in mathematics. She closed by asking the board to build a school on Rahling Road in west Little Rock and to then spend the extra funding from the increase in enrollment to educate and remediate the students who need the most support.

Teresa Gray, former PTA president and parent of a second grade student at Terry Elementary School, asked the board to take immediate steps to improve the environment at Terry and Fulbright. She stated that she had recruited many families to Terry, and that they were pleased with the education that their children were receiving; however she expressed concern about the deterioration of the facilities at Terry and Fulbright.

Ms. Gray noted that both of these schools were over capacity, with portable classrooms that do not provide sufficient restroom or cafeteria facilities. She asked the board to approve the purchase of land and to proceed with planning for a new Pre-K through eighth grade school.

Cathy Kohler expressed concern regarding policy revision GBI. She stated that the proposed language was ambiguous.

Eleanor Burress addressed the issue of overcrowding in west Little Rock Schools. She introduced herself as a realtor with two children who attend Fulbright. From her perspective, parents who are in the market for a home most often ask first about the schools and want to purchase in an area with good public school options. She noted that her fifth grader was in a portable classroom this year with no running water and no restroom facilities. She noted the new construction and the west LR population shift, and asked the board to look into the future to address the issues that affect everyone in the city.

Dr. Mimi Kokoska introduced herself as a full time doctor at the Veterans Administration Hospital. She stated that she had moved to Little Rock approximately three years ago and that she had many discussions with realtors and neighbors who told her that the public schools were terrible - - that her only option would be to place her children in private schools. She instead opted to place her children in Fulbright, and gave her reasons for attending the meeting tonight: 1) to urge the board to do what had been previously approved and funded through the millage election; 2) to consider the west Little Rock schools which are doing an outstanding job of educating children even with the conditions and problems associated with operating schools over capacity; and 3) to gain parental and community support to ensure a successful school with a diverse population once it is built. She asked the board to embrace this as a leadership moment - - to make good decisions, and to take appropriate action to approve the procurement of land for a new school in west Little Rock.

Teresa Holloway, parent of a fifth grade student at Fulbright, expressed concern and disappointment in the current conditions at her daughter's school. She recently moved from Texas, and noted the difficulty associated with explaining to her child why she is being taught in a trailer. She stated that the children feel disconnected and apart from the rest of the students in the school and she asked the board to make a favorable decision on building a new school: "It is time - - growth in Little Rock is going to happen . . . make the right decision and build a school for the future of our children."

Keith Broach also reported that he recently moved to Little Rock, and that private schools came highly recommended. He asked the board to vote in favor of building a school in west Little Rock, commenting on his support for and belief in public schools. He expressed great satisfaction with his family's experiences at Fulbright and reported that he and others had spent the past four years recruiting families to Fulbright and Terry. "We have filled up two schools - - give us a chance to fill up one more."

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES:

Mr. Berkley made a motion to suspend the rules to reorder the agenda, moving the West Little Rock Schools item to this point in the agenda. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. Discussion and action on the purchase of property for a west Little Rock School was conducted at this point in the meeting.

Purchase of Property for West LR School:

Mr. Kurrus made a motion to place the Rahling Road property under contract to purchase for 180 days at the specified price in order to study the property and to determine if it is suitable for the building of a school, including a study on engineering, zoning, and enrollment and to determine how building the school will impact the district as a whole. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion, and after a lengthy period of comments and discussion the motion **carried unanimously**. Prior to the vote:

Dr. Mitchell commented on the commitments made in the Revised Desegregation and Education Plan and the fact that many of the things that were contained in that plan had not been completed. She asked the board to commit to working together to ensure that promises made were promises kept, assuring the audience that she had supported building a school in west Little Rock because it was a promise made in the millage election.

Mr. Berkley thanked those in the audience and others who had called and written in support of moving ahead with the building of a school in west Little Rock. He asked for continued involvement "even when there aren't hot issues on the agenda." He thanked Mr. Kurrus for the huge investment of time in searching for a site for a school in west Little Rock.

Dr. Daugherty echoed comments made by Dr. Mitchell. He agreed that a vote in favor of this was a vote in support of a promise made to the community during the millage election several years ago. He also seconded the comments made by Mr. Berkley, asking the community to continue to speak up when they are concerned about issues that come before the board.

Ms. Fox expressed appreciation for the "100's of e-mails" she and other board members received, and asked the audience to "keep it up."

Ms. Curry thanked community members for their input and their e-mail messages and stated her intent to continue to move forward in a united effort to keep our promises to the community.

Mr. Armstrong responded briefly to comments from speakers earlier in the meeting about the quality of education at Fulbright and Terry. He reminded the listeners that the Board intends to ensure that every school in the LRSD is a high quality school and that every student, no matter which school they attend, receives a high quality education. He asked that parents support their schools, support their communities, and become more involved in their children's education.

Mr. Kurrus expressed optimism as the district moves forward to build a first class facility in west Little Rock and to then to go forward to build more new schools. He discussed the impact of attractive facilities on the community - - the better the schools become, the more people will be attracted to attend, the more revenue we generate. He noted that there will be similar needs in Zone 7 soon, with new housing and the schools in that area enrolling more students. He asked the board to pull together, east-west-north-south, and to do what is right for our school district and our community.

C. PTA Council

Bernadette Turner thanked the board for supporting the west Little Rock School proposal and stated that it was a good first step in fulfilling promises to the children and the community. She thanked the Fulbright PTA and staff for hosting the monthly council meeting, and expressed appreciation to board members Armstrong, Berkley, Fox and Kurrus for attending. She announced the date of the next Council meeting at Wakefield Elementary on December 12, at 11:30 a.m.

Ms. Turner reported that a survey would be distributed at the December meeting to determine if it would be beneficial to hold PTA Council meetings in the evenings or after school. She also reminded the board that Dr. Brooks would be hosting a breakfast for the PTA unit presidents; board members were invited to attend on Friday, November 17, 2006, at 8:30 a.m. The final announcement was regarding the Middle School Showcase for students and parents on Sunday, November 19, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at Hall High. The event will provide a forum to discuss elementary to middle school transition, the assignment process, curriculum, magnet programs, and school choice options.

D. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Katherine Wright Knight congratulated the negotiating committees for reaching agreements for transportation workers and psychological examiners. She reported that scores for National Board Certification were expected within a few days, noting that sixty-three teachers had taken the exam - - a significant increase over the past three years. She reported that twenty-six scholarships in the amount of \$1,250 were available to pay approximately half of the NBCT registration fees.

Ms. Knight expressed opposition to the proposed policy revision on staff participation in political activities, stating that the current policy had served well for a number of years. She reported that nothing inappropriate or illegal had been done in past campaigns and stated that the policy should remain as it stands. Ms. Knight also reported that she had received many calls about the number of meetings being called in the schools and that there appeared to be a misinterpretation of what is allowed under the negotiated agreement.

She closed by thanking Dr. Mitchell for making board meetings humorous, and for giving the meetings a comfortable feeling. She stated that the CTA wants to continue to work together to make this a better school district for our children.

E. Update: Mitchell School / Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association

Dr. George Blevins addressed the board regarding the Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association and their intent to continue to develop a proposal for the reuse of that building. He thanked the board for making a commitment to keep their promises, but expressed his opinion that a promise to the Mitchell community had been broken when Mitchell was closed as a neighborhood elementary school. He again asked for additional time to develop a comprehensive proposal for reuse of Mitchell Elementary and he asked that the building be removed from the district's surplus property listing.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES:

Mr. Armstrong moved to suspend the rules to reorder the agenda and to consider the Mitchell School property offer at this point in the agenda. Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried 6-0-1**, with Dr. Daugherty abstaining.

Mitchell School Property Offer:

The board was presented an offer in the amount of \$450,000 for the purchase of the Mitchell school property. The school was closed in December 2004 due to the amount of extensive repairs and renovations required to maintain the building as a viable school. The Board declared the property surplus in May of 2006 and it was placed on the market.

Mr. Berkley made a motion to accept the offer presented; Ms. Fox seconded the motion. Following a lengthy discussion, the board **defeated the motion** by a vote of 2-4-1, with Mr. Berkley and Ms. Fox voting in favor of the motion, Mr. Armstrong, Ms. Curry, Dr. Daugherty and Dr. Mitchell voting no, and Mr. Kurrus abstaining.

Prior to the vote, the discussion included responses from Stuart Mackey, representative of The Hathaway Group. He indicated that an affirmative vote would place the property on a 45-day contract for an assessment of the property to determine the costs involved in renovations and upgrades. He reported that he had met with the proposed buyers, who were interested in using the facility for a daycare and pre-kindergarten facility. The building was listed at \$575,000; the offer was in the amount of \$450,000. He considered this to be a very good offer, and reported that he had asked the Wright Avenue Neighborhood Association to make an offer on the facility with a 180-day contract to determine if they would be able to bring forth a viable proposal. WANA representatives had declined to do so.

Dr. Daugherty questioned whether the buyer might be interested in opening a charter school or other facility that would place us in competition for students. The teacher ex-officio board representative, Ms. Walker-Knowlton, replied by saying that competition might be a good thing and that if the district wasn't using the building it should be sold rather than to sit vacant.

Mr. Kurrus addressed the issue of declining population and shifts in housing patterns away from the central part of the city. He reported that 759 single family housing units had been lost over the past ten years resulting in a decrease in the number of school-age children in the area. He related that King, Stephens, Washington and Gibbs were within five to seven minutes from Mitchell and that all of them had open and available seats.

Mr. Berkley thanked Dr. Blevins for his comments, but noted that the WANA had been given ample time to put together a concrete proposal. Dr. Daugherty suggested that the funds from the building, when it is sold, could be allocated to building a new pre-k center in central Little Rock. Mr. Armstrong suggested that the Mitchell School building be demolished and a new school built on that site.

Dr. Mitchell reminded the board that she had voted against closing the school because of a commitment made to the voters to provide funding to update the school and to improve the technology through the millage election. She expressed a desire to give the community a chance to decide what will happen to the building.

Ms. Fox asked Mr. Milhollen to report the costs currently associated with keeping the building secure and maintained. He reported that approximately \$6,000 was paid during the 2006-07 school year in utilities costs. In addition, he reported that the roof needed repair to prevent it from continuing to deteriorate.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Remarks from Board Members

Dr. Mitchell presented an honorary gavel to outgoing president Dr. Daugherty in appreciation for his service to the board during the 2005-06 school year. She also presented a plaque to Tony Rose for his six years of outstanding service to the students of the LRSD.

Mr. Rose made brief comments, stating that he was honored by the opportunity to serve and that he considered his time on the board to have been the most important thing he had ever done. He promised to follow the board actions, attend meetings, and continue to maintain interest in the activities of the LRSD.

Ms. Curry reminded the board and the audience that there would be three forums in Zone 7, and she asked her fellow board members to attend.

The board took a brief recess at 7:15 p.m. and reconvened at 7:35 p.m. Dr. Mitchell did not return after the break.

B. Budget Update

There was no report and no information was requested by the board.

C. Student Assignment Report

There was no report provided.

D. Internal Auditors Report

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

E. November 2006 Construction Report – Bond Projects

Mr. Goodman's report was provided as part of the board's agenda.

F. Report: Independent Investigation – Quattlebaum Law Firm

Mr. Kurrus made a motion to table this report until the next agenda meeting, December 7, 2006. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS:

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting of October 26, 2006 and from a special meeting held on November 9, 2006 were presented for the board's review and approval. Ms. Fox moved to approve the minutes as written; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW:

A. First Reading – Policy GBI: Staff Participation in Political Activities

A revision to district policy ***GBI, Staff Participation in Political Activities***, was recommended for board review and first reading approval. The revision would have no effect on political involvement of employees outside the school day, but it would restrict activities conducted on school district property during the school day. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the recommended policy revision; Ms. Fox seconded the motion.

Mr. Mittiga was asked to respond to questions from the board regarding the intent of the revision and recommendations from legal counsel to clarify the policy. Dr. Daugherty opposed language of the proposed revision; Mr. Armstrong suggested that the board's policy be a reflection of the state ethics policies, agreeing that the policy may need revision, but preferring a prior review of state policy prior to voting.

Mr. Kurrus suggested that the board remove the item from the table, do an additional review, and ask board members to return with suggested additions, deletions, and corrections. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion after Mr. Berkley's motion and Ms. Fox's second were withdrawn. The motion to table **carried unanimously**, and applied to the following two policies as well.

B. First Reading – Policy KHE: Political Solicitation and Activity on District Property

This policy revision was similar to the previous policy in its' intent to provide guidelines for political activities which are allowed on district property. The previous motion to table was considered to apply to this recommendation.

C. First Reading – Policy BDDA: Requests for Information

Action on this recommended policy was tabled with the previous motion.

VII. ADMINISTRATION

A. Resolution and Affirmation – Unitary Status

At the suggestion of the District's legal counsel, a resolution was presented for the board's review and adoption. Mr. Berkley read the resolution prior to the vote.

It is the intention of the Little Rock School District Board of Directors to continue to assess Little Rock School District programs, particularly those programs designed to improve and remediate the achievement of African-American students, and to modify or replace programs which are not working, even after LRSD is released from federal court supervision. It is further the intention of the Little Rock School District Board of Directors to continue to follow the comprehensive program assessment process approved by the Board on December 16, 2004, even after LRSD is released from federal court supervision.

Mr. Kurrus moved to approve adoption of the resolution as read. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried 4-0-2**, with Mr. Armstrong and Ms. Curry abstaining.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. External Evaluations

Three of the four final evaluation reports prepared by external evaluators, Steve Ross and James Catterall were presented for the board's review and approval. These included Read 180, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and the A+ Program at Woodruff Elementary School. The fourth evaluation, Pre-K literacy, will be presented in December. As required, the step-2 evaluation reports are presented for approval by the board prior to final submission to the courts. Ms. Fox moved to approve the three reports for submission. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Proposed Changes in Courses and Clarification on Math Credits Required for Graduation

A recommendation for revisions to board policy IKF, and updates to the regulations included in IKF-R were prepared and presented by the district's curriculum and instruction staff. Dennis Glasgow was present and responded to questions regarding the mathematics credits required by the Smart Core curriculum. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the revisions as submitted. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

IX. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel matters were listed in the board's agenda. No other personnel issues were presented for consideration. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the items presented; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Salary Proposal: 2006-2007 school year: School Psychologists and Transportation Employees

Dr. Brooks reported that the final two employee groups had completed negotiations and it was recommended that a 3% salary increase for a three year agreement for transportation employees and school psychologists be approved by the board. Ms. Fox moved to approve the recommendation. Mr. Berkley seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Refunding of District Bonds

In October, 2006, the board approved a resolution to proceed with the issuance of refunding bonds. The sale was completed in November, 2006, with the low bid submitted by Prager, Sealy & Co., Inc. The refunding will produce a total savings of \$2,954,488 to be realized through the 2032-33 school year. Mr. Milhollen and Cary Smith from Stephens Inc were present to respond to questions from the board. Mr. Berkley moved to approve a resolution authorizing the delivery and issuance of bonds. Ms. Fox seconded the motion. Dr. Daugherty recused and was absent at the time of the vote. The **motion carried 5-0**.

B. Resolutions: Signatures – District Documents

Arkansas Act 671 requires the district to designate the board’s president as disbursing officer and an alternate officer to serve in the president’s absence as part of the annual board reorganization. The board’s president and vice-president are so designated. In addition, the Act also requires the Superintendent to serve as the ex-officio financial secretary for the district. Resolutions authorizing these actions were presented for the board’s adoption. Dr. Daugherty moved to approve the resolutions as presented; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Additional Funding for Forest Heights Bond Project

The board received a report at the agenda meeting regarding the Forest Heights Middle School construction project. Circumstances regarding rising construction costs caused a shortfall in the allocations previously approved by the board. The administration requested approval to allocate an additional \$1.75 million for the project. Specific details were provided as part of the board’s agenda; Mr. Milhollen and Mr. Goodman were present to respond to questions. Ms. Curry moved to approve the administration’s request for additional funding; Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

D. Purchase of Property for West Little Rock School

Action on the purchase of property to build a school on Rahling Road in west Little Rock was taken and reported earlier in these minutes.

E. Mitchell Property Offer

Action on the recommendation to sell the Mitchell School property was taken and reported earlier in these minutes.

F. Donations of Property

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

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Booker Arts Magnet School	Micael Deconet Fecit Venetis bass valued at \$2,000.00	E. O. Huddleston
	Viola valued at \$500.00	Elizabeth Clarke
Central High School	Lexan, valued at \$1,594.26 to replace windows in gym doors	Dr. Darin Wilbourn of LR Spine & Joint Clinic
Dodd Elementary School	School supplies, valued at \$500.00 and classroom subscription to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, valued at \$1,000	Transamerica Worksite Marketing
	School supplies valued at \$250.00	Office of Federal Probation and Pre-Trial Services

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Dodd Elementary School	Eight cases of coke products, valued at \$138.00 for the fall festival	Coca Cola Bottling Company
J. A. Fair High School	\$200 cash to the football activity fund	J. L. Shelton & Associates, Inc.
Forest Heights Middle School	\$250.00 cash for the IB Ropes Course \$100.00 cash for the IB Ropes Course \$10.00 cash for the IB Ropes Course \$25.00 cash for the IB Ropes Course \$25.00 cash for the IB Ropes Course Assorted School Supplies, valued at \$200.00	Megan Chisholm Melissa Brink Dana Browning Elaine Gundlach Angela Brooks T. Tyler Thompson
Fulbright Elementary School	\$1,000 cash for the teachers' lounge	Susan Klimbert in honor of Lynn Penn and Brenda Hipp
Geyer Springs Elementary School	\$300 cash for RIF books Assorted office furniture, equipment and supplies, valued at approximately \$3,100.00	Kappa Gamma Celestica
Jefferson Elementary School	75 student dictionaries, valued at \$990.00 for fifth grade classrooms	Jan & Larry Alman
Woodruff Elementary School	\$600.00 cash for student incentives and materials for faculty and staff members \$2,500 cash to the A+ Program	Day Spring Behavioral Health Services of AR Arkansas A+ Schools Network
Little Rock School District	\$70,833.07 contribution to the winners of the 2006 Innovative Idea Grant Program	Public Education Foundation of Little Rock

G. Monthly Financial Reports

The monthly financial reports were printed in the board's agenda. No additional information was requested.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Kurrus, seconded by Ms. Curry.

APPROVED: 12-14-06

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