



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

MINUTES  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
March 19, 2009

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2009, in the Boardroom of the Administration Building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Dianne Curry presided.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Dianne Curry  
Charles Armstrong  
Jody Carreiro  
Melanie Fox  
Baker Kurrus  
Katherine Mitchell

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mike Daugherty

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Linda Watson, Superintendent  
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

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

Ms. Curry called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Five members of the board were present at roll call; Mr. Armstrong arrived at 5:40 p.m. Dr. Daugherty was absent. **Catherine Sue Williams** student at Central High School and **Cara Lynn Penn** teacher from Fulbright Elementary were present as ex officio members of the board for the month of March.

Ms. Curry welcomed members of the audience and asked Dr. Watson to proceed with the citations and commendations.

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

**A. Superintendent's Citations & Commendations**

Dr. Watson introduced **Dr. Krishna Young**, Coordinator of the Hamilton Alternative Learning Academy. Dr. Young introduced **Master Lucas Taekwon Lee**, who represents the American Taekwondo Association, which is celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> year. The ATA has established a partnership with the Hamilton Learning Academy, utilizing Instructor **Master Richard Anderson** from the Arkansas ATA. The program at Hamilton has been named **Leadership Nine**. Students from Master Anderson's program performed briefly for the board. It was announced that students from Hamilton will receive instruction as a collaborative effort between the LRSD, City of Little Rock, and ATA.

**Johnny Johnson** sent an announcement that the opening of baseball season at the newly renovated Kanis Park would be this Friday night. Hall and Parkview will play, and it was noted that this would be the first year that these schools would be able to play all of their home games at Kanis Park. Free hot dogs and drinks will be provided.

Certificates of appreciation were presented to the student ex-officio, **Catherine Sue Williams** from Central High School, and the teacher, **Cara Lynn Penn** from Fulbright Elementary.

## **SUSPENSION OF THE RULES**

Ms. Fox moved to suspend the rules to reorder the agenda. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. Action on the *Naming of the West Little Rock School* was taken at this time, but will be reported later in these minutes.

## **B. Partners in Education**

Debbie Milam presented several new partnerships for the board's review and approval:

- **W.D. "Bill" Hamilton Learning Academy**, represented by Krishna Young partnering with:
  - **American Taekwondo Association**, represented by **Master Lucus Lee** and **Master Richard Anderson**
  - **100 Black Men, Greater Little Rock Chapter**, represented by **Darren Hamilton**
- **Watson Intermediate School**, represented by **Betty Mosley**, partnering with:
  - **Agape Church**, represented by **Cathy Dortch** and with
  - **Luigi's Pizzeria**
- **Felder Academy**, represented by **Judge Evans**, partnering with **Arkansas Sustainability Network**, represented by **Daniel Wills, Katie Elliott, and Jonathan Buford**

Dr. Mitchell made a motion to accept the partnerships, Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **C. Remarks from Citizens**

**Shelly Ehinger**, Director of the City of Little Rock Housing Authority, made brief remarks and presented a check in the amount of \$50,944.00, which represents the Housing Authority's Payment in Lieu of Taxes. The Housing Authority will build 120 apartment homes across the street from Washington Magnet School, and Ms. Ehinger stressed to the board that the Housing Authority continues in partnership with the district to provide valuable services to children and families.

**Becky Rather, Connie Walker, and Betty Slater** addressed the board on behalf of non-certified and clerical staff members who are supportive of an early retirement incentive for employees. They asked that the certified and non-certified staff be treated equally when making a decision on a retirement incentive. Ms. Walker stated "we aren't the top paid employees, but we are the glue that holds us together." Ms. Slater also stated that the insurance incentive would allow her to retire after 24 years with the district, but that without it she wouldn't be able to afford to retire.

**Carl Grummer**, an instructor at Metropolitan Career and Technical Center, spoke on behalf of teachers at Metropolitan and at the Accelerated Learning Center who are supportive of the early retirement insurance incentive.

#### **D. Little Rock PTA Council**

**Patty Barker**, President of the PTA Council, greeted the board and reported on the annual Founders Day luncheon. She thanked Central High School for sponsoring the annual event and for the participation of Central's color guard, jazz ensemble, and principal's cabinet members who served. Ms. Barker noted that the annual awards were announced with Charlotte Cook of Carver Elementary being named teacher of the year, Dr. Suzanne Ross from Central High School named administrator of the year, and Forest Park Elementary School named PTA unit of the year.

Ms. Barker encouraged parents to become involved in their local PTA units, announcing that this is the time of year for the local schools to nominate and elect their officers for the 2009-2010 school year.

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

Cathy Koehler addressed the board and introduced students from UALR and UCA who were attending the board meeting as part of the requirements of their Education as a Profession class.

Ms. Koehler asked the board to support the half-percent additional increase for salaries, and she asked for support for the early retirement insurance incentive. She reminded the board that the early retirement incentive was proposed initially to reduce expenses and to avoid a reduction in force as a savings measure. She expressed concern that we will be required to implement a districtwide reduction in force in order to affect the savings that could be realized by the insurance incentive.

### **IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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

**Ms. Fox** wished the audience, teachers, and staff a restful spring break.

**Mr. Kurrus** expressed appreciation to Ms. Penn, the teacher ex officio. He stated that she had taught two of his children at Fulbright and that she was a great teacher. Mr. Kurrus also encouraged the audience to attend the baseball game between Hall and Parkview on Friday evening at Kanis Park. He asked the city of Little Rock to step up in support of the public school athletic programs and provide additional recreational venues for youth athletics.

Mr. Kurrus closed by thanking the committee who worked on naming the new school in west Little Rock. He stated pride in the building of a new schools and said "nothing we could have done better than naming the school for Don Roberts."

**Mr. Carreiro** also thanked the committee who worked on the naming of the west Little Rock school, saying that he was proud of the process and the results. He reported that students in our schools have recently participated in regional band and choir competitions, and he noted that our students performed very well. He closed by saying that the LRSD has a great music program, and he encouraged the middle schools to be better represented at the competitions.

**Dr. Mitchell** reported that she had attended an informative educational conference where the new Secretary of Education explained the stimulus package and use of the funds for our schools. She encouraged others to be aware of the funding and to watch to make sure our state is using the funds wisely.

Dr. Mitchell also expressed gratitude for the new partnerships for the alternative education programs. She encouraged teachers to continue to work hard in meeting the needs of our students and she encouraged better attendance from our classroom teachers, reminding them that we could save a lot of money that we spend on substitutes.

**Mr. Armstrong** thanked the committee for naming the west Little Rock school after Dr. Don Roberts. He reported that he had attended the Parent Institute this past Saturday where he met with parents who are very concerned about what's going on in their schools. He encouraged more parental participation saying "these students are our future, and if we don't educate them we will be lost."

**Ms. Curry** thanked the audience for their comments and thanked the committee for selecting Dr. Don Roberts as the person for whom the new school will be named.

## **B. Legal Update**

Mr. Eddings provided a brief update and noted that it had been a year since the oral arguments at the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in the district's desegregation case. He reported that two new lawsuits had been filed in state court; one by a former interim employee who complained that she wasn't rehired at the end of her contract and a personal injury lawsuit from a Pulaski Tech student who was injured in the course of her classroom requirements. He also reported that the Jalisha Vandiver case was scheduled to be heard on appeal and would go to trial May 11 in Judge Eisele's court.

The board requested a written summary report of all open and pending legal issues and Mr. Eddings agreed to provide by the next board meeting.

## **C. Budget Update**

No report provided.

## **D. Internal Auditors Report**

Mr. Becker's report was provided in the agenda. No additional information was requested.

## **E. Student Registration Update**

A written student registration update was provided to the board immediately prior to the meeting.

# **V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS**

## **A. Donations of Property**

The Board was asked to approve the acceptance of recent donations to the District. Catherine Williams, student ex-officio representative, read the listed donation.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to accept the donation as listed; Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**. One donation is listed in the following chart:

**DONATIONS**

<b>SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DONOR</b>
Chicot Primary School	\$1,000 cash via SWLR Branch of Metropolitan National Bank to purchase food items for students	Anonymous

**B. Minutes**

Minutes from the regular board meeting of February 26, 2009, were presented for the board's review and approval. Ms. Fox moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

**VI. BOARD POLICY & REGULATIONS REVIEW**

**A. Second Reading: Revised Board Policy DC - Taxing and Borrowing**

The existing Board Policy *DC Taxing and Borrowing* did not include procedures that demonstrate post-issuance tax compliance. It was recommended by our auditors that procedures be implemented covering all aspects of post-issuance compliance related to the administration of bond proceeds. The board approved the policy on first reading at the February board meeting, and received a copy of the Post-Issuance Compliance Procedural Manual.

Mr. Armstrong moved to approve policy DC on second reading; Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

**VII. ADMINISTRATION**

**A. Naming the West Little Rock School**

The agenda was reordered and action on naming the west Little Rock school was taken earlier in the meeting. The Little Rock School District Board of Directors previously approved building a new elementary school on Taylor Loop and Cantrell Road. Construction has begun and the board had authorized a committee to select an official name for the school. Fifty four recommendations were presented for the committee's review and one was selected.

Dr. Sadie Mitchell and Tiffany Hoffman co-chaired the committee for naming the school. Voting was done privately and Mr. Becker and Ms. Elfrink tallied the votes.

The proposed name for the school was unveiled, and the administration recommended naming the school for Dr. Don Roberts, former interim superintendent of the Little Rock School District. Dr. Roberts had served earlier in his career as the superintendent of the Ft. Worth, Texas school district and as an associate superintendent in the Little Rock School District. Dr. Roberts and members of his family were present. Ms. Fox moved to approve naming the school for Dr. Don R. Roberts. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

## **VIII. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

### **A. Grant Proposals: ADE 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Program**

The administration requested approval for submission of 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grant applications for Terry and Otter Creek Elementary Schools. The funding would establish community learning centers to provide students with out-of-school academic tutoring and enrichment activities aligned with the schools' regular academic program including extended day, Saturday School and summer enrichment programs. If funded, each school would receive \$540,000 over a five-year period.

Dr. Mitchell moved to approve submission of the grant application; Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

### **B. Textbook Adoption – Career, JAG and Workplace Readiness**

The district's Career and Technical Education textbook committee provided their recommendations for the adoption of books and materials for use in teaching middle and high school courses for business and marketing, career guidance and exploration, Jobs for Arkansas' Graduates, and workplace readiness. Carol Green, Director of Career and Technical Education was available to respond to questions. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the adoption of the textbooks as recommended. Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

### **C. Textbook Adoption – Foreign Language**

The committee for the selection of foreign language textbook and materials provided their recommendations for adoptions for the 2009-2010 school year. Copies of the selected materials were provided for the board's review prior to the adoption and included texts for Latin, French, Spanish, German and Chinese. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the adoption of the texts selected. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously.**

## **IX. HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **A. Early Retirement Insurance Incentive Plan**

David Hartz addressed the board and responded to questions as a follow up to a presentation made at the agenda meeting. Mr. Hartz reported that in order to be financially beneficial to the district a minimum of fifty (50) full time certified teachers would be needed to sign up for the plan. In order to be eligible for the incentive, they must be on grade 61 or higher of the salary schedule and at step 20. He clarified for the board, stating that if fewer than fifty employees opted for the incentive plan it would not go forward.

Mr. Hartz and Ms. Elfrink responded to additional questions including whether the use of vacation or sick leave would be a problem for those who planned to retire under this plan. Mr. Hartz reported that the agreement would prevent unauthorized use of sick leave and that certified teachers and other employees who work less than 12 months do not accrue vacation time.

Ms. Curry asked for consideration to be given to an incentive for clerical and other non-certified employees. She asked board members to consider extending the offer to other employee groups. Ms. Fox agreed that it should be offered to all employee groups, but only if it was a cost savings measure.

Ms. Elfrink was asked to respond to questions regarding the amount of savings that might be realized by offering the same benefit to other groups. It was reported that \$15,000 would pay for insurance over three years, and that positions below grade 61 would not provide a reasonable savings to the district. She reported that the administration had not made that recommendation because it was not financially feasible to do so. She reported that a minimum of 30 employees in the non certified group would have to opt for early retirement in order to make it economically advantageous to the district. In addition, most of these employees would have to be replaced, which wouldn't result in a salary savings offset.

Mr. Kurrus stated his opposition to the motion and noted that he had not voted in favor when it was first proposed. He reminded the board that the entire plan was developed in order to save money for the district, not as an incentive for any particular employee group to leave. Dr. Mitchell agreed with his remarks, but stated that it was her belief that more people would come forward and report their intention to retire if the incentive were approved. "Without the payment to cover their insurance benefit they don't feel that they can afford to retire."

Mr. Carreiro encouraged employees not to take the early retirement incentive unless they were at least age 62 or planning to retire anyway, noting that the benefit of working three years and accruing benefits under the teacher retirement system far outweighs the benefit of the \$15,000 payment.

Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendation for the early retirement incentive. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it **failed 3-3**, with Ms. Fox, Mr. Kurrus, and Ms. Curry voting no.

After the vote, Ms. Curry asked for an amendment to include non-certified employees for the early retirement incentive. However the vote had been taken and the motion was no longer on the floor.

*The board took a brief recess and returned at 7:58 p.m.*

The board continued discussion on the previous issue and asked for additional information to be presented prior to the April board meeting, and for the issue to be reconsidered at a later date.

Ms. Curry passed the gavel to Mr. Armstrong and made a motion to reconsider the previous early retirement incentive recommendation. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion to reconsider and it **carried 4-2** with Dr. Mitchell and Mr. Kurrus voting no.

Ms. Curry made a motion to reconsider the early retirement incentive and to include non certified employees. Mr. Carreiro restated the intent of the motion: to approve the early retirement plan as presented with the addition of non-certified employees on a lower than 61 pay grade, with the actual amount to be determined and brought back to the board.

There was additional discussion to clarify the motion and Ms. Curry stated that it was her intent to approve the proposal presented by the administration at this time, and to approve the proposal for the non-certified employee groups with the details to be presented at next month's meeting.

Ms. Elfrink responded to questions and stated that for the non-certified or employees on a salary grade lower than 60 to be included the incentive, payout amounts would need to be reduced to \$10,000, \$8,000, or \$5,000, depending on their grade and levels of experience.

The motion **failed 3-2-1**, with Ms. Fox and Mr. Kurrus voting no, and Dr. Mitchell abstaining.

### **B. LRSD/LRCTA Proposed Re-Opener Salary Agreement 2008-2009**

Mr. Hartz discussed the proposal to reopen the 2008-09 contract agreement and to provide an additional .5 percent salary increase to all employees with the exception of administrators and CARE employees. Mr. Carreiro moved to approve the recommendation; Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

### **C. Personnel Changes**

Routine personnel matters were printed in the board's agenda Ms. Fox moved to approve the recommendations. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

The administration also recommended the appointment of Mr. Kelsey Bailey as the new Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Bailey's resume and supporting information was provided as an attachment to the board's agenda. The board discussed the resignation of Ms. Anne Elfrink, and that Mr. Bailey's appointment would be effective upon acceptance of her resignation. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendation; Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion conditional upon acceptance of Ms. Elfrink's resignation, and it **carried 5-1**, with Mr. Kurrus voting no.

## **X. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **A. February 2009 Financial Statements**

The monthly financial statements were attached to the board's agenda. No additional information was requested.

## **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 Mr. Armstrong.

APPROVED: 04-23-09

Originals Signed by:  
Dianne Curry, President  
Jody Carreiro, Secretary