



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

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**  
**June 10, 2010**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held a special meeting on Thursday, June 10, 2010 immediately following the regular agenda meeting. The meeting was held in the Boardroom 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 immediately following the regular agenda meeting. All members of the board were present at roll call.

**II. Appointment of School Administrator**

The administration recommended the appointment of Rhonda Hall as principal of Mabelvale Middle School. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendation; Ms. Curry seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the motion **carried 4-3**, with Mr. Armstrong, Dr. Daugherty, Ms. Curry and Dr. Mitchell voting in favor. Ms. Fox, Mr. Carreiro and Mr. Kurrus voted no.

Prior to the vote, Ms. Fox stated her opposition to the appointment for reasons stated in a previous board meeting. She expressed a desire to involve parents and the school staff in the selection of building leaders.

Mr. Carreiro expressed concerns regarding the process for hiring building administrators, and Mr. Armstrong agreed the board would work on the policies and regulations to ensure the board develops a consistent process and policy.

Mr. Eddings was present to respond to questions regarding the board's procedures and adherence to current policy.

Dr. Watson discussed the routine reassigning of staff during previous administrations. Mr. Kurrus responded, by saying that some of what we have done in previous administrations has contributed to our lack of success. He stated that the district has to deal with the fact that the leadership pool needs to be upgraded, saying, "We have to be bold, step forward, and admit that what we have done in the past isn't working."

Dr. Mitchell asked that the board address the problems and issues and stop making negative comments about the school district. Ms. Curry asked that we find a way to collaborate to move the district forward; to learn from past mistakes and do things differently than what has been done in the past.

### **III. Promise Neighborhoods**

The board was asked to approve the district's participation in the Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant. This is a collaborative project involving the LRSD and Arkansas Children's Hospital, Central Arkansas Library System, City of Little Rock Board and New Futures for Youth in collaboration with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's University District Educational Network initiative. Five LRSD schools would be involved: Bale Elementary, Franklin Elementary, Stephens Elementary, Forest Heights Middle School and Hall High School.

Sadie Mitchell introduced Julie Hall and Vice-Chancellor Bill Walker from the UALR University District Educational Network Initiative. The Memorandum of Understanding presented for the board's consideration provided a commitment from each of the partners to work together during the planning year to further develop educational opportunities for students in the LR schools located around UALR. Twenty cities would receive the Promise Communities grant, which is based on a model that has received national acclaim as the Harlem Children's Zone.

Mr. Carreiro suggested that Mr. Armstrong appoint a board member to serve on the planning committee. Dr. Katherine Mitchell has been serving as a representative of the New Futures board.

Mr. Kurrus expressed concern about whether the group initiative would have a significant impact on academic achievement. He noted past efforts which have not provided systemic change in these schools.

Julie Hall would be the project manager and would coordinate the efforts among the partner agencies. The city has committed \$50,000 to the effort; the Rockefeller Foundation has indicated support for the application but has not committed a specific dollar amount. The LRSD and other partners would provide varying levels of financial and in-kind donations.

Mr. Carreiro moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

*The board took a brief recess prior to the hearings, and reconvened at 6:45 p.m.*

#### IV. Employee Hearings

The district's seven Curriculum Compliance Coaches (CCC's) requested a hearing to appeal the administration's decision to place them back in regular classroom teaching positions. The coaches involved in the hearing were Loretta Davenport, Patricia Bullock, Paula Korte, Tina Miller, Marjorie Plant, Kelly Simmons, and Jackie Whitehead. They each received the required letter notifying them that their contracts would not be renewed under the same terms and conditions as their previous contracts.

David Hartz provided written summary information for the board's review; Paula Korte spoke on behalf of the CCC's. These employees objected to the elimination of their positions and expressed belief that the action is discriminatory based on the fact that other coaching positions in other subject areas have not been eliminated. They reported inconsistencies in the way positions are being filled, and they asked the board to let them remain in their positions. They also asked for the opportunity to continue to work with Renee Dawson who has assisted the coaches in developing a consistent curriculum for special education students.

Barbara Barnes responded to questions from the board regarding professional development opportunities for the CCC's other than those provided by Ms. Dawson through Educational Services. Elna Hasberry, special education supervisor, also responded to questions regarding the responsibilities of the coaches and the supervisors.

Dr. Watson explained her decision for making the recommendation to place these teachers in the classroom as a means to prevent being cited by the state for not having enough certified teachers in special education. She asked the board to uphold her recommendation, with the understanding that the individuals would be reassigned as curriculum coaches as soon as certified special education teachers are hired.

Dr. Watson offered a compromise to the employees at a conference prior to this hearing, asking them to accept teaching positions with additional curriculum coaching responsibilities. The coaches did not want to split their time between teaching and coaching. Under this compromise, the teachers would transition back to their coaching positions full time as the certified teachers are hired and placed in the classrooms.

It was the superintendent's recommendation that the coaches be placed in classroom positions and to work in a dual role, assuming some of the coaching responsibilities until a full time teacher is found.

Ms. Fox asked if this decision had to be made at this time or whether it could be postponed until it is determined how many new special education teachers are hired for the next school year. Mr. Kurrus asked to clarify the length of the contract for teachers (9¼ month) and asked if it was possible to provide a 9¾ month contract for these employees, which would include the additional duties of the coaches as assigned.

Mr. Kurrus made a motion to support the superintendent's recommendation to offer the CCC's a contract based on the same length as their previous contract, but that they be assigned teaching duties and other duties as assigned as reasonable in order to meet state standards. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

Mr. Armstrong requested a motion to suspend the rules to convene an executive session to discuss the evaluation of the superintendent. Ms. Fox made the motion to suspend the rules. The motion died for lack of second, with Mr. Kurrus noting that a motion to suspend the rules in a special meeting had to be by a unanimous vote.

Mr. Armstrong announced that he would call a special meeting next week to discuss the superintendent's evaluation.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, Mr. Kurrus moved to adjourn at 8:26 p.m.

APPROVED: 06-24-10

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