



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

**MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 27, 2014**

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 27, 2014, in the boardroom of the administration building, 810 West Markham Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. President Greg Adams presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Greg Adams
Norma Johnson
C. E. McAdoo
Jody Carreiro
Dianne Curry
Leslie Fisker
Tara Shephard

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Dexter Suggs, Superintendent of Schools
Beverly Griffin, Recorder of Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Prior to the call to order, Dr. Suggs was asked to make comments regarding the proposed literacy program and the planning by administration to insure students receive appropriate reading support and instruction. A more detailed report will be provided at the meeting in March.

Mr. Adams called the meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. Six members of the board were present at roll call; Mr. Carreiro arrived at 5:40 p.m. The teacher ex-officio, Stacy Kindervater from Geyer Springs Elementary was present. The student representative, Tre' Harris from McClellan High, was present at the agenda meeting, but not at the regular board meeting.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Partners in Education

At the agenda meeting, Debbie Milam introduced four new school and business partnerships:

- **Cloverdale Middle School**, represented by *Dr. Angela Seay*, in partnership with **Kairos Foundation**, represented by *Karolyn Taylor* and **Life Skills for Youth**, represented by *Hiram Sumlin*
- **Metropolitan Career and Technical Center**, represented by *Allie Freeman*, *Cassandra Norman*, and *Shameka Montgomery*, in partnership with **Little Rock Marriott Hotel** represented by *David Joslin* and *Karen Tucker*
- **Roberts Elementary School**, represented by *Barbara Anderson* and *Carl Duncan*, in partnership with **Show Room Ready**, represented by *Tarra Morris*

Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the new partnerships; Mr. McAdoo seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Remarks from Citizens

John Doyle addressed the board regarding literacy programs in the LRSD. He volunteers at Booker Arts Magnet School and works with *AR Kids Read* to insure students become literate by third grade. He expressed encouragement with the success of the students he works with. In *AR Kids Read*, volunteers work with specific students to improve reading skills and enhance their confidence in reading. He responded to remarks from Dr. Suggs earlier in the meeting saying that the quality of one on one interaction is very important to improving reading in our children.

Laura Reynolds, a Booker parent, related her experiences with Reading Recovery and other reading resource programs. Her child had trouble reading and was tested for a learning disability. This student works with a Reading Recovery teacher to cope with her learning disability, and Ms. Reynolds expressed belief that her child benefits from the one-on-one support afforded by Reading Recovery.

Melvin Anderson, a transportation department employee, spoke on behalf of other transportation employees and expressed concern that he will be fired because he continues to wear jeans to work. He doesn't agree with the district's dress code policy and stated he would continue to wear jeans even though he has received two letters of reprimand.

Mike Campbell, a transportation department employee, also spoke on behalf of drivers, monitors, and aides, and expressed concern regarding morale and safety in the workplace. He said he was not trying to point fingers, but there existed bullying, harassment, and intimidation in the transportation department workplace. He asked the board to launch an investigation into their concerns.

Kerry Davis, parent of a student in the resource program and early intervention program of the LRSD, stated her son had experienced low morale because he can't read on the same level as other students in his class. She expressed concerns regarding the programs used, and the possibility of using programs that don't have a proven track record.

Jim Ross, parent of a high school student, said his daughter has a reading comprehension disability. He stated he had been told his daughter was “just being lazy.” He expressed agreement with Dr. Suggs in that the district’s reading program has failed systemically for years, and it was important to teach every student, at every grade. He did express belief that Reading Recovery should be a part of whatever program the district adopts.

Gwen Marshall, an employee at Henderson Middle School, spoke to the district’s anti-bullying policy. She said she had been at Henderson for seven years, and it was her belief that the bullying policy is not being enforced. She stated staff members at Henderson were also being exposed to harassment, bullying, and intimidation, and she asked the administration to do whatever was necessary to improve the climate at Henderson.

Joy Springer asked the board about the evaluation of programs and whether the process of evaluation has been implemented. She said K-3 literacy had been evaluated in the past, and she wondered if these evaluations were being used to make decisions regarding the effectiveness of reading programs.

John Walker addressed the board calling the LRSD a “failing school system.” He continued, stating the buildings are falling down, teachers aren’t given support, and “the superintendent is incompetent.” He told the Board it was their responsibility to serve as good stewards of the district so that all students are given the same opportunities to succeed.

Neddie Nichols, a transportation department employee, also addressed the board regarding the dress code. She said the district’s bus drivers should be able to work in comfortable clothing. The drivers are responsible for cleaning up their buses after each run, and jeans are an important part of their attire.

Janet Behrend, a Reading Recovery teacher leader at UALR, asked the board to consider expanding RR into all district elementary schools. She stated 75% of children improve their reading proficiency when consistently served by RR.

Barbara Douglas, representing members of the community in Pankey, asked Attorney Robert Kinchen to address the board. Property in Pankey owned by the district and deeded to the Pankey community was recently quit claimed to the city of Little Rock for use as a police substation with space dedicated to community use. Mr. Kinchen stated a desire by members of the Pankey community to retain interest in the property in Pankey under the previous terms that the property would be retained if it was used for educational purposes.

Nancy Locke and **Regina Norwood**, cofounders of Friends of Josephine Pankey, addressed the board regarding the history of the Pankey community. Ms. Pankey was sent to Arkansas in the early 1900’s by the AME Church to teach children in that community. They believe it is important for Ms. Pankey’s name to be retained on that property. The City of Little Rock has the rights to the property now, but they asked that an educational element be made a part of the agreement within the deed.

After public comments, Ms. Curry was asked to read the board goals as approved in August 2013. Teacher representative Stacy Kindervater was asked to read the district's Cultural Imperatives.

C. Donations of Property

The teacher ex officio, Stacy Kindervater, read the list of recent donations to the district. Mr. McAdoo made a motion to accept the donations. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**. The donations are listed in the following chart:

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Central High School	Sculpture of tiger head valued at \$500.00	Gloria Gough
Central High School	\$300.00 cash to the Central High School Baseball Team	Clara Dobbins
Central High School	\$500.00 cash to the Central High School Band	Robyn Vanover
Central High School	\$300.00 cash to the Central High School Baseball Team	Amjaco Inc.
Fair Park Early Childhood Center	\$15,000.00 cash to be used to purchase equipment and classroom materials	The Roy and Christine Sturgis Charitable and Educational Trust
Hall High School	\$100.00 cash to the Guidance Office	St. Paul United Methodist Women
Horace Mann Magnet Middle School	\$500.00 cash donation	Entergy Corporation
Horace Mann Magnet Middle School	\$300.00 cash for the ACTAAP Kick-Off assembly expenses	National Horace Mann and Dunbar Association
J.A. Fair Magnet High School	Washing machine valued at \$ for use by football team	Eric Redmon
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$100.00 cash to the Football Program	Pulaski Heights Youth Football
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$50.00 cash to the Football Program	Lamarie Rutelonis
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$75.00 cash to the Football Program	Tom and April Owen
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$40.00 cash to the Football Program	Michael and Karen Shepherd
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$40.00 cash to the Football Program	Michael and Kathryn Matchett
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$20.00 cash to the Football Program	Tom and Holly Barron
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$100.00 cash to the Football Program	Robert and Sharon Dallimore
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$50.00 cash to the Football Program	Brant and Joan Foster
Pulaski Heights Middle School	\$50.00 cash to the Football Program	Sloene Sutton
Romine Inter-district School	\$100.00 cash for student uniforms	Mrs. Nancy Ivy
LRSD Elementary Literacy and Early Childhood	Art supplies valued at \$250.00	Mr. Fred Griffin

D. Little Rock Education Association

Cathy Kohler greeted the board and stated there were several items of interest on the agenda tonight, including the staff dress code and concerns that transportation, maintenance and other groups of employees were being mandated to follow the board's policy and the administration's Suggs directive.

She asked the board to support the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the waiver of calendar agreement which would provide opportunities for schools to schedule activities on board meeting nights. Ms. Kohler also said the association would be supporting the school calendar once prepared and presented to the board.

Regarding the reading proposal that will be before the board, she suggested leaving Reading Recovery teachers in place and implementing the other proposed plan in schools that don't have RR. She suggested hiring an independent evaluator to determine which methods work best to meet the needs of the students.

She encouraged continued collaboration with all stakeholders at the table to see which programs work best for our students. All parties want to know when children leave third grade they are reading at or above grade level.

E. Little Rock PTA Council

Mr. Becker made an announcement regarding the monthly PTA Council meeting on March 11, 11:30 at Williams Magnet. He also reminded the audience of the deadline date for turning in their volunteer hours.

IV. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Ms. Shephard reported on attendance at the *Moms Matter* luncheon today. She acknowledged the mothers who participated in the contest, and thanked them for attending. Regarding Reading Recovery, she stated she was looking forward to the more formal presentation to the board in March. She acknowledged Mr. Ross and Mr. Keys for the 1000's of emails received over the past few days. It is Dr. Suggs responsibility to make a recommendation to improve the district's reading programs, and it is the board's responsibility to decide to approve or not to approve the recommendations.

Mr. McAdoo stood and sang "Lift Every Voice and Sing," then exited the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Mr. Carreiro congratulated students who recently participated in All-State choir and band programs. He also congratulated Parkview music teacher, Carolyn Foreman, for being named Arkansas' Choir Director of the Year. He discussed the difficult decisions facing the board, and the choices that have to be made to balance quality education versus the reality of finances. He thanked the audience for the questions and comments, and said he would be listening to the facts and making decisions based on that information. He closed by thanking his wife, Debbie, for the past 32 years, as this was their anniversary.

Ms. Johnson had attended a Black History program at Mann Magnet School and the National Jr. Honor Society induction at Dunbar Middle School. She had visited Cloverdale Middle School and commended the students for being highly motivated and for achieving in school. Regarding previous comments and discussion on Reading Recovery and the district's reading programs, she said when students aren't reading there is a problem. We need to backtrack and find out where the breakdown occurred, get to the root of the problem, and address the problem. We have to consider everyone's best interest and work together.

Ms. Fisken thanked the audience for their comments and for their support. She responded to some of the comments regarding elementary literacy and expressed distress over the numbers of students who are not reading on grade level. She thanked the administrators in the LRSD who are willing to do better things for kids. She expressed commitment to the students, and promised to do her due diligence to make decisions based on what is best for all the students. She had participated in the superintendent's bus tour last week to Mann and Baseline, and enjoyed seeing students at work . . . "this is why we are doing this."

Ms. Curry thanked students at Booker for the card they sent to the Board. She encouraged students to go to a vocational school or career program if they aren't planning to go to college. She responded to the bus drivers who had addressed the board, and said she hoped to assist in addressing their concerns. She expressed appreciation for those in the community who were rallying behind Reading Recovery. "Teamwork is key . . . We have to work together as a team."

Mr. Adams commented briefly, expressing appreciation for the support of the audience, thanking those who addressed the board, and looking forward to the discussions regarding improvements in facilities.

B. Legal Update

At the agenda meeting Mr. Heller reported on a visit to Hall High School by the Office of Civil Rights. OCR representatives spoke with students, teachers, and counselors in the investigation of a complaint regarding discrimination of Hispanic students.

In a lawsuit filed against the LRSD regarding bullying at Parkview, Mr. Heller reported he had filed a motion to dismiss.

On an issue regarding the state's School Choice law, Mr. Heller reported he had discussed with Dr. Suggs and had recommended we discontinue filing for an exemption from School Choice as had been done in previous years. The LRSD had been exempt under the law because of the ongoing desegregation orders. The law requires declaration of an exemption each year, and it has to be filed by April 1. Mr. Heller stated his belief that it would be beneficial to the district to participate in school choice to allow students who live outside the district to request assignment to LRSD schools. The only factor left in the desegregation agreement is that the North Little Rock School District has not yet been declared unitary. Mr. Heller will prepare a resolution and recommendation for the motion prior to the February 27th meeting.

At the board meeting Mr. Heller was present and offered to respond to any questions concerning the School Choice item on the agenda. He offered to wait until that agenda item if necessary.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

Mr. Carreiro moved to suspend the rules to reorder the agenda and allow action on the matter of School Choice at this point in the agenda. Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**. Action was taken at this point in the meeting, but will be reported as it was presented in the agenda.

The board recessed briefly at 7:40 p.m. and returned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

C. Update: Forest Heights STEM Academy and Geyer Springs Gifted and Talented Academy

At the request of the board, Linda Young provided a brief update on the progress toward implementation of the revamped programs at Forest Heights and Geyer Springs. As discussed in previous meetings, each department in the district is working collaboratively to ensure these two schools are ready for next school year.

D. Presentation: LRSD Quarterly Report, Volume 1 – Number 2

The Evaluation and Testing Department staff was present to review the quarterly report which was printed in the agenda. Those present included: Danyell Cummings, Julia Cheers-Young, Maurecia Robinson and Dr. Ed Williams.

Dr. Fields responded to questions from the board regarding student suspensions and expulsions compared to last year which were presented as part of the quarterly report.

E. Update: Facilities Review – Fanning Howey

At the agenda meeting, Carl Baxmeyer and Troy Glover provided the monthly progress report from the Fanny-Howey partners. A worksession will be scheduled with the board to review all reports once they are completed.

F. Annual Report from the LRSD Anti-Bullying Committee: STAND Committee

The report from the LRSD Anti-Bullying Committee was provided during the February 13th agenda meeting. Board Member Greg Adams served as the co-chair of the committee and provided introductory remarks. He also introduced his co-chair, Julian Calzado. Audience members present who served on the committee were asked to stand and be recognized.

Dr. Sadie Mitchell provided an overview presentation. Latrisha Criss, a student from Parkview Magnet School, reported that 35 students attended Unitown to confront issues of race, ethnicity, discrimination and bullying. Other partnerships with community organizations were highlighted.

Steven Young reported on the anti-bullying rally, "*Build Communities, Not Bullies*," which was held at the Clinton Center on November 9, 2013. The district's STAND committee is leading training sessions for others in the community, and is working to establish more community partnerships.

Representatives of other organizations who participated in the rally were present, including LULAC, Just Communities of Arkansas, and Fox 16. Four students who participated in the anti-bullying efforts were present and made brief comments.

Pamela Smith reported briefly on the electronic process for reporting instances of bullying which is linked to the LRSD website. Shoutelle Richardson provided information on changes in discipline and reporting, and demonstrated the flow chart for reporting.

G. Update: Career and Technical Education

At the agenda meeting, Dr. Suggs introduced Cassandra Norman-McGee and Shameika Montgomery who provided an overview of the revamped Career and Technical Education program within the LRSD. A summary report was attached to the board's agenda.

Partners in the LRSD Career and Tech Ed initiatives were introduced and included Pulaski Technical College, the City of Little Rock, and the Arkansas Economic Development Council. Linda Kindy, director of the district's Adult Education department was also introduced along with representatives from Molex in Maumelle, Baptist Health Systems, and the Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce.

Shemeika Montgomery discussed the various partnerships developing at Metropolitan, including the LR Fire Department and the Dr. Emma Kelly Rhodes Education Center. It was noted the partnership with Pulaski Technical College will allow students an opportunity to earn college credit from PTC through the agreement and partnership at Metro.

The new website was noted: www.metrocareertech.org, and informational booklets were provided for the board's review. Open House will be held at Metropolitan on Tuesday, February 18th, 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

H. Update: Student Registration / Enrollment

Dr. Fields reported on the open enrollment period, and provided information on the "opt-out" provisions for students who receive an assignment to Forest Heights but who choose to remain in their attendance zone school. The enrollment counts won't be done until after the end of the opt-out period, so that those on the waiting list can be assigned to available seats. Assignment letters have been mailed except for assignments to Geyer Springs. Applications are still being accepted for the GT Academy until March 14th.

III. CONSENT ITEMS

Items on the consent items were approved by consensus without a motion.

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting of January 23rd, and from a special meeting on February 13th were presented for review and approval.

B. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda.

C. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's report was printed in the board's agenda.

IV. BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS REVIEW

A. Second Reading: Board of Education Policy BBBE Unexpired Term Fulfillment / Vacancies

B. Second Reading: Board of Education Policy GBEB Staff Dress Code

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve both policies, BBBE and GBEB on second reading. Ms Fiskens seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

C. First Reading: Board of Education Policy Revisions: BEB Special School Board Meetings; BEDDB Suspension of Rules of Order; BEDF Voting Method

Revision to policy BEB, special school board meetings, BEDDB, suspension of the rules of order, and BEDF, voting method, remained on the table as the LRSD awaits an Attorney General opinion on the variance between LRSD policy and Robert's Rules of Order regarding the requirement of more than a majority vote in some instances.

D. Adoption of Leadership Team Governance Handbook / Protocols

Horace Smith assisted in the development of a Board Protocols and Governance handbook over the course of several months. It was presented for board approval. Ms. Shephard made a motion to approve the document as presented. Mr. Carreiro seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

V. ADMINISTRATION

A. Memorandum of Understanding: Waiver of PNA Calendar Agreement

At the agenda meeting, Cathy Kohler provided some background information on waiving some of the provisions in the PN agreement related to restriction of days of the week the district and the association can hold meetings with their members. The MOU was attached to the agenda for action.

Mr. Carreiro moved to approve the MOU as presented. Ms. Shephard seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. School Choice

Mr. Heller reported to the board at the agenda meeting, and was again present to provide information on the recommendation to participate in School Choice as legislated by the state of Arkansas. The LRSD had previously opted out of school choice as allowable under the law due to the obligation of the desegregation lawsuit. Since the settlement of the desegregation issues with the state, the LRSD no longer qualifies under the current allowable exemptions. Mr. Heller asked for the board's to vote to notify the ADE by April 1 that we are moving from a district with an exemption to a district not claiming an exemption for the 2014-15 school year.

Mr. Carreiro made a motion to approve the recommendation to participate in school choice for the 2014-15 school year. Ms. Shephard seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

VI. Human Resources

A. School Calendar 2014-2015

Dr. Suggs recommended approval of the proposed school calendar for the 2014-15 school year. Ms. Shephard moved to accept the administration's recommendation. Ms. Fiskien seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Approval of PN Agreement for Transportation: Bus Drivers, Aides, Monitors (2013-2015)

The negotiated agreement between the administration and the transportation department employees was recommended for approval by the superintendent. Ms. Curry moved to approve the agreement, and Ms. Fiskien seconded the motion. It **carried unanimously**.

VII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. GAAP Financial Statements and Audit Report for June 30, 2013

The annual audit of the district's financial statements was provided in the board's agenda and was recommended for approval. Mark Glover from Hudson and Cisne, LLP, attended the meeting to formally present the findings and to respond to questions. Mr. Carreiro served as the board's representative on the audit committee and moved to accept the audit report as presented; Ms. Fiskien seconded the motion. The motion was **unanimously approved**.

B. Minority and Women Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE) Monthly Report

The reports were printed in the board's agenda. No other information was requested or presented.

C. Budget Update

Mr. Bailey reported he would be working with Dr. Suggs to set a budget development calendar and a schedule of budget worksessions with the board.

He also reported the recommendation from the arbitration fact-finder is expensed to be received in the district in early March. That report will come to the board for consideration and approval of the recommendation for salary and benefits.

D. Monthly Financial Statements

The financial statements were printed in the board's agenda. No other information was requested or presented.

VIII. CLOSING REMARKS

A. Superintendent's Comments

Dr. Suggs announced the high school wrestling championship winner, Tyler Mann from LR Central High School. Tyler has been recognized for his outstanding academic and athletic abilities, and will be invited to a future board meeting for a more formal introduction.

In addition, Dr. Suggs asked listeners to support the student athletes in the LRSD. There is much to be done to improve the perception of the athletic program, but the district is producing championship teams and athletes.

As always, he encouraged parents to spend at least thirty minutes a day reading to their children.

B. Announcements & Reminders

Pamela Smith closed the meeting by making brief announcements, including highlights from the Mom's Matter luncheon including the name of the mother who won the iPad mini.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

APPROVED: 03-20-14

Originals Signed by:
Greg Adams, President
C. E. McAdoo, Secretary