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For Immediate Release

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**LPS Board of Education approves calendars for
2007-2008 & 2008-2009 school years;**

Board's commitment to increasing student achievement evident through decision to embed time for Professional Learning Communities within the school calendar.

The LPS Board of Education voted unanimously during last night's Board meeting to approve calendars for the 2007-2008 & 2008-2009 school years. Each calendar has the following characteristics:

- 10 identified days for embedded Professional Learning Communities (PLC) time;
- A district-wide late start on those 10 days;
- The Board's charge to convene a Blue-Ribbon panel comprised of teachers, parents, principals, classified staff members, and others, to monitor and evaluate this calendar approach, the results of Professional Learning Communities and student achievement work over time, and then report these findings to the Board of Education as appropriate.

These calendars provide for a two-hour block of time designated for the work of Professional Learning Communities on each of the 10 late-start days. During this time, teachers and other instructional staff will:

- analyze data gathered through a number of assessments students already take as well as daily classroom work;
- use what the data tells them to guide their conversations, share their best thinking and create strategies to help each child achieve more and bring out the special gifts within each of them;
- create more consistency in instructional and grading practices.

The conversations about how to increase student achievement and use time more effectively have been ongoing for several years. LPS students continue to achieve at high levels, but the gap is narrowing between achievement levels in LPS and achievement levels in other district across the state.

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Because the PLC model will allow for frequent, consistent, and data-driven conversations about student achievement, each child's classroom experience will become richer and more productive as a result.

During the meeting, Board members stated their continued support for the Professional Learning Communities process as it relates to and furthers the district's achievement goal: "90% of all students will be on or above grade level in reading, math, writing, and science by 2011. The achievement gap in student performance will be cut in half by 2009."

"During my time on the Board, I have learned that the quality of the teacher in the classroom has the biggest impact on student learning. Board action tonight is not about making changes to the calendar. It is all about making improvements to instruction," said Board President Diana Holland. "The teaching profession has moved from one of isolation to one of collaboration. It's critical for our teachers to have the opportunity to share their best thinking and best practices with one another and to look at student achievement data together. Our 90% achievement goal is bold and requires a change in the way we approach student learning. I am fully in support of this initiative, which honors our professionals and keeps in mind the needs of families."

"Over the past few months, I have had the privilege of observing the Professional Learning Community model first hand in many of our schools. I have come away from each experience with a true respect for the work being done by all those involved—especially knowing that the time for this work has been limited," said LPS Superintendent Scott Murphy. "I am excited that teachers and other instructional staff members will now have time designated specifically for this important work."

The Board put significant effort into making sure they received feedback from parents, staff, and community members. Throughout the fall semester, the public gave feedback during Board workshops and meetings, through school accountability committees, PTOs, and via phone calls and e-mails. During December and January, three parent forums and one staff forum were held.

"I want to thank our parents, staff members, and community members for continuing to be so engaged in this issue and for taking the time to get involved in the conversations," said Holland. "Without such meaningful feedback, we would not have been able to find the correct balance between what is best for students in terms of their achievement and what parents can manage."

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