



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

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

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 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
Jody Carreiro
Melanie Fox
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 5:38 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call. Ms. Curry arrived at 6:00 p.m. The ex officio teacher representative, Tina Ross from Fair Park Early Childhood Center, was also present.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Superintendent's Remarks

Dr. Watson reminded listeners of school check-in on August 4-5, 2010, and reported that the Principals' Institute would begin the week of July 26, 2010. She introduced Attorney Chris Heller who briefly summarized some pending litigation in the district.

He reported on an upcoming trial on August 17 in Judge Wilson's Court. Litigation was brought against the district by an employee alleging that her supervisors retaliated against her for being too strong an advocate for handicapped students. Another lawsuit by a current employee of the Child Nutrition department is scheduled for October 14.

Regarding the district's motion to enforce the settlement agreement, Mr. Heller reported that he was meeting with potential witnesses, and he has asked Judge Miller to provide a scheduling order which has not yet been received. Counsel for the Arkansas Department of Education has responded that he is preparing to provide information that was given to the University of Arkansas Office of Educational Policy that was used to develop their latest study.

B. Remarks from Citizens

Carrie Stewart, a fourth grade teacher at Watson Elementary School, addressed the board and spoke in favor of continuing to use *America's Choice*. She provided a handout of information which was compiled with the assistance of the new principal at Watson. She expressed belief that the staff at Watson was stable, and that the former principal was an instructional leader who helped the staff fully implement the *America's Choice* model to help the students at Watson to be successful.

C. Little Rock PTA Council

Henri Smothers, the PTA Council president, greeted the board and offered a brief overview of current Council efforts to encourage PTA membership and participation. Council members and PTA presidents have spent the summer planning and preparing for a successful school year. The first PTA Council meeting will be held at Roberts Elementary School in September.

D. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Cathy Kohler addressed the board and welcomed Henri Smothers as the new PTA Council president. Ms. Kohler reported being very busy over the summer getting ready for the new school year. She reported that she had attended the discipline and handbook committee meeting, and had attended a meeting to assist in developing the school improvement grant application.

Ms. Kohler expressed support for the board and administration and encouraged an environment of trust, cooperation and respect. She also stated support for the agreement reached between the board and Dr. Cohn, indicating that she was glad he would be involved in efforts of team building and cooperative relationships.

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Dr. Mitchell thanked teachers and administrators who worked diligently with students to improve achievement across the district. She encouraged principals, teachers and parents to become involved in the educational process. She especially noted the progress of the students at Mabelvale, Franklin and Geyer Springs Elementary schools where there was exceptional student achievement.

Mr. Armstrong reported that he had attended the key ceremony at the new Roberts Elementary School on the previous Monday. He expressed pleasure in the beautiful new facility and remarked that it was his hope that someday soon all schools across the district would be upgraded and improved.

B. Update: Roberts Elementary School

Barbara Anderson, principal of Roberts Elementary School, addressed the board providing a brief and enthusiastic overview of the progress and planning for the upcoming year. She introduced the assistant principal, Misty Sims. Highlights included:

- plans to have a mural installed on the wall of the library;
- placement of painted wooden benches and seats provided by the PTA;
- staff members have been hired, and many of them attended a meeting at Izzy's in July;
- the PTA has held their second meeting and has elected officers;
- Ms. Anderson has met with families in the apartment complex on Chenal;
- Bancorp South will provide a breakfast for the teachers on their first day back to work;
- Dr. Sain will meet with staff and assist in writing the mission statement, goals and guiding principals.
- a Saturday tour for staff only is scheduled;
- a meet and greet night is scheduled for parents on August 17;
- the official dedication ceremony will be held on Sunday, September 19;
- 702 students are currently registered to attend.

Steve St. John, construction manager, was present and provided a brief overview of progress:

- the building is substantially complete, with the exception of the cafeteria floor tile;
- construction trailers will be removed, and landscaping will be completed within two or three weeks;
- the traffic signal will be installed by August 5, but won't be operational until August 14;
- the signage will be installed on or before August 18, and a monument sign will be placed within 3 or 4 weeks;
- furniture has been delivered and is being assembled.

C. Update: Cloverdale Aerospace Charter School

Principal **Willie Vinson** provided an overview of progress in preparing to reopen Cloverdale as the Aerospace Charter School. He noted the major component of restructuring was the reconstitution of the school staff. Fifty-one (51) percent of the staff will be new to the school with teachers applying specifically to work at Cloverdale and within the aerospace theme curriculum. The recent job fair brought candidates from Tennessee, Texas, Missouri and surrounding states.

Mr. Vinson also reported that Lisa Mack would be coordinating the aerospace curriculum for all 6th graders, which will be integrated throughout the curriculum. The plans also include sending teachers and students to space camp in support of the aerospace theme.

Mr. Vinson announced that a community festival would be held at Cloverdale on Saturday afternoon from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Thirteen businesses and agencies near the school are supporting the effort to include as many area residents as possible.

Expected improvements to the school and campus include additional parking availability at the school for staff and parents and completion of the restroom renovations. Smart Boards have been mounted in the classrooms, with the expected completion in October or November.

D. Quarterly Report from Schools on Improvement and School Improvement Specialists

Mr. Glasgow reviewed the progress reports provided for the board from the school improvement specialists. Each school had submitted an update of progress toward compliance with their school improvement plans. It was reported that the elementary schools all agreed the SOAR assessments were their most valuable tool in improving student achievement. Classroom walk-through and the "assessment wall" were also regarded highly by the principals for assisting in increasing student performance.

Improvement strategies included the reorganization of school leadership teams to make them more effective, an increased emphasis on parental involvement, more support for teachers to become instructional leaders; an increased integration of math and literacy throughout all subject areas, and efforts to increase parental support for after school tutoring.

Secondary principals also recognized SOAR assessments as their number one tool for improving student achievement. In addition, reading intervention classes at the middle schools, double-blocking math and literacy, the additional resource of math and literacy coaches, classroom walkthroughs and emphasis on data review were credited with aiding increases in student achievement.

Dr. Phil Clark, Ms. Isophene Jones, and Dr. James Jennings were present to respond to questions from the board. They discussed their perception of the amount of support for implementation of school improvement, implementation of the individual school ACSIP plan, and the varying resources available to building leaders and teachers.

Board members expressed concerns regarding the implementation of ACSIP plans, allocation of resources, and the interventions used to assist students. They asked that the school improvement specialists identify which interventions have been successful and which need to be eliminated due to their ineffectiveness. They were also asked to incorporate information from the PRE department to determine cost effectiveness of some of the intervention programs.

E. PRE July 2010 Quarterly Report

The PRE Quarterly Report was provided in the board's agenda. Dr. Karen DeJarnette and Dennis Glasgow were present to respond to questions.

Board members asked questions about reading intervention at the secondary level. Dr. DeJarnette and Mr. Glasgow responded, noting that 10th and 11th grade students aren't tested, but that of those tested 3,385 students did not score at the proficient or advanced level.

These 3,385 students would be those targeted for intervention through Read 180 or America's Choice. Mr. Glasgow reported that America's Choice is a whole school intervention, meaning that all teachers in the school are trained to use various strategies, work shop models, and research-based strategies to work with all their students to improve achievement across the curriculum.

The "ramp-up" program served 259 students to provide targeted intervention strategies in literacy and mathematics. This is the state mandated implementation of America's Choice and the state paid for teacher training and materials for 100 students per grade level in literacy and math. The LRSD has added to the amount paid by the state in order to increase the number of students served.

Dr. Watson responded to questions regarding the tracking and monitoring of student progress in the intervention programs, including tagging students in the district's database. A more in-depth report is to be provided in August.

Maurecia Robinson addressed statistical questions regarding information provided in the report. Mr. Kurrus asked for additional statistical analysis on larger groups of students to determine if the programs used for intervention are effective. He expressed concern about the lack of context in the reports and for a recommendation from the superintendent on a reduction of programs which have proved to be ineffective.

The board recessed at 7:37 and resumed at 7:53 p.m.

F. Update: Strategic Plan

Dr. Watson reported that a contract for services to assist with implementation of the strategic plan had been forwarded to Dr. Carl Cohn. As requested by the board, the contract was reviewed by the LRSD procurement department and attorneys. Dr. Cohn expects to be in Little Rock by the agenda meeting in August, and plans to attend the regular August 26 board meeting.

In response to a question from Ms. Fox, Dr. Watson reported that annual and five-year improvement goals would be established for each school and that the school leadership teams would participate in the development of these goals as they complete their individual school ACSIP plans. These individual plans would become a part of the district-wide ACSIP plan.

G. Budget Update

Mr. Bailey was present. Later in the meeting, he provided a budget process handout for the board's review. Additional information will be provided as the annual budget is compiled and prepared for submission to the ADE.

H. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's report was provided as part of the board's agenda. He was not present.

IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on June 24, 2010 and from a special meeting held on July 8, 2010, were presented for the board's review and approval. Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

V. ADMINISTRATION

A. Superintendent's Contract Extension

Dr. Daugherty requested an addition to the agenda for the board's consideration: the extension of the superintendent's contract. The current contract has an expiration date of June 30, 2011, and by Arkansas law may be renewed annually for a term not to exceed three years.

Dr. Daugherty made a motion to extend the contract for a period of one additional year; Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the **motion failed 3-4**, with Dr. Daugherty, Dr. Mitchell and Ms. Curry voting in favor. Ms. Fox, Mr. Kurrus, Mr. Carreiro and Mr. Armstrong voted no.

VI. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. North Central Association AdvancEd / NCA

The administration presented a recommendation to revise the North Central Association / AdvancEd district accreditation review on a five year cycle rather than the current annual accreditation of ten schools at a time.

LRSD schools have been individually NCA accredited for many years, some since 1924. NCA has now changed to AdvancEd/NCA and provides an opportunity to participate in a process to achieve district-wide accreditation. Individual staff members, departments and board members would participate in the process culminating in a review by peers from accredited national urban school districts. The accreditation would be renewed every five years.

Ms. Curry moved to approve the administration's recommendation; Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES:

ADE – Grant Submission: School Improvement Grant Funds

Mr. Carreiro offered a motion to suspend the rules to consider the submission of three school improvement grant applications. Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Linda Young requested approval of three school improvement grant applications to the Arkansas Department of Education. She responded to questions from the board regarding the submissions for Hall High School, J. A. Fair High School and Cloverdale Aerospace Charter School. Mr. Carreiro asked if the board would be given an opportunity to review the entire grant application packets once they were completed; Ms. Young agreed. In the meantime, the critical elements of the application were reviewed in brief. Each of the schools will utilize grant funds to implement early prevention of dropout strategies. As many of the strategies as possible will be implemented immediately in order to get off to a strong start for the 2010-11 school year.

Dr. Watson reported that the grant funds would allow the schools to broaden some of the things they were already doing with the addition of resources to provide additional student support, more dropout prevention, and possibly a social worker-type employee, to help keep students in school. It was noted that Cloverdale has had two school improvement grants in the past. The funds have been used for extensive summer programs.

Dr. Watson reported that the Hall and Cloverdale applications are nearly complete, and it is her intent to submit all three applications immediately. However, if the J. A. Fair application is not complete, she would ask the board to return next week to approve that submission in a separate vote.

Ms. Curry made a motion to authorize the administration to submit the grants for Hall and Cloverdale, and to also submit the application for J. A. Fair if it is complete by the due date. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried 6-1**, with Ms. Fox casting the no vote.

VII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. Mr. Carreiro moved to approve the personnel changes as presented. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

Additional administrative assignments were recommended for approval:

- **Karen James** was recommended for appointment to the position of Director of Early Literacy / Early Childhood. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendation; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried 6-1**, with Ms. Fox casting the no vote.
- **Karissa Nichols** was recommended for the position of assistant principal at Hall High School. Ms. Fox moved to approve the recommendation. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.
- **Stephanie England** was recommended for the position of principal of Watson Elementary principal. Ms. Fox made a motion to approve the recommendation; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

- **Frank Williams** was recommended for the position of assistant principal of Cloverdale Aerospace Charter Middle School. Ms. Fox moved to approve the recommendation. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. 2010 Annual School Election Polling Sites

The administration recommended approval of a Resolution to the Pulaski County Election Commission in the instance that only one candidate files for election to the Zones 2 and 4 positions on the LRSD Board.

Arkansas Code Ann. §6-14-102 (c)(1), states “if there are no contested races and no other issues to be decided, the District may request that the Election Commission open no polling places on election day so that the election can be conducted by absentee ballot and early voting only.” This option would reduce the election cost to the District by approximately \$30,000. By this same law, the Election Commission must be notified by **July 29, 2010** in order for ballots to be prepared in accordance with State law. The filing deadline for the 2010 election is July 23, 2010, and if additional candidates file prior to the that deadline, this Resolution would be rescinded.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the Resolution presented. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Carreiro, seconded by Mr. Kurrus .

APPROVED: 08-26-10

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