



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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
April 23, 2009**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 23, 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
Mike Daugherty
Melanie Fox
Baker Kurrus
Katherine Mitchell

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Linda Watson, Superintendent
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Ms. Curry called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. All members of the board were present at roll call; **Thang Diep**, student at J. A. Fair High School and **Patricia Ross**, teacher from Geyer Springs Elementary were present as ex officio members of the board for the month of April.

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

LRSD Athletic Director **Johnny Johnson** introduced **Russ Herrington**, President and CEO of Baptist Health. Coach Johnson expressed appreciation to Baptist Health for the various ways that they partner with and support LRSD activities, including sports physicals, early childhood physicals, and the provision of volunteers in the district's schools. They recently contributed financially to the renovation of the baseball park at Kanis Park and provided the electronic scoreboard. Baptist also provides funding for the district's letter jacket program, whereby all athletes receive a letter jacket for their participation.

Teams from Cloverdale Magnet Middle School and Parkview Magnet High School recently participated in the Black History Month Quiz Bowl. The contest was sponsored by Senator Mark Pryor, who was represented by Mr. Frank Bateman at the meeting. The team from Parkview Magnet High School placed fourth in the high school division. Members were **John Cain, Kiara McIntosh, Billy Woods** and their coach **Cornelius Roberts**. The team from Cloverdale Magnet Middle School placed third in the middle school division. Members were **Alexis Britton, Daniel Calderon, Brenna Morris** and their coach **Nona Whittaker**.

Teresa Knapp Gordon, the Media Specialist at David O. Dodd Elementary School was selected to receive an "NEA Books Across America Library Award." Fifty awards are granted nationwide which provide \$1,000 to bring reading resources to economically disadvantaged public school students.

The ex-officio members of the board were **Thang Diep**, student at Fair High School, and **Patricia Ross**, teacher from Geyer Springs Elementary. Certificates of appreciation were provided for their service during the month of April.

Dr. Watson expressed appreciation to Terrence Bolden and Senator James Argue for agreeing to co-chair the district's Strategic Planning Commission. She also thanked Mr. Kurrus, the board's representative, and others from the community who have graciously agreed to give of their time in this effort.

Mr. Bolden provided a brief update on the two meetings of the strategic planning commission, and reported that the next meeting was scheduled for Monday, April 27, 2009. In addition a meeting with consultants from The Picus Group was scheduled for Monday, June 1, 2009 at the Clinton Library.

B. Partners in Education

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

- **Central High School**, represented by Nancy Rousseau, partnering with the **Arkansas Extended Learning Center**, represented by **Dana Venhaus**

Ms. Fox made a motion to accept the partnerships, Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. Remarks from Citizens

Master Richard Anderson from Anderson Taekwondo Academy addressed the board as a way of expressing appreciation for the support given by the district. Students from ATA did a brief demonstration of their skills and presented board members with trophies.

Rose Collier addressed the board, introducing herself as an advocate for her daughter at Mann Magnet Middle School. She stated that her daughter wasn't receiving appropriate services specified by her IEP. She expressed support for the district, but asked for the administration to listen to parents when there are areas of concern.

REORDER OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Armstrong moved to reorder the agenda to allow the Legal Update to be moved forward on the agenda. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Heller reported at this point, but his remarks will be included at the specified point in the agenda.

D. Closing the Achievement Gap / Community Conversation Update

Mr. Babbs and Mr. Glasgow were present to report on the Closing the Achievement gap committee recommendations. An overview of the report was presented at the April agenda meeting and questions were addressed at that time. Cathy Koehler also responded to questions from the board as a member of the Closing the Gap / Community Conversation committee.

E. Little Rock PTA Council

Patty Barker, President of the PTA Council, announced the election of Council officers for the 2009-10 school year. She expressed appreciation to the volunteers who were honored at the ViPS program this week. She congratulated Melanie Fox on her selection as the Jane Mendel Award recipient. Ms. Fox was nominated by the Forest Park elementary school PTA. She thanked the McClellan PTA and Mr. David Bernard for hosting the April Council luncheon.

F. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Cathy Koehler addressed the board and opened by thanking the McClellan students for hosting the PTA Council luncheon. She complimented the students for their courteous service and hospitality. She also congratulated Isaiah Bailey, who performed at a luncheon she attended at the Governors Mansion. Isaiah is a student at Central High School who recently received a scholarship to Ouachita Baptist College. Ms. Koehler also recognized Hannah Kelly, student at Forest Park Elementary, who also sang at the luncheon. She stated that these students represent the best of the LRSD.

Ms. Koehler discussed her attendance at the ACC commencement ceremony at Greater Second Baptist last May. She commended these students who overcome immense obstacles in order to receive their high school diploma. The ceremony this year will be held on May 19th, 6:00 p.m. at Greater Second Baptist Church, and she encouraged everyone to attend and be inspired by these students.

Ms. Koehler closed by recognizing the officers of the CTA, Vice President Teresa Knapp Gordon, Secretary Diana Harshfield, Terry Stewart and Cornelius Roberts.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Mr. Carreiro expressed appreciation for the ViPS staff and their work in coordinating the Evening for the Stars. Ms. Fox and Dr. Mitchell also thanked everyone who participated in the ViPS Evening for the Stars, with Ms. Fox stating that it was her favorite event of the year.

Mr. Kurrus reported that he wasn't able to attend the ViPS Evening for the Stars because he was volunteering at the time, cooking hot dogs for the Central high school baseball game. He thanked the ViPS staff for their work with the district's volunteers.

Dr. Daugherty responded to comments made by Ms. Koehler regarding the students who attend the Accelerated Learning Center. Mr. Armstrong agreed and stated that we are all accountable for the students' success. He asked that "we all become a part of the solution."

B. Legal Update

The legal update was provided earlier in the meeting by a suspension of the rules to reorder the agenda. Chris Heller reported that the Eighth Circuit court had issued its final mandate for full release from the desegregation case. No appeals were filed, and the eighth circuit has filed the final order. Mr. Heller also reported that a hearing previously scheduled in Judge Miller's court was postponed and would likely be rescheduled at a later time. This will likely be a status conference to hear the remaining Pulaski County desegregation issues and would likely not have significant impact on the remaining issues regarding the state's financial obligations to the LRSD.

On another issue, Jalisha Vandiver vs LRSD and Vernon Smith, is set for trial May 11. The board had previously voted to settle with Ms. Vandiver, but she disagreed with the amount of the settlement. The case ended up in bankruptcy court and she continued to pursue a financial claim against the district. Clay Fendley is serving as the district's representative; Mr. Heller was called to be a witness. He reported that the trial should be complete and resolved by the middle of May. A written summary report was provided on all other open and pending legal issues. Board members were asked to contact Mr. Heller if there are any questions.

C. K-3rd Grade Literacy Evaluation

The Kindergarten – Third Grade Literacy Evaluation was provided as part of the board's agenda. Dr. DeJarnette was present to respond to questions regarding the report. In addition, Karen James addressed questions regarding Reading Recovery and other reading intervention programs. Ms. James indicated that it was their goal to serve 25% of the students in first grade in order to remediate reading deficiencies before moving on to 2nd grade.

Mr. Kurrus asked that the administration ensure that intervention programs are implemented and operated with fidelity to benefit the students who need the services most. Mr. Armstrong and Dr. Daugherty also asked for additional oversight by the district's administration to monitor teachers and ensure their effectiveness in the classroom. Ms. Curry asked for ongoing reports and feedback from additional monitoring and assessment.

D. Update: 2009 Legislative Session

Mr. Hartz provided a brief overview of the 2009 legislative session. A summary report was provided following the meeting.

E. Budget Update

Kelsey Bailey, Chief Financial Officer, addressed the board. He reported an expectation of increases in revenue from property tax assessments. In addition, fuel and utility costs are expected to come in under the amount originally projected. The monthly financial reports were provided as part of the board's agenda.

F. Internal Auditors Report

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

V. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Donations of Property

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

Dr. Mitchell made a motion to accept the donations; Ms. Fox seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**. The donations are listed in the following chart:

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Dodd Elementary School	Zenith 16" TV valued at approximately \$50.00	Anonymous
Forest Park Elementary School	\$809.08 to purchase a Redcat LT71 Lightmic for Ms. Dailey's 4 th grade classroom	Melanie Fox
Pulaski Heights Elementary School	Fiction and non-fiction books, valued at \$7,960.00 for the library	Pulaski Heights Elementary PTA
Wilson Elementary School	\$300.00 cash for incentives and staff appreciation activities	Affirmative Risk Management
Woodruff Elementary School	\$200.00 to provide incentives and materials for faculty and staff	DaySpring Behavioral Health Services of AR

B. Minutes

Minutes from the March 19, 2009, board meeting were presented for the board's review and approval. Mr. Armstrong moved to approve the minutes as submitted; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. ADMINISTRATION

A. Early Retirement Insurance Incentive Plan

The early retirement insurance proposal was brought back from the March board meeting for the board's reconsideration. The original recommendation was intended as a way to reduce the district's expenditure for salaries. Eligible employees would include teachers or other employees who are at the top of the salary schedule, Step 20, on Grade 61, and who have a minimum of five years of service.

David Hartz responded to questions from the board, stating that some employees who are eligible and desire to retire are unable to do so because of the high cost of insurance. This plan would allow this group to retire with \$15,000, which would offset the cost of their insurance premiums.

After a great deal of discussion, Mr. Carreiro suggested that the minimum number of employees recommended for implementation of the plan be increased from 50 to 60 and that an open and close date be included within the motion. Mr. Kurrus asked that a waiver agreement be developed to ensure that the district doesn't face legal challenges after approval.

The board took a brief recess at 8:23 p.m. and returned at 8:38 p.m.

Mr. Carreiro moved to adopt the recommended proposal with the following changes: that the minimum number of employees be increased from 50 to 65 participants; that employees be required to have announced their intent to retire on or after March 19, 2009; and that they must retire by June 30, 2009. In addition he asked that a thirty day window to announce their election to retire open on May 1 and end on May 31.

Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried 5-2** with Ms. Fox and Mr. Kurrus voting no.

VII. STUDENT SERVICES

A. Care Program Rate Increase Proposal for 2009-2010

The CARE Program is a non-profit, self-supporting program, which offers before and after school childcare. The administration recommended an increase in the CARE program fees for the 2009-2010 school year. This increase would generate approximately \$339,000.00 in revenue, which would allow the district to cover the rising cost of salaries, nutritious snacks for the students, supplies and materials, as well as our contribution to teacher retirement:

Dr. Daugherty made a motion to approve the rate increase; Ms. Fox seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Central High Wellness Center Proposal

From 1989 to 2001 the Arkansas Department of Health provided school based health services at Central High. The services included mental health counseling, reproductive care and episodic care for students. This outstanding program received national attention after being featured as a model program on the television news program 20/20. The Arkansas Department of Health has agreed to restart on site health services at Central High.

Health services provided on campus decrease the time the student is out of school for illness and eliminates, in most cases, time a parent would need to spend away from their job. The Central High Wellness Center's unique combination of medical care and counseling with strong health education will reinforce healthy lifestyles and promote disease prevention and the early intervention of serious problems.

The board was asked to approve the proposal for reestablishing the Central High School Wellness Center. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the recommendation; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

VIII. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel matters were printed in the board's agenda. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendations. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

IX. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Proposed Meal Price Increase

The board was asked to approve a recommendation to increase school breakfast and lunch prices for the 2009-2010 school year. Breakfast and lunch costs would increase by .25 for elementary students, secondary students and adults. The cost breakdown is provided:

Meal	Elementary Students	Secondary Students	Adults
<u>Breakfast</u>			
- current	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.25
- proposed	\$1.25	\$1.25	\$1.50
<u>Lunch</u>			
- current	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$2.75
- proposed	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$3.00

Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the recommendation; Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion and it **carried 6-1**, with Ms. Fox voting no.

B. March 2009 Financial Statements

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

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES:

Ms. Fox made a motion to suspend the rules to confirm the names of the district's audit committee members. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

Ms. Curry read the list of audit committee members:

- Jody Carreiro
- Bob Birch
- Alonzo Williams, Jr.
- Joann Thomas
- Sarah Lenehan
- Bob Whitfield
- Beverly Richardson

Mr. Armstrong moved to accept the nominations for the audit committee; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Fox, seconded by Dr. Daugherty.

APPROVED: 05-21-09

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