



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

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**April 22, 2010**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 22, 2010, in the board room of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Charles Armstrong presided.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Charles Armstrong  
Melanie Fox  
Jody Carreiro  
Mike Daugherty  
Baker Kurrus  
Katherine Mitchell

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Dianne Curry

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Linda Watson, Superintendent  
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

**I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Mr. Armstrong called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Five members of the board were present at roll call; Dr. Daugherty arrived at 5:53 p.m. Ms. Curry was absent. The teacher representative, Ken Milton from Booker Arts Magnet Elementary and student representative, Mike Vincente, from McClellan High School were also present.

**II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**A. Superintendent's Remarks**

At the agenda meeting on April 6, 2010, Dr. Watson presented citations and recognitions to the following students and employees:

**Coach George Cirks** and members of the Hall High School Warriors basketball team were recognized for winning the Arkansas 6-A championship. It was noted that this was the seventh state title in the school's history; their most recent win in 2008.

**Coach Christopher Threatt, Principal Marvin Burton** and the members of the McClellan Magnet High School Crimson Lions were recognized for achieving the Arkansas 5-A men's title. This was the first time in 40 years that McClellan had won a state title in basketball.

Dr. Watson introduced **Lisa Black**, Executive Director of the Public Education Foundation of Little Rock. Ms. Black requested time to make a special presentation. She introduced PEF board president, **Joe Hilliard**, Arkansas Arts Center Director, **Nan Plummer**, and members of the foundation board. A \$20,000 contribution from the foundation will allow every seventh grade student in the LRSD to attend the *World of the Pharaohs* exhibit at the Arkansas Arts Center. In addition, professional development will be afforded to social studies teachers, and study guides will be provided for classroom use.

Ms. Black closed by reminding the board of the upcoming Academic Signing Day on May 24, 2010, sponsored by the Public Education Foundation and Centennial Bank.

Dr. Watson reported that she attended a press conference at Mabelvale Elementary School where Mayor Mark Stodola distributed light bulbs to representatives from all elementary schools. Every 5<sup>th</sup> grade student in the district will receive an energy efficient light bulb and coupons from Home Depot to purchase additional bulbs.

## **B. Partners in Education**

Ms. Milam introduced one new school and business partnership for the board's review and approval.

- **Capitol View Stiff Station Neighborhood Association**, in partnership with **Woodruff Early Childhood Center**

Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the partnership. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **C. Remarks from Citizens**

None.

## **D. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association**

Cathy Kohler reported briefly, reminding parents, teachers and students to remain focused on academics for the remainder of the school year. She expressed appreciation to the LRSD administration and board for their efforts to prevent unnecessary reductions in staff. She discussed the reauthorization of ESEA which has resulted in some districts laying off teachers and reducing support staff.

She closed by announcing that the AEA was recognizing Katherine Mitchell for her service on the board, her life-long commitment to education, and her unwavering support of district employees.

## **E. Little Rock PTA Council**

Patty Barker reported that the PTA Council met at McClellan last week, and she thanked Karen Newby and Principal Burton for their support. She announced the new Council officers for the 2010-2011 school year: Henri Smothers, President, Vice Presidents Nadia Chambers and Sarah Buffalo, and corresponding secretary Rita Qualls.

Ms. Barker also congratulated this year's ViPS / Jane Mendel Award winners, Linda Smith and Rita Qualls.

The next meeting will be the Founders Day luncheon on May 6, 11:00 a.m., at Second Presbyterian Church. New officers will be installed and school awards will be presented. The Arkansas PTA convention will be on April 30 through May 1, with the Little Rock Council hosting the membership awards dinner. The National PTA convention will be held in Memphis, June 10 -13.

### **F. Donations of Property**

The board was asked to approve the receipt of recent donations to the district. Mr. Carreiro read the list of donations and made a motion to approve their acceptance. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

#### **DONATIONS**

<b>SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DONOR</b>
Central High School	Programs for the spring production of "The Ultimate Gift", valued at \$140.00 to the communications department	Jody Carreiro of Osborn, Carreiro & Associates
J. A. Fair High School	\$150 check to the baseball program to be deposited in the activity fund	Chicken King
LRSD Health Services	Health room equipment and supplies valued at \$3,000 for secondary school health rooms to provide emergency care and first aid	UALR Children International

### **III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **A. Remarks from Board Members**

Ms. Fox expressed appreciation to the Jane Mendel award winners, Rita Qualls and Linda Kay Smith. She also thanked Tammy Blaylock, Myrtle Withers and Debbie Milam for their hard work in organizing the annual ViPS Evening for the Stars.

Dr. Mitchell expressed gratitude to ViPs staff and board and the volunteers who were recognized for the hours contributed to the schools. She also noted the recent scholarship awards to our students from the THEA foundation.

Dr. Mitchell also noted that she and other board members had attended the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) meetings at the annual National School Boards Association conference in Chicago. She stated that she learned a lot and enjoyed interacting with board members from across the nation.

Mr. Kurrus reported that he had attended a Central High baseball game on the night of the ViPS awards program, but he thanked the staff who work hard to recognize the volunteers.

Mr. Kurrus stressed that it was very important for the public to know that all memorandums and e-mails will be made public if they are sent to all board members. He expressed belief that it is very important for the public to be made aware of the board's thoughts even when they are communicated in writing, not in a public meeting.

Mr. Carreiro thanked the district's volunteers and all the organizers of the annual ViPS award banquet. He noted that it was a good time of the year to visit schools to see the spring choir and band concerts, and a good time to support the schools and students who participate in band, choir, drama and arts presentations.

Dr. Daugherty expressed sadness on the recent passing of Brownie Ledbetter. Ms. Ledbetter was an advocate for education and highly active in community affairs. He echoed previous remarks from Mr. Kurrus regarding e-mails sent to board members, and agreed that the board does a better job when the public has access to what is being written and discussed among the members.

Mr. Armstrong apologized for missing the annual ViPS Evening for the Stars. He thanked the volunteers for the hours they contribute to our schools. He encouraged more parents and community volunteers to step up as mentors and to become involved with the students in the schools.

## **B. Update: Community Truancy Board**

Angelia Tolbert, representing the Community Truancy Board Task Force reported briefly, and provided a written report summarizing the Board's progress to date. Members of the task force have been recruited representing the Little Rock Police Department, the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Department of Human Services, and the Arkansas Cradle to Prison Pipeline Initiative. In addition, invitations have been sent to representatives from the Pulaski County Sheriff's Department, Pulaski County Juvenile Court, and the Chamber of Commerce. Reginald Merritt serves as the LRSD staff representative and coordinator for the Truancy task force.

## **C. Update: Strategic Plan**

Dr. Watson presented the draft summary of progress on the strategic plan implementation timeline. She encouraged board members to review the information included in the report and to keep in mind that the work will continue over the next few months to develop strategies for meeting the target goals. Additional information will be provided as the strategies are developed and implemented. Board members requested a monthly update.

## **D. PRE Quarterly Report**

The quarterly report was provided as part of the board's agenda. Dr. DeJarnette was present to respond to questions.

Ms. Fox reminded Dr. DeJarnette and Dr. Watson that she had requested a cost benefit summary to go along with the evaluation of programs. She asked for additional information regarding the various levels of implementation of some of the programs at some of the schools. Some schools have changed how they use the programs and some have discontinued use of some programs in order to implement others.

## **E. Budget Update**

Leroy Harris provided an overview of the \$4.7 million spent or encumbered from the stimulus funding allocated to the LRSD, \$ 2.6 million of which is stabilization funding. He reported that there was a hold of approximately 33% of the funds which have yet to be released; however, he had spoken to his contact with the ADE, and they assured him that although there was not a final decision on the release date, they felt certain that the remainder of the funding would be forthcoming.

With the stimulus funding, secondary schools had implemented science lab upgrades and had begun white board installations. At the elementary level, twenty-two of the twenty-five schools had begun operating their after school programs. Several major building renovations, roofing and structural projects are in the design phase.

Funds had been allocated to add two classroom teachers to reduce class size, six math and literacy coaches, fifteen reading recovery teachers and a behavioral specialist for special needs students.

The transportation department implemented a safety project by installing additional cameras on school buses. Funding for additional professional development in gifted programs and fine arts was allocated and several summer school programs will be paid from stimulus funds.

Mr. Harris and Mr. Bailey responded to questions and it was noted that Smart Board installations will continue over the summer months. It is expected that all installations will be complete prior to the start of school in August. Mr. Bailey reported that they were developing a link for the website so that the public can be kept informed of the progress of installation.

Mr. Bailey also addressed the progress with implementing a data warehouse or data management system as requested by the board. He also reported that all employees will be required to enroll in direct deposit for payroll by July 1. He estimated that the LRSD spends approximately \$2.50 - \$3.00 per check in processing. Other cost reduction efforts are being reviewed and implemented in an effort to become more fiscally accountable. A data dashboard will be available for employees to access their personal financial information, employment information, leave balances, payroll deductions, and tax information.

## **F. Internal Auditors Report**

Mr. Becker's report was provided as part of the board's agenda. Dr. Watson introduced Ms. Hopson, assistant to Mr. Becker.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS**

##### **A. Minutes**

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on March 18, 2010, and from a special meeting held on March 30, 2010, were presented for the board's review and approval. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

#### **V. ADMINISTRATION**

##### **A. Approval to Appoint a Deputy Superintendent**

Dr. Watson requested the Board's approval to appoint a deputy superintendent to bring together the various departments under one umbrella to increase accountability under the newly adopted Strategic Plan. She reported that a current position would be used and upgraded to deputy superintendent, adding a new title but not an additional person. The job descriptions of the associate superintendents had been provided for the board's review as requested.

Dr. Mitchell spoke in support of adding the deputy superintendent, reporting that Dr. Ruth Steele was the first to add a deputy and that the Board had not prohibited a superintendent from adding the staff needed to accomplish the goals of the district.

Mr. Kurrus spoke regarding the superintendent's request, saying that he was not opposed to supporting the recommendation, but that he was not in favor of making the addition at this time. He agreed that staff is needed to accomplish the goals of the district, but that he would prefer assessing the needs for an additional position once the Strategic Plan is in place and adding necessary personnel as measured by the larger scheme of operations.

Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the recommendation. The motion died for a lack of second.

Mr. Carreiro expressed sentiments similar to Mr. Kurrus, stating that this is not the right time to add administrators. He offered a motion and asked that it be included verbatim, to "authorize the board president on behalf of the LRSD board to enter into negotiations with Dr. Carl Cohn. These negotiations are intended to produce a contract between Dr. Cohn and the board, of maximum duration of one year, to provide his advice and counsel on the implementation of the strategic plan which the board enacted last month and to provide board member training on implementation."

Ms. Fox seconded the motion. She also thanked the administrators for the impressive amount of work completed to date on implementation of the strategic plan. She spoke in support of utilizing the expertise of Dr. Cohn in this type of planning and his background of successfully implementing plans.

Dr. Mitchell spoke in opposition to the motion, stating that it would be better to invest in someone who would be here on a constant basis to ensure progress.

Dr. Daugherty expressed concerns about taking on another employee to be managed and supervised by the Board. He encouraged attendance at the upcoming ASBA/AAEA workshops on board and superintendent relations and stated the importance of maintaining the line between board members as policy makers vs. administrators. He also spoke in opposition to hiring a deputy superintendent at this time, citing the duplication of responsibilities and the additional layer of bureaucracy.

Dr. Watson expressed concern that the possibility of hiring a consultant had not been discussed with her previously. Mr. Kurrus agreed, and expressed reluctance to vote without more input from the superintendent. Mr. Carreiro and Ms. Fox commented regarding the value of asking for assistance, and agreed that additional discussion would be helpful.

Mr. Kurrus made a motion to table action. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion, asking that it be tabled until the next board meeting. The motion **carried 5-1**, with Dr. Mitchell casting the no vote.

## **VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

### **A. ADE Charter School Implementation Grant Application – Cloverdale Middle School**

The superintendent requested approval to submit an application to the Arkansas Department of Education for the Charter School Implementation Grant. This grant application would provide resources to support the implementation of the new Cloverdale Aerospace Technology Conversion Charter School. Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve submission of the application. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Funding would be allocated over a three year period, most of it during the first year as start up funding for the aerospace program. Dr. James Jennings was present to respond to questions and assured the board that the aerospace courses would be ready for implementation at the beginning of the 2010-11 school year.

## **VII. SCHOOL SERVICES**

### **A. Adjustment to Elementary Attendance Zones Adopted in October 2009**

The board approved the attendance zones for the new Roberts Elementary school in October 2009. The administration requested a revision to these zones to include a small area within a one mile radius of Fulbright Elementary that consists of homes within the Pleasant Valley and Fawnwood subdivisions, currently zoned for student attendance at McDermott Elementary. Currently there are eight students in grades K-5 who reside within this area and attend LRSD schools. Of the eight students only one attends McDermott with the remainder attending magnet or private schools. Mr. Kurrus moved to approve the revised attendance zone; Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **B. Forest Heights Middle School / Staff Reconstitution**

The superintendent reported that Forest Heights Middle School is currently in Year 6 of School Improvement as designated by the Arkansas Department of Education under NCLB guidelines. Dr. Watson asked the board to consider a reconstitution of the staff at Forest Heights, with all employees, with the exception of the principal, being required to apply and interview for their positions

Concerns were presented by the Scholastic Audit in 2008 and their recommendations indicated that reconstitution under Smart Accountability would be an option for meeting the requirements under the law. Dr. Watson reported that Mr. Babbs and Mr. Hartz had been developing plans and recommendations to support reconstitution, and the staff had been notified as required prior to May 1.

Ms Fox suggested tabling action until after further discussion at a worksession. She asked that the board be given a more comprehensive overview of the recommendation for Forest Heights, and asked for similar information regarding all schools in school improvement.

Mr. Hartz reported that administrators had met with the staff for discussion and to assure them that they wouldn't be unemployed, but that they may be reassigned to another position in another school. Under the guidelines, only 49% of the current staff could return to Forest Heights if it were reconstituted.

Dr. Daugherty expressed concern about the morale of teachers and whether the interviews would be conducted by a team or by the principal. Mr. Hartz responded to questions, assuring board members that the team approach would be used to fill all positions.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to table and asked that a worksession be scheduled on Tuesday April 27 to review information on the reconstitution in more detail. He also requested additional information on the strategic plan and action on the proposal to hire a consultant to assist with strategic plan implementation. Mr. Kurrus seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

## **VIII. HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **A. Personnel Changes**

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. In addition to the routine personnel matters, administrators were recommended for summer school programs at Williams, Watson, Otter Creek, Washington, Geyer Springs, and Romine Elementary Schools and at Cloverdale and Forest Heights Middle Schools. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the personnel changes as presented; Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

## **IX. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **A. Monthly Financial Reports**

The monthly financial reports were provided for the boards review as part of their agenda. Mr. Bailey was present to respond to questions. No action was required.

Dr. Watson announced upcoming end of year events including the Teacher of the Year banquet, retiree's reception and administrative assistants' luncheon, all to be held at Embassy Suites on Monday, May 3 and Tuesday May 4. Invitations had been provided for the board to attend.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Mr. Carreiro moved to convene an executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. The session started at 7:40 p.m. They returned at 7:54 p.m. and reported that no action was taken.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m. on a motion from Dr. Daugherty, seconded by Mr. Kurrus.

APPROVED: 05-20-10

Originals Signed by:  
Charles Armstrong, President  
Jody Carriero, Secretary