



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

**MINUTES  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
May 20, 2010**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 20, 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  
Dianne Curry  
Mike Daugherty  
Baker Kurrus  
Katherine Mitchell

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None.

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Linda Watson, Superintendent  
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

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

Mr. Armstrong called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. All members of the board were present at roll call. The ex officio representatives, Lana Chaffin from Chicot Elementary, and Evan Wordlaw from Parkview High School, were also present.

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

**A. Superintendent's Remarks – Citations and Commendations**

At the agenda meeting on May 6, 2010, the *Voices Without Borders* choir, made up of honors choir students from Chicot, Rockefeller, Wakefield, Washington, Watson and Wilson performed several songs, highlighting their ability to sing in both English and in Spanish. Dr. I. J. Routen and music teachers from each of the elementary schools involved were also present.

The Central High School Madrigals performed under the direction of Scott Whitfield. This choir recently scored "Best in Class" in the 7A division for mixed ensemble and won overall ensemble awards at the Arkansas State Choral Festival.

The *Stephens Award*, which was established in 1985, provides \$5,000 scholarships to outstanding students and \$5,000 cash awards to teachers with proven records of excellence. Dr. Watson introduced the winners of the annual *City Education Trust / Stephens Awards*. Teacher winners were **Monica Ball**, Parkview, and **Katie Parson**, Central; student scholarship recipients were **Helio Liu**, **Siteng Ma** and **Yi Wu**, all from Central.

In addition, **Katie Parson** was also named the winner of the *Marian G. Lacey Educator of the Year award* at the annual LRSD Crystal Awards banquet.

**Suellen DiMassimo**, a teacher at Carver Magnet Elementary, was selected by the National Council of Teachers in Mathematics and the National Science Teachers Association to attend the 2010 Mickelson ExxonMobil Teachers Academy this July at the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, New Jersey.

**Arnella Hayes** and **Jeff Carter** of Future 500 Step-Up Educational Services requested time on the agenda to make a special presentation to McClellan Magnet High School. McClellan hosted the Fourth Annual Historically Black Colleges and Universities Fair. Plaques of appreciation were presented to Principal Marvin Burton, Ms. Shirley Hodges, and the McClellan maintenance staff for their assistance in preparing for the conference.

**Michael Peterson**, Coordinator at Metropolitan Career-Technical Center, provided an update on the State SkillsUSA competition which was held in Hot Springs, April 12 – 14. Student award winners were introduced to the board:

- Amanda Klipp, Gold Medal in Medical Professions
- Terrance Johnson, Gold Medal in Advertising and Design
- Marlisha Phillips, Gold Medal in Culinary Arts
- Thomas Allen, Silver Medal in Culinary Arts
- Lemond Barton, Silver Medal in Culinary Arts
- DeOnte' Bousquet, Bronze Medal in Culinary Arts
- Leon Randle, Bronze Medal in Graphic Communications
- Andrea Plummer, Bronze Medal in Cosmetology

The ex officio representatives for the month of May were **Evan Wordlaw**, student from Parkview Magnet High School, and **Lana Chaffin**, teacher from Chicot Primary School.

## **B. Partners in Education**

At the agenda meeting on May 6, 2010, Debbie Milam introduced one new school and business partnership for the board's review and approval.

**Bancorp South**, represented by *Kelly Humphries* and *Beth Harvey* in partnership with **Roberts Elementary School**, represented by *Barbara Anderson*.

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

### **C. Remarks from Citizens**

**Raven Duda**, student at Mann, spoke to the board regarding the use of Styrofoam in the school cafeterias. The chemicals used to manufacture Styrofoam are not biodegradable and not as earth-friendly as paper products or reusable cafeteria items.

**Floyd Smith**, security officer at Central High School, addressed the issue of contract negotiations for the district's security officers. He also spoke in support of Dr. Watson and the renewal of her contract.

**John Walker** addressed the implementation of the strategic plan and the student achievement component. He asked the board to consider holding a community forum to address concerns, including the allegation that people are not being treated fairly in the district and that children are not receiving the best effort at education. He emphasized the importance of looking at things other than teaching when trying to determine hindrances to student achievement.

**Cheryl Warden** addressed the transition from the alternative classroom to the traditional classroom setting. She stated that the current process of "rotating children" through the LRSD is contributing to student failure. She asked for a review of the recidivism rate reflected in the alternative classroom setting, especially at Hamilton Learning Academy. She asked the board to examine the successes and consider the failures of current efforts to help students to achieve. Ms. Warden ceded a portion of her time to allow Mr. Walker to continue his comments.

Mr. Walker stated it was a poor decision to create the alternative learning center at Hamilton because the students were merely being labeled and were then unable to successfully transition back to a regular school setting. He expressed his belief that all children should be taught in the schools where they were assigned.

**Helen Davis** also ceded her time to Mr. Walker, who continued his remarks regarding achievement and accountability in the schools.

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

Cathy Koehler addressed the board and reported that the CTA had conducted a survey of teachers in the schools to determine their views on a variety of issues. The number one concern was student classroom behavior. Remarks included in response to the survey were that 1) students do not dress appropriately and 2) students don't come to class with a positive attitude toward learning. She responded to some of Mr. Walker's remarks on placement in the alternative classroom setting, stating that the students have to accept responsibility for their actions.

Ms. Koehler also reported positive comments regarding Dr. Watson's performance as superintendent and spoke in support of extending her contract.

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

Patty Barker reminded the board that the new council president, Henri Smothers, would likely be attending the next and future board meetings.

She thanked all who were involved in the combined Founders Day and spring luncheon held at Second Presbyterian Church. She thanked Mr. Hearnberger, choir director from J. A. Fair for coordinating the student performance at the luncheon, and the Color Guard from Felder Academy.

Ms. Barker recognized the annual PTA Council award winners:

- Administrator of the Year: **Dr. Jill Brooks, Principal, David O. Dodd Elementary**
- Teacher of the Year: **Kenya Robinson, Wilson Elementary**
- Children's Champion: **Andrew Webre, Forest Park Elementary**
- Communications: **Central High School**
- Heroic Effort: **Gwen Thompson, Western Hills Elementary**
- Outstanding PTA Unit: **Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary**
- Parent Education: **Felder Academy**
- Safety: **Central High School-Project Graduation**

Ms. Barker closed by thanking Mr. Carreiro and Mr. Kurrus for attending the Roberts Elementary School PTA organizational meeting and announced that the Statewide leadership training would be held on July 31.

### F. Donations of Property

The board was asked to approve the receipt of recent donations to the district. Evan Wordlow read the list of donations. Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the donations; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

#### DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Forest Park Elementary	\$10,846.00 to assist with the purchase of Yamaha MIE System	Forest Park PTA
Wilson Elementary	30 circus passes, valued at \$300.00 to be used as student incentives during Benchmark exams	Randall Dixon, agent of AFLAC Insurance
	300 free admission and buffet passes, valued at \$1,485.00 to be used as student incentives	Playtime Pizza
Woodruff Early Childhood Center	\$400.00 cash to provide incentives and materials for faculty and staff members	Dayspring Behavioral Health Services of Arkansas

### III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

#### A. Remarks from Board Members

**Dr. Daugherty** offered congratulations to Ms. Rugen Anderson for being selected as the LRSD middle school teacher of the year. He also expressed condolences to Benny Johnson, LRSD security officer, on the recent death of his fiancée, who was a LRSD teacher.

**Ms. Curry** thanked the PTA for their annual end of year luncheon. She also congratulated Ms. Fox on her selection to attend the Mom's Congress in Washington, D.C.

**Ms. Fox** congratulated all of the seniors on their upcoming graduations. She reported that as a result of her attendance at the national *Parenting Magazine* Mom's conference, two LRSD schools will receive library books and technology.

**Dr. Mitchell** reported that she had attended many of the schools' year end celebrations, the PTA Council luncheon, the Teacher of the Year banquet, and the reception for employees who are retiring this year. She commended the graduating students who have received numerous awards and honors and she acknowledged the students who graduated from Hamilton and the ACC.

Dr. Mitchell referred to comments made earlier in the meeting regarding assignment of students to alternative classrooms, saying "All students don't succeed in a regular classroom. Some students do well in alternative settings." She stated that the students who do well in the alternative settings appreciate the opportunity for a second chance.

**Mr. Kurrus** reported that he enjoyed the organizational meeting for the Roberts Elementary School PTA. He reported that some of the parents who will bring their children to Roberts haven't been in a public school before, and they are coming together for their first experience in a public school setting. He challenged them to continue in the LRSD after elementary school to middle and high schools in order to help us be a more successful school district.

Mr. Kurrus also encouraged parents who might not have considered their public school options, saying that the "real world experience of attending a public school is priceless."

**Mr. Carreiro** echoed the comments of appreciation for all the end-of-year celebrations. He expressed comments similar to those of Mr. Kurrus regarding his children's positive experiences in the LRSD. He noted that there are many good things to celebrate at this time of the year and he expressed hope that the board would take the next steps to succeed with implementation of the strategic plan. He also encouraged the district to pay attention and to begin developing a new vision for middle schools.

**Mr. Armstrong** also spoke in support of public schools, noting that his daughter was also a successful public school product. He encouraged parents, community leaders, businesses, and churches to lend a hand to make the public schools stronger. "We live in a global economy and we must have participation from all aspects of the community in order to succeed." He noted that the cost of incarceration was much higher than the cost of education.

## **B. Update: Strategic Plan**

Dr. Watson reported that she and Mr. Armstrong had held discussions with Dr. Cohn regarding his willingness to serve as a consultant on implementing the strategic plan. Once they have the contract, they will bring it for the board's review.

She also reported that the literacy audit by consultants from the Council of Great City Schools was completed last week. Their report is not complete at this time, but it will be a resource of information to determine if our literacy program is effective. They did report in the exit conference that the preliminary results of the audit found implementation was a problem in some schools. They will provide recommendations for areas where improvement can be made. The report is expected within the next two months.

### **C. Update: Summer School**

Summer program information was provided as part of the board's agenda. Dr. Daugherty questioned whether students from other districts were eligible to attend LRSD summer schools and whether our students were accepted first. Mr. Babbs responded that LRSD students are served before others are accepted.

Ms. Curry asked to see a comparison of students who attended summer school last year with those who will be returning to summer school this year. She asked if they were "tagged" so that their success from one year to the next can be measured.

### **D. Budget Update**

Mr. Bailey provided a brief update, and he reported the LRSD would receive 100% of the stimulus funding requested. He also noted that interactive whiteboards had been installed at several schools, and other schools would receive theirs prior to the start of school in 2010.

He noted that there had been some changes in the budget process to improve the way school funds are allocated. He reported that he would be visiting with the principals in all the schools to go over their budget reports and to ensure they understand the process, and to determine if they need assistance in completing their budget reports.

Ms. Fox asked if the budgeting timeline was on track, and Mr. Bailey assured the board that although we are a few weeks behind at this point, they should still be ready to approve the 2010-2011 budget in August.

Mr. Carreiro asked if the funding rubric provided in the strategic plan was being followed when making budgetary decisions. Mr. Bailey assured him that they were looking at that and considering the recommendations on technology included in the strategic plan.

### **E. Internal Auditors Report**

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

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

### **A. Minutes**

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on April 22, 2010 and from special meetings held on April 27 and May 6 were presented for the board's review and approval. Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **V. ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. Board meeting Dates, 2010-2011 School Year**

The board annually approves the twelve-month schedule of regular meeting dates. According to policy, the second and fourth Thursday of each month are designated as regular meeting dates.

Several exceptions to the calendar were noted including the Thanksgiving holiday, Winter break, Spring break and graduation dates in May. Approval of the proposed schedule was requested. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the calendar of meeting dates as presented. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

### **A. K-2 Report Card and Rubric**

The board was provided with information regarding recommended changes in the rubrics and report cards for kindergarten through second grades. Beth Clifford and Vanessa Cleaver were present to respond to questions. The new report cards had been piloted at several schools across the district; teachers, principals, and parents were invited to express their concerns and comments.

Teachers Jennifer Beasley, King Elementary, and Ashley Davis, Carver Elementary, were also present to make remarks regarding their experiences using the new rubrics and report cards. Both of them expressed belief that the format was useful in showing parents exactly where their children were excelling and where they needed additional instruction and support.

Dr. Mitchell expressed support for the new report card format, and stated that it was easier for parents to understand how to help their children and how to intervene to make sure their children are learning the skills.

Mr. Kurrus requested follow up on the use of the new report cards to determine if they are an accurate assessment of progress and an indicator of the need for remediation and reinforcement.

Ms. Fox moved to approve the K-2 report cards and rubric. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **VII. SCHOOL SERVICES**

### **A. Renaming of Hall High School Gymnasium**

Associate Superintendent Babbs and the principal and staff of Hall High School brought a recommendation for naming the new gymnasium at Hall High School for long-time Coach George Cirks. The recommendation provided biographical information for Coach Cirks, including the fact that he has been employed by the LRSD for thirty-eight years as a teacher and a coach.

Mr. Kurrus spoke in support of the recommendation, noting that he had known Coach Cirks for 30 years, and thanking him for his successful career in the LRSD and at Hall High School.

Coach Cirks expressed appreciation for the recognition. His wife was present, and he thanked her for supporting him over the past thirty-eight years. He expressed appreciation to Principal Rhonda Hall, the school faculty, and to Athletic Director Johnny Johnson for

supporting the recommendation for this recognition. He thanked the other Hall High coaching staff and the cheerleading sponsor for always being supportive of the team. He closed by thanking the student athletes for their hard work and especially recognized one of the students present who called him every day during a time when his mother was ill and he was off work.

Ms. Fox moved to approve the naming of the Hall High School gymnasium for Coach George Cirks. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and **carried unanimously**.

## **VIII. STUDENT SERVICES**

### **A. Report and Recommendations from the Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committee (NPAAC)**

The superintendent presented the recommendations developed by the district's Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committee (NPAAC) for the board's review. Nursing Coordinator Margo Bushmiaer was present to respond to questions.

There was a brief discussion regarding the need for additional nurses in the schools, especially at those sites where children require critical care, diabetes management, and asthma treatments. Ms. Fox encouraged the administration to review the possible hiring of at least one additional "roving" nurse to support those schools which don't have a full time nurse or during times when the regular nurse is absent.

Dr. Daugherty agreed with Ms. Fox and suggested hiring LPN's to ensure that we have qualified medical professionals working with our children. Dr. Mitchell encouraged seeking retired RN's or LPN's who may be available to serve as substitute or part time nurses.

## **IX. HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **A. Personnel Changes**

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. In addition, recommendations for appointments of school principals and assistant principals were included. Dr. Watson recommended considering the two personnel sections separately.

For the routine personnel changes, Mr. Kurrus moved to approve. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Dr. Watson reported that the recommendations for appointment of principals at Rockefeller, Bale and Williams Magnet were being pulled at this time for a review by administration and the interview teams. Those recommendations will be brought back for approval in June.

Some members of the board had questions regarding the reassignments of personnel and whether the superintendent can administratively reassign staff. Attorney Eddings was present to respond to questions, stating that the interpretation of board policy would be a consideration for the board to discuss.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Fox moved for an executive session to discuss personnel issues. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. The board remained in executive session from 7:00 p.m. to 8:07 p.m. They returned to report that no action was taken.

## PERSONNEL CHANGES *(CONTINUED)*

Dr. Watson recommended the administrative reassignment of Ann Blaylock from principal of Mabelvale Middle School to principal of Hall High School. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendation for principal of Hall. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion.

Ms. Fox stated that she would not be voting in favor of any of the personnel reassignments presented tonight. It was her belief that the board's policy was not being followed and that parents and staff at the schools should play a part in the selection of their principal.

Ms. Curry spoke in support of Ms. Blaylock for principal. Mr. Carreiro suggested that the policy should be revised so that in the future the stakeholders would be assured a part in the appointment of their principals. After discussion, the motion to appoint Ann Blaylock as principal of Hall High **carried 5-2**, with Ms. Fox and Mr. Kurrus voting no.

The superintendent recommended appointment of Dexter Booth as principal of Parkview Magnet High School. Dr. Daugherty moved to approve the appointment, and Ms. Curry seconded the motion. The motion carried **carried 5-2**, with Ms. Fox and Mr. Kurrus voting no.

On Dr. Watson's recommendation, Dr. Mitchell moved to appoint Rhonda Hall as principal of Mabelvale Middle School. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion. There was a brief discussion regarding this appointment, with Mr. Kurrus stating that the better approach would be to involve the community, the teachers and staff when making this decision. Dr. Daugherty commented also, expressing disappointment that board members are micromanaging by telling the superintendent who to hire or not to hire as principal.

Ms. Curry agreed with Mr. Carreiro's comments earlier regarding revision of the policy for future appointments. In the meantime, however, she asked the board to consider now what is best for the LRSD.

Mr. Carreiro offered a motion to table the appointment of the principal of Mabelvale Middle School until the next meeting. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion. The motion to table carried **5-2** with Mr. Kurrus and Dr. Mitchell voting no.

Dr. Watson presented a recommendation to appoint Cassandra Norman as the Coordinator of the Accelerated Learning Program (ACC) at Metropolitan. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

The superintendent recommended the appointment of Misti Sims as assistant principal of Roberts Elementary School. Mr. Carreiro moved to approve the recommendation, Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried 6-1** with Ms. Fox casting the no vote.

**X. 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.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Fox, seconded by Ms. Curry.

APPROVED: 06-24-10

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