

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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
December 14, 2006**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 14, 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 5:35 p.m. All members of the Board were present at roll call. Ex officio representatives for the month of December were also present: Valarie Valdez, student from Hall High School, and Betty Koon, teacher from M. L. King 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 presented a superintendent's citation to **Ruthie Walls**, a social studies teacher at Hall High School. Ms. Walls was recently awarded the Arkansas Council on Economic Education's Bessie B. Moore Award for excellence in teaching economics.

Carolyn Jennings, an English teacher at J.A. Fair Magnet High School, was recently named the High School English Teacher of the Year by the Arkansas Council of Teachers of English and Language Arts. Dr. Brooks presented her with a citation in recognition of this achievement.

The Superintendent's Quality Service Award recipients for the month of December were:

- **Dora Wallace** - - Ms. Wallace was nominated by Board Member Dianne Curry. Principal Brenda Allen endorsed the nomination and commended Ms. Wallace for her commitment to excellence. Ms. Wallace introduced two of her students, **April Griffith** and **Kelvin Parker**, who recited poems they performed at the recent Poetry Slam at J. A. Fair.
- **Jan Robbins** - - Ms. Robbins, a kindergarten teacher at Gibbs Magnet Elementary School, received five nominations from parents of Gibbs Magnet School students. Principal Felicia Hobbs supported their recommendation and submitted commendations of support.

The ex-officio representatives for the month of December were awarded certificates of appreciation for their service to the board: **Betty Koon**, teacher from Martin Luther King Magnet Elementary School; and **Valarie Valdez**, student from Hall High School.

B. Remarks from Citizens

There were no members of the community signed up to speak.

C. PTA Council – Bernadette Turner

Ms. Turner thanked district staff members for supporting the PTA sponsored middle school recruitment activity on Sunday, November 19, 2006. She reported that the December PTA Council meeting at Wakefield Elementary School had provided information for PTA officers regarding accessing the board agenda and becoming involved in district activities and school board meetings. She encouraged parents to become involved and to contact board members when there are issues before the board that impact their children's education.

D. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Katherine Wright Knight reported that the National Board Certification scores had been received and that at least 17 teachers had successfully completed the requirements; some of the teachers had not opened their test results. A more formal announcement will be made when all of the results have been compiled.

Ms. Wright asked the board and the district administration to continue to make a commitment to those teachers who need to retake portions of the national exam; registration is in January and the cost is \$350 per teacher for retakes. District financial support for this testing is an opportunity to partner with teachers and to work with them to improve teaching and learning.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Remarks from Board Members

Mr. Kurrus complimented the students who recited their poetry and thanked them for coming before the board. He had supported the Poetry Slam at J. A. Fair but had not been able to attend.

Ms. Curry expressed excitement about her participation in the Poetry Slam at J. A. Fair. She announced the third and final Zone 7 forum, scheduled for Monday, December 18th, at Otter Creek Elementary School.

Mr. Armstrong encouraged the students who participated in the Poetry Slam, and reported that he had served as a judge. He briefly commented on the board's recent Saturday retreat and the community meeting which was held on Tuesday, December 12, 2006. He asked the audience members, staff and members of the community, to form partnerships with the district, and to come together to support the education of the children of the city of Little Rock.

Dr. Daugherty congratulated Dr. Katherine Mitchell on her selection as a Martin L. King, Jr., *Salute to Greatness Award* recipient. A banquet will be held in January in honor of this achievement.

Mr. Berkley thanked the staff for their preparation and contribution to the board retreat held on Saturday, December 9, 2006. He stated that the board came together to focus on activities that will help students achieve.

Ms. Fox stated that she was very impressed with the students who recited their poetry before the board and she thanked Ms. Wallace for inviting them to attend. She also reported that she had read on ViPS reading day at Watson and at Williams Elementary Schools. She thanked the staff members and wished the audience a happy holiday season.

Dr. Mitchell reported that she had also read, at Stephens Elementary School, and that she had encouraged students at Philander Smith College to participate in VIPS reading day. She announced that she had recently participated in a *Women of Faith* fundraising banquet and had spoken at the Felder Alternative School banquet, which raised funds for Felder students to take field trips.

Dr. Mitchell commended members of the board for the time that had been invested over the past few days to improve board operations and to meet the needs of our students. She invited participation of the CTA and other groups in the community to make all LRSD students are more successful. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

B. Student Assignment Report

No report.

C. Open-Enrollment Charter School Application

Dr. Watson presented a report regarding a proposed open-enrollment charter school application which was submitted late to the Arkansas Department of Education and received by the LRSD on the date of this board meeting. Dr. Watson recommended that the district take no formal opposition to this particular proposal. She reported that the application indicated they would serve kindergarten through fifth grade at-risk and special education students who performed below basic in reading and mathematics. The application stated they would start with approximately 300 students from the Little Rock area.

Mr. Kurrus expressed concern and noted that no matter how many students are served in this and other charter schools, the bottom line means fewer students attending LRSD schools which would ultimately have an impact the district's financial bottom line. He did not wish to suspend the rules to take formal action, but he did express his opposition.

Dr. Mitchell reported that she had attended the Arkansas Board of Education charter school hearing and stated her belief that they will approve any application that comes before them unless the allotted number have already been approved out of that particular congressional district. She noted that grant money is being provided by a private foundation to every charter school who applies to them for funding.

A suspension of the rules and a vote at this time would be required in order to file a formal letter of opposition to this charter application. The board declined to do so.

D. Budget Update

Mr. Milhollen was present, but there was no budget presentation.

E. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's report was provided as part of the board's agenda. He was present, but did not make any additional comments.

F. December 2006 Construction Report – Bond Projects

Mr. Goodman was present, but did not address the board. His report was provided as part of the board's agenda.

G. Procurement Bidding Processes and Procedures

Mr. Armstrong had requested information regarding the district's procurement and bidding processes. Board policy DJ and accompanying regulations were attached to the board's agenda. Mr. Paradis provided a brief overview of the district's compliance with applicable laws of the state of Arkansas, a review of bidding procedures, and copies of the District's Vendor Information Guide.

IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS:

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting of November 16, 2006, were presented for the board's review and approval. Ms. Fox moved to approve the minutes as written; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

V. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW:

A. First Reading – Wellness Policy

Act 1220 of 2003 requires each school district in the state to have a nutrition advisory committee and requires the development of policies to support a healthy school environment.

The LRSD Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committee presented a list of recommendations in June 2005 which were approved by the board and adopted by the administration. The committee developed a policy which was presented for first reading approval. Second reading in January will allow the time necessary to make operational changes prior to the start of the 2007-2008 school year.

Dr. Watson was present with other members of the NPAAC committee. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the policy on first reading; Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. Dr. Mitchell commended the committee on their efforts; she had served as the board's representative on this committee.

VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Pre-kindergarten Literacy Program

The fourth and final evaluation report, Pre-Kindergarten literacy, was presented for the board's review and approval prior to submission to the court. Board members were reminded that they had received and approved evaluation reports on Read 180, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and the A+ Program at Woodruff Elementary School at the November board meeting. These reports were completed and submitted by external evaluators, Steve Ross and James Catterall.

Dr. Ed Williams, interim director of the Planning, Research and Evaluation Department was present to respond to questions. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the report as presented; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

It was noted that the report provided very encouraging information regarding Pre-K through third grade literacy progress within the LRSD and supports the district's efforts to encourage the state legislature to provide additional state funding for pre-kindergarten and early childhood education programs.

VII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel matters were provided in the board's agenda. The superintendent recommended approval. Ms. Curry moved to approve the personnel changes as submitted; Mr. Berkley seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Apperson Alternative Learning Center Property

Dr. Brooks reported that the district had received an offer in the amount of \$300,000 for the purchase of surplus property at 800 Apperson, formerly the district's Alternative Learning Center. The purchaser, Cycle Breakers, Inc., is in the process of appealing a decision of the City Planning Commission to the City Board of Directors in order to gain the necessary approval to utilize this facility as a prevention and intervention treatment center.

The board was asked to approve the sale of this property, conditional upon Cycle Breakers, Inc. receiving the appropriate city approval. Stuart Mackey, representing The Hathaway Group, was present to respond to questions.

Mr. Mackey responded affirmatively to a question from Mr. Kurrus regarding whether the district could accept another offer while this one was pending. The City of Little Rock Board is scheduled to decide by January 18, 2007. If they approve, the district could close with Cycle Breakers by January 22, 2007. Mr. Berkley made a motion to approve the sale of the property with the agreed conditions. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried 6-1**, with Dr. Mitchell casting the “no” vote.

B. Request for Temporary Use of Badgett Parking Lot

The administration requested board approval to allow the city of Little Rock to construct a temporary road for use by the community around the old Badgett Elementary School. The road would be used for approximately six to eight months while Fourche Dam Pike is closed for repair and construction. Mr. Milhollen was present to respond to questions. Mr. Berkley moved to approve the request; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Donations of Property

The Board was asked to accept recent donations to the District. The student ex-officio representative, Valerie Valdez, read the listed donations. Ms. Fox made a motion to accept the donations as listed; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**. Donations are listed in the following chart:

DONATIONS

| SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT | ITEM | DONOR |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Brady Elementary School | \$300.00 cash to purchase books for grades 1 and 2 | Kiwanis Club of Pulaski Heights |
| Fair Park Early Childhood Center | \$15,000.00 cash to be used to install two outdoor tricycle tracks and to purchase classroom equipment and supplies | The Roy & Christine Sturgis Charitable and Educational Trust |
| | \$500.00 cash to purchase an outdoor picnic table and benches for the school lawn | Hillcrest Residents' Association in honor of Debbie Milam's six years of service on the HRA board |
| Forest Heights Middle School | Cash contributions to the FHMS International Baccalaureate Program \$2,300.00 \$100.00 \$25.00 | Mr. Chris Alberts Gretchen Phillips, M.D. Ms. Cathy Matts |
| Henderson Middle School | Fitness equipment, valued at approximately \$300.00 to the fitness team | Ms. Kimberly Sanders |
| | Fitness equipment, valued at approximately \$230.00 to the fitness team | Ms. Meredith Spann |

| SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT | ITEM | DONOR |
|--|---|---|
| Woodruff Elementary School | \$400.00 cash to be used to purchase incentives and materials for faculty and staff | Day Spring Behavioral Health Services of Arkansas |
| Little Rock School District | \$1,000.00 cash to establish a scholarship fund for the "Computers for Kids" program | The Public Education Foundation of Little Rock / Bank of America Foundation |
| Little Rock School District / Division of Special Programs | Pathfinder Plus Communications Device, valued at \$7, 995.00 for use by the Speech and Hearing Department | Eric and Carol Fleming |

D. Monthly Financial Reports

The monthly financial reports were included in the board's agenda. Mr. Milhollen was present, but provided no report.

IX. CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Daugherty thanked the principals who send board members newsletters and information to keep the board up to date on school events.

Dr. Brooks closed by wishing board members, teachers, administrators, parents and students a peaceful winter holiday.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to convene an executive session. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. The board returned from executive session at 7:00 p.m. and reported that no action was taken.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Fox, seconded by Dr. Daugherty.

APPROVED: 01-25-07

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