



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

MINUTES
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
June 24, 2010

The Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District held their regular board meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 24, 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
Dianne Curry
Mike Daugherty
Baker Kurrus
Katherine Mitchell

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Melanie Fox

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. Fox was absent. The ex officio representatives, **Boyce Pearson** from Dodd Elementary and **Christopher Westfall** from Central High School, were also present.

II. REPORTS/RECOGNITIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:

A. Superintendent's Remarks – Citations and Commendations

At the agenda meeting on June 10, 2010, Dr. Watson recognized **Glenda Nugent** for being selected to receive the **2010 Maryann Manning Outstanding Volunteer Service Award** from the **International Reading Association**. This award was presented to her at the IRA convention in Chicago on April 28. Ms. Nugent was also congratulated on her upcoming retirement from the LRSD.

The ex officio representatives for the month of June were presented certificates in appreciation for their term of service: **Christopher Westfall**, student from Central High School, and **Boyce Pearson**, teacher from Dodd Elementary School.

B. Remarks from Citizens

John Walker discussed the reported improvement in test scores across the state. He stated that he was particularly impressed with students in the Marianna School District whose scores improved immensely from 30 to 70 percentile points in some instances. He questioned the validity of the scores and cautioned against becoming “euphoric” about the drastic increases reported. He asked that there be a review to determine if the reports are valid, and that the administration take a closer look at the more detailed statistics before accepting these results. He asked that when addressing progress of the overall district, the needs of the students with greater need -- those from the lower income groups, be considered.

Former LRSD Board member and former **State Representative Linda Chesterfield** congratulated the board and superintendent on recent district successes. She addressed the three main areas where the state holds the district accountable: facilities - the LRSD is not in facilities distress; fiscal – the District is not in fiscal distress; and academics - students are continuing to achieve. She noted that African American children are doing better on standardized tests, and other student groups are also continuing to achieve. She also noted that the LRSD has managed personnel and maintained a positive relationship with the teachers and the community. She expressed gratitude to the superintendent and to the board for their service and for communicating with all facets of the community.

Mary Louise Williams, a retired LRSD employee and member of the Pulaski County Quorum Court, expressed continuing interest and involvement in the community. In her role with the quorum court, she works with the county jails and other Pulaski County groups to ensure the support of Little Rock’s children and schools. She expressed pleasure with the reported progress with test scores, and she encouraged the board to continue to move forward - - not to make the mistake of starting over. She asked the board to work together to make sure they support the children and not to micromanage the school district.

Senator Tracy Steele thanked the board and the audience for giving him the opportunity to represent the three school districts in Pulaski County. He noted his positive working relationship with many of the members of the LRSD board. He reported that he has two children in the LRSD, and that he feels it is most important for them to receive the best education available. He expressed pleasure with the increase in student test scores, both in the LRSD and across the state. However, he is happiest with his personal experiences when he picks his students up from school, that they are happy and achieving. He congratulated the district for raising test scores in the midst of ending the desegregation case and in the face of the continued expansion of charter schools.

C. Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association

Mike Coleman greeted the board and reported that the Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association had changed their name to Little Rock Education Association. He also reported that Ms. Kohler was in New Orleans for a NEA national conference. Mr. Coleman thanked the board and stated that they had been able to work through the administration to resolve issues and concerns through constructive dialogue and collaborative efforts.

D. Donations of Property

The board was asked to approve the receipt of recent donations to the district. Student representative Christopher Westfall read the list of donations. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the donations; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

DONATIONS

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	ITEM	DONOR
Geyer Springs Elementary	\$250.00 Walmart gift card to be used for student incentives	2010 Junior League of LR Provisional Spring Project
	\$2,000.00 cash to be used for 5 th grade weekly activities and other student and staff activities	Allied Waste Services
Woodruff Early Childhood Center	Gifts for faculty and staff appreciation week:	
	Six \$25.00 gift cards	Centennial Bank
	\$40.00 gift card to Rejuvenation Clinic; \$50.00 cash	Priority 1 Janitorial Services
	Two gift sets, valued at \$80.00	Cara Chapman
	\$25.00 gift set	Sonya Campbell
	Gift, valued at \$20.00	Phyllis Johnson
	\$25.00 gift card to Cothams in the City	GSI Solutions, LLC Promethean Partner
	Six teacher bags and atlas sets, valued at \$180.00	M & M Promotion, LLC
	\$20.00 gift card to Riverdale Theater	UAMS House of Delegates
	\$15.00 gift card to Red Lobster	R. S. McCullough
Two \$15.00 gift certificates	Buffalo Grill	
Gift basket, valued at \$30.00	LR Convention & Visitors Bureau	

III. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Remarks from Board Members

Dr. Mitchell commended the teachers, staff members and administrative team for the work that was done this school year to show gains and progress on the standardized tests. She was pleased that students have shown that they are attaining the skills they are required to master as measured by the state exams.

Ms. Curry echoed Dr. Mitchell's comments regarding the progress shown on the tests for this school year. "It shows that we are working collaboratively to improve educational opportunities for our students." She thanked members of the audience and listeners for the comments they have provided, and for their willingness to express their views and opinions.

Ms. Curry closed by reading an article from a national publication on improving customer service in the school district.

Mr. Kurrus thanked audience members for attending the meeting and for their comments. He especially took note of State Representative Pondexter's comments regarding the strong facilities in the LRSD, and he took that opportunity to thank the voters for approving the millage rate which allowed appropriate funding to keep the facilities in good condition.

Regarding academics, Mr. Kurrus said "when scores go up, we are proud." He noted that the scores this year are similar, almost identical, to those from the 2004-05 school year. He agreed that test scores are important, but noted that if 35% are proficient & advanced, 65% are not. He encouraged administrators and teachers to "pursue excellence" in all of the district's schools. "All schools should be schools of excellence."

Mr. Carreiro congratulated all the graduates of 2010, taking special note that McClellan students received over \$1 million in scholarship dollars. He reported that he was still studying the test scores, and had taken note of some interesting points. He discussed the "tightening up" of the literacy curriculum, making it more consistent across the district. He closed, saying that "the LRSD did not gain as much as the state, some progress has been made, however much work remains to be done."

Mr. Armstrong agreed with comments regarding the test scores, saying "we did make some progress, but we still have a long way to go." He stressed the importance of providing a quality education for the children in the community, noting that the State of Arkansas is losing the opportunity to recruit business and industry because we cannot provide the quality educated workforce that is necessary to attract business." He closed by saying that the district must start educating all the children and have an expectation that all of them will succeed.

B. Update: Cloverdale Aerospace Technology Charter

Dr. James Jennings prepared a written update on the Cloverdale Aerospace Technology Charter School, which was included in the agenda. In addition, he was present to respond to questions regarding staffing, recruitment of students, and promotional aspects of getting ready for the opening of school. He noted that interviewing and selection of staff was nearing completion, and that they were on track to have the school fully staffed and ready for a staff retreat next week.

Board members asked specific questions regarding staffing decisions and the applications process. Dr. Jennings explained the process, noting that all employees could reapply for a position, but only 49% could be retained at Cloverdale. He reported that some new teachers were hired from the job fair.

Board members also asked that measures be put in place from the inception to ensure accountability of staff at Cloverdale. Mr. Jennings assured them that the restructuring of the school would include measures for tracking progress and identifying those teachers who get the best results on student achievement measures.

Mr. Kurrus noted that the Cloverdale test results showed some improvement, but he also cautioned that the success in this school as a charter would be key for the LRSD. "We need to figure out how the charter can be supported to be successful."

Mr. Armstrong asked for information on the strategies for marketing the Cloverdale Aerospace Magnet School program to ensure that we are competitive with other charter schools in that area. Dr. Jennings reported that the major recruitment push would be during the months of July and August, and that there had not been a significant number of students exiting from the existing attendance zone. Board members asked to see the enrollment figures as soon as they were available.

Dr. Jennings also reported that the district's staff, led by Jennifer Webb and others in the curriculum department, were developing the aerospace and technology courses and that they would be ready to implement the new curriculum in August.

Ms. Curry asked the administration to address some of the physical and structural issues at Cloverdale, noting that there were some significant problems with the roof and areas of the school and grounds which flood. She asked for a facilities update in that regard.

In response to a question from Dr. Daugherty, Dr. Jennings reported that pre-and post-SOAR testing assessments would be used throughout the school year to measure progress. These assessments would allow progress monitoring every six weeks.

Mr. Carreiro requested information on the parent contract for Cloverdale when it becomes available. Dr. Jennings reported that he had met with staff and parents to develop the contract and to draft a letter which will go out to all parents of current students and to the entire 72209 zip code. They plan to send the letter by the end of June. In addition, Dr. Jennings reported that they were planning to hold community-based parent meetings in some of the area apartment complexes to explain the aerospace program and to answer questions regarding the availability of transportation, athletics and other extracurricular activities that might not be available in other private and charter schools.

C. Update: Strategic Plan

Mr. Armstrong reported that he had sent an e-mail to board members to secure comments and input regarding the proposal to negotiate a contract with the consultant for strategic planning. Once comments are received, he will send the final contract for review and approval.

Mr. Carreiro asked Dr. Watson if administrators had begun to identify and implement markers for tracking progress beginning August 19. Dr. Watson reported that "tagging" some programs had begun so that the administrators can begin to measure strategic plan progress.

Mr. Carreiro asked for information on dropout data so that beginning in 9th grade the early predictors of school dropout or failure can be identified and addressed. Ms. Curry asked if the data dashboard being developed might tie in the dropout data.

Dr. Watson responded to questions from Dr. Daugherty regarding report cards and interim reports and whether there are procedures in place to insure that parents receive the report cards. There is a problem with secondary level students and with parents who just fail to sign and return interim reports. They are advised and requested to do so, but there is not a provision in our policy that says a parent has to sign it. Some teachers do follow up, make phone calls to parents and send follow-up communication, but some parents just don't get the reports signed and returned. Dr. Daugherty asked that it become a part of the policy and a part of the parental involvement component that parents be required to sign report cards and interim reports. Dr. Watson agreed and said she would work with school administrators to see what can be done to encourage parents to comply.

Mr. Armstrong asked that teachers be held more accountable for communicating with parents when children aren't passing, and Ms. Curry encouraged home visits and more involvement from social workers and counselors. She suggested this could be the topic of a future worksession.

Mr. Armstrong announced that he had attended the Community Truancy Board meeting today, and reported that representatives from state and local government entities and agencies were present. He noted that all parties at the table were willing to work together to help the LRSD improve student attendance and reduce the dropout rate.

D. Budget Update

Mr. Bailey addressed a question regarding the need for roofing repairs or replacement at Cloverdale Middle School, reporting that the estimate was \$450,000. He also reported that these repairs were included on a long list of school renovation projects that will be done as the funds become available. He noted that several roofing projects were taking place over the summer, and that they were trying to address them on a "greatest need" basis.

Mr. Bailey also reported that the data dashboard was being developed, including upgrades to payroll and timekeeping technology, better activity fund accounting, and an upgrade to the overall operating system. These steps are being implemented over the months of July and August.

On the topic of the regular monthly budget report, Mr. Bailey stated that the revenues and expenditures were remaining stable, and that finance department staff was monitoring and communicating regularly to keep spending under control. He noted that there were several changes made to the budget planning process and changes with web based forms which will assist with better overall financial management.

Regarding the storm damage at J. A. Fair, Mr. Bailey reported that additional modifications to the roof might cost more than the \$100,000 deductible and that most would be covered by insurance.

Mr. Armstrong asked staff to look at the amount budgeted for maintenance and upkeep of school grounds. He noted the playgrounds at Fulbright, Terry, and Rockefeller and said that there was mostly dirt, gravel and rocks instead of grass.

Mr. Bailey closed by reporting that he had met with the auditors regarding the annual financial statements, and he expects the report should be prepared and ready for the board in January.

E. Internal Auditors Report

Mr. Becker's report was provided as part of the board's agenda. There were no additional questions or comments.

IV. APPROVAL OF ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Minutes

Minutes from the regular board meeting held on May 20, 2010 and from a special meeting held on June 10, 2010 were presented for the board's review and approval. Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

V. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

A. Grant Continuation Proposal: McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless

The administration requested approval to submit a continuation grant for funding programs for homeless children and youth in the LRSD. The district has received these funds through the McKinney-Vento Education grant since 1992. The funding ensures that homeless students receive additional support in the way of tutoring, health referral services, school supplies, family emergency services and other enriched educational services. Approximately \$35,000 would be received to support this program. Dr. Mitchell moved to approve the submission of the grant, Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. 2010-2011 Evaluation Agenda

The board was asked to review and approve the 2010-2011 evaluation agenda as required by board policy IL. The estimated budget for the 2010-2011 evaluation program is \$60,000. Dr. DeJarnette responded to questions regarding the programs that will be monitored and how the PRE department will monitor and collect data to evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan and ACSIP plan monitoring.

Mr. Carreiro commented, asking that the board be allowed to see as much "raw data" as possible. He wants to see "data as close to the source as possible." Ms. Curry agreed and suggested that the board should receive reports and feedback much sooner by doing more of the monitoring in-house.

The board will receive evaluation reports in July on Read 180, Compass, Target Teach and America's Choice. Dr. Daugherty asked that the reports include how the programs benefit student achievement, which programs are effective, and which ones are giving us the progress we want.

When discussing the implementation of programs, and the concerns that some building administrators are not fully using the programs and initiatives approved for use by the board, Mr. Kurrus stated that he was "stunned" that some principals discontinue programs without notifying the administration and that some schools aren't implementing the programs with fidelity.

Mr. Kurrus asked Dr. Watson and other administrators to consider this as serious grounds for discussion on the importance of holding principals responsible for implementing the programs as directed. The early literacy systemic changes and addressing of deficiencies in the early grades will eliminate the need for these costly interventional programs. Dr. Mitchell agreed and remarked that identifying the children who need extra support should begin in kindergarten.

Dr. Watson reported that the literacy audit is expected to provide an overview of the areas where we need to allocate additional resources. One of the recommendations is that the district needs a basal textbook for elementary students. Next year is reading adoption time, and that will provide support and additional improvement in reading.

Mr. Carreiro moved to adopt the evaluation agenda; Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

The board took a brief recess at 7:20 p.m. They returned at 7:33 p.m.

VI. HUMAN RESOURCES

A. Personnel Changes

Routine personnel changes were printed in the board's agenda. In addition, recommendations for appointments of school principals at Bale Elementary, Rockefeller Elementary and Williams Magnet Elementary, and a recommendation for the appointment of a School Improvement Specialist were also included in the board's agenda.

On the routine personnel changes, Dr. Mitchell moved to approve. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

For the elementary school principalships, the administration recommended the following individuals. The board voted separately on each appointment.

- **Erika O'Neal McCarroll** was recommended as principal of Bale Elementary School. Ms. Curry moved to approve the recommendation. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.
- Sandra Register was recommended as principal of Williams Magnet School. Mr. Kurrus made a motion to approve the recommendation. Ms. Curry seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.
- Janice Wilson was recommended as principal of Rockefeller Elementary School. Dr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the recommendation. Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

For the position of School Improvement Specialist, Dr. Watson recommended Dr. Sheketa McKisick. Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the appointment; Dr. Daugherty seconded the motion and it **carried 5-1** with Mr. Carreiro voting no.

Prior to the vote, Mr. Carreiro expressed reservations and asked questions about where Dr. McKisick would be placed and whether the effectiveness of the school improvement specialists had been measured or evaluated. Dr. Watson reported that Dr. McKisick would be assigned to a school or schools once administration had the opportunity to assess the areas of greatest need.

Dr. Watson also responded to questions from Mr. Kurrus regarding Dr. Jennings' responsibilities as a school improvement specialist and how he would also continue his responsibilities at Cloverdale in implementing the charter program.

VII. FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

A. Annual School Election Budget

The board was asked to review and approve the proposed budget of election expenditures and tax levy for the 2011-2012 school years. This submission is required by Ark. Code Ann. 6-13-622. Ms. Curry made a motion to approve the recommendation. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion and it **carried unanimously**.

B. Monthly Financial Reports

The monthly financial reports were provided for the boards review as part of their agenda. Mr. Bailey was present to respond to questions. No action was required.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Carreiro moved to convene an executive session to consider the Superintendent's annual evaluation. Ms. Curry seconded the motion, and it **carried unanimously**. The executive session convened shortly after 8:10 p.m. The board returned from executive session at 9:00 p.m. and reported no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

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

APPROVED: 07-22-10

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