

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting, February 19, 2008

MINUTES

The Board of School Trustees of the Monroe County Community School Corporation met in a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 19, 2008, in the Board Room at the Administration Center, 315 E. North Drive, Bloomington.

Board members present:

Teresa Grossi	President
Jeannine Butler	Vice President
Valerie Merriam	Secretary
Susan Daniels	Member
Jim Muehling	Member

Board members absent:

Lois Sabo-Skelton	Member
Sue Wanzer	Assistant Secretary

Also present:

James Harvey	Superintendent of Schools
Tim Thrasher	Comptroller
Peggy Chambers	Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Personnel
Mary Lovejoy	Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Mike Shipman	Director of Assessment and School Operations
Kathleen Hugo	Director of Special Education
Mike Scherer	Director of Extended Services
Janet Tupper	Administrative Assistant

In addition to the above, 26 citizens signed the visitor list (which is included as a part of the official record of this meeting) and two representatives of Bloomington Community Access TV were present.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

President of the Board, Teresa Grossi, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She noted that two Board members were absent: Ms. Wanzer was out of town and Dr. Sabo-Skelton was ill.

2. **FACES OF EDUCATION**

Dr. Grossi explained that at every Board meeting an employee or volunteer is recognized for outstanding accomplishments. She introduced Charlie Hawk, paraprofessional and volunteer at Clear Creek Elementary School, who was nominated as honored 'Face of Education' by Tammy Miller and Sasha Davis, Principal and Assistant Principal, respectively, at Clear Creek Elementary School. They noted that Mr. Hawk is a part of the support staff at Clear Creek and they cannot imagine him not being there. After retiring in 1994, he began working at as a playground aide and moved to full time in 1996. He now supervises the lunch room and literacy group. They referred to him as the 'grandfather' of the school. Noting that Mr. Hawk believes children keep him young, his goal is to see changes in their eyes when they 'get it'. In addition to his service at Clear Creek, Mr. Hawk served as a School Board member from 1976 through 1989. Dr. Grossi said it is the Board's pleasure to recognize Charlie Hawk as one of the school system's shining *Faces of Education*. Mr. Hawk thanked Ms. Miller and Ms. Davis for nominating him and graciously accepted the Board's award, noting this is his last year.

3. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE** – There was no response to Dr. Grossi’s invitation for comments from the public.

At 7:05 p.m. the Board moved to the next item on the agenda.

4. **HEARING ON ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL TERMS AND RESOLUTION THAT USE OF A 12-MONTH SCHOOL TERM WILL NOT RESOLVE THE EDUCATIONAL ISSUES THE PROPOSED BOND ISSUE IS INTENDED TO ADDRESS**

Mr. Thrasher explained that the Monroe County Community School Corporation is contemplating a project which involves construction of a new elementary school to replace an existing school and makes improvements to other school buildings and support facilities. The Project is not intended to address issues of growth in student population, but rather to replace an obsolete building, address comfort and safety issues, and to provide opportunities for students which do not currently exist because of facility limitations. He said as a consequence, it is the conclusion of the Administration that implementation of a 12-month school calendar would not reduce costs to the school corporation and is not recommended at this time.

Dr. Grossi opened a hearing on the project as explained by Mr. Thrasher. Hearing no response from the public, she declared the hearing closed.

Ms. Merriam moved approval of the resolution of Monroe County Community School Corporation regarding a 12-month school term as proposed. Dr. Butler seconded the motion. When public input was invited, there were no questions or comments. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling. Motion carried.

5. **HEARING ON THE PROPOSED LEASE AND RESOLUTION TO EXECUTE LEASE BY THE MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION**

Mr. Thrasher noted that the Board approved a form of the lease on February 5 and nothing had changed. He said following a hearing, he recommended that the Board adopt the proposed resolution. Dr. Grossi opened a hearing on the proposed lease with the Building Corporation for the Project reviewed in the previous report. Hearing no response from the public, she declared the hearing closed.

Ms. Merriam moved approval of the resolution to execute the lease with the Building Corporation as proposed. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion. When public input was invited, there were no questions or comments. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling. Motion carried.

6. **SCHOOL SHOWCASE: Clear Creek Elementary School**

On behalf of students, staff and their school community, Principal Tammy Miller opened Clear Creek’s presentation. She introduced Sheri Curry, art teacher who had spent three weeks in Japan in October as a Fulbright teacher internship participant. She said Ms. Curry learned about the culture and education system and then integrated a study unit on Japan into her art curriculum. She complimented Ms. Curry, a teacher of 25 years who is one of a few people who received the award, for pursuing opportunities and continuing to learn.

Ms. Curry said 200 people were chosen from 50 states for three weeks of travel in Japan. She said they visited different cities and schools, met with School Board members and were very impressed with their philosophy of education. She said they went to elementary and high schools and to a very small school in the mountains where they attended a formal tea ceremony. She said they are not so different from other parents, i.e. they want a better world for their children. She said she hoped that our children understand

that although we speak and live differently, we are really all the same. Clear Creek students who shared with the Board some of the lessons they have learned in their art classes included: Sabrina Adams, Cierra Byers, Blake Collier, Megan Couch, Kayla Gott, Danielle Guy, Thomas Henderson, Miranda Hoagland, Lilly Hoover, Savannah Oldham, Kasey O'Mullane, and Bryce Stancombe. They demonstrated a traditional tea party, mentioned that Japan consists of islands with 200 volcanoes and that one of their most important holidays is New Year. They mentioned that 2008 is the year of the rat which represents ambitious. Two students explained the different styles and fabrics used for kimonos, the traditional dress for Japanese women. The children explained Origami and what they learn from making cranes – a symbol of long life. They also mentioned that in Japan there are four forms of written language.

Following a time for questions, Board members thanked Ms. Curry and her students for sharing this informative presentation.

7. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Harvey recommended approval of the Consent Agenda: (a) donations, ECA expenditures and field trip requests; (b) contracts; (c) Personnel matters; and (e) Allowance of Claims. Mr. Muehling so moved. Dr. Butler seconded the motion.

Board members commented on various items included on the consent agenda and expressed appreciation for the many donations received. Mr. Harvey announced that Batchelor Middle School teacher Jeff Rudkin applied for and was awarded a \$10,000 grant in the form of a debit card from Best Buy for the B-TV program. He said approximately 40 school corporations in the U.S. received grants and they have been invited to apply for two \$100,000 grants. He said Mr. Shipman will work with Mr. Rudkin to apply for this grant. Dr. Grossi noted that Glenda and Patrick Murray make a contribution to Fairview Elementary School on a regular basis. She said their commitment to the school and neighborhood and volunteerism and contributions are commendable.

In response to Ms. Daniels' question regarding student funds for field trips, Ed Brown, Director of the Hoosier Hills Career Center, said they have many contests through the year and there is a pool of funds available for use as needed if students do not have money for food, etc.

Ms. Chambers noted that Gaye Hudson had announced her pending retirement. She said Ms. Hudson began teaching in 1970 and will retire with 40 years of service in education.

Following a time for additional discussion, Board members voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

8. **CREATE DIRECTOR OF LEARNING POSITION, SET TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND AUTHORIZE POSTING AND FILLING POSITION**

Noting that the Board talked about this position at the February 5th meeting, Mr. Harvey recommended creation of the Director of Learning position with terms and conditions of employment as included on this report. Mr. Muehling so moved. Ms. Daniels seconded the motion.

Dr. Butler said she has no doubt that Dr. Lovejoy needs assistance; however, she (Dr. Butler) needs to see the big picture about where our resources are going, noting we have yet to hear from the Middle School Task Force and class sizes for grades 4-6 are large. She indicated that she was not ready to support this position. Mr. Muehling commented on the scope of responsibility for Dr. Lovejoy's position without support from an assistant. He did not disagree with the need to establish priorities but said he thinks this rates high in terms of a position we need to move forward. Dr. Grossi agreed but said she thinks we will

not be able to move other initiatives forward without this position. Ms. Merriam agreed that Dr. Lovejoy needs assistance in her new position and stated that this is not a new position since it will replace one being eliminated. She thinks this position needs to be filled to fulfill district goals. Dr. Grossi mentioned that this is expanding the old Director of Literacy position. Ms. Daniels thanked Dr. Lovejoy for her presentation at the last meeting, noting that it helped her to understand a broader picture of what is going on and an appreciation for the many activities in curriculum and instruction.

Dr. Grossi noted that Ms. Merriam made a comment about how over zealous this position description is and stated that is the case in education where there are so many demands and accountability is great with limited resources. Dr. Butler said she did not disagree with what other Board members said and would take on faith that creation of this position will not diminish our ability to look at high school and class size needs. Dr. Grossi expressed appreciation for Board comments. She said after spending two years on the Graduation Work Group she also wants to make sure we complete that task before moving on to the next major initiative.

There was no further discussion from the Board or public. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling. Motion carried.

9. CLASS SIZE RATIOS

Ms. Chambers presented information regarding class size ratios. She said ideally each individual class would be staffed at the same ratio, but it is difficult because some classes may have 28 or 29 and another 25; they try to get as close as possible to the ratio. She explained how staffing will be computed this year, including additions for specific programs, and thanked Mr. Shipman for putting together a spread sheet that explains how ratios were established. She recommended that the Board approve class size ratios – Elementary: kindergarten (½ day) = 1:18; kindergarten (full day) = 1:20; grade 1 = 1:20; grade 2 = 1:22; grade 3 = 1:24; grades 4-6 = 1:28; exception – Fairview 1:20 in grades 2-6 to maintain status quo. Secondary: grades 7-8 = 1:28; grades 9-12 at BHSN and BHSS = 1:28; grades 9-12 at Aurora = 1:15; grades 9-12 at New Tech = 1:25. Ms. Daniels so moved. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion.

Mr. Shipman reviewed data for elementary and secondary staffing. He explained that elementary teachers have 200 minutes per week for preparation and the adjusted classroom teacher ratio also includes a computation for special area teachers since that is when teachers get prep time. He said at the middle school level teachers teach six out of seven periods. He noted that remediation is the number of children in each school building that fail ISTEP and paraprofessionals are added and they are calculated as .08; ESL is certified staff member. He said Title I schools include teachers and assistants; money is set aside in the contract to accommodate paraprofessionals when class sizes are larger. Mr. Shipman explained that to compute class size ratios the adjusted total staff is divided in the number of students in the building. He said they are checking numbers every day because of shifting enrollments.

Dr. Butler said her calculations indicate that except for Fairview, class sizes for grades 4-6 are 27.5 and 28. Ms. Merriam said she has a problem that we have special staffing recommendations for Fairview based on their needs and our needs are influx according to ISTEP scores. She would like to see other schools with a large of percentage of students who have not passed ISTEP to have similar dispensations. She said if we are here to truly serve the needs of kids, she does not see passing a ratio is addressing that problem.

Mr. Shipman explained the notion of compensatory education, i.e. Title I dollars are by federal law designed to give assistance to students with the highest need. He noted that full day kindergarten classes at Fairview and Templeton are funded with actual remediation dollars which are driven by students most at risk of failing ISTEP. He said one very difficult issue is the notion of having to look at grade levels and

subject areas across the grade levels. He said success on the ISTEP test is for one youngster pass or fail. He said we also have to look at the scale and how far above or below one third grade in a building could be struggling in language arts and comprehension while another fourth grade down the hall may be struggling with math. He suggested perhaps a way to look at that is to look at remediation dollars and try to focus those on ISTEP tests at various levels.

Mr. Muehling said due to our convoluted funding formula, we are near the last in the state for funding and a proposition before the Legislature could make it even worse. He noted that General Fund money is used to hire teachers and we are in the lowest 20% of the state for funding and in the top 20% in performance.

Mr. Harvey stated that our contract with the teachers union calls for individual buildings to submit class size reports and they were due February 1. He said based on enrollment projections this is what we think we need. He said what is being recommended is very close to what buildings requested. He noted that there are no additional classrooms at Rogers and they did everything they could short of doing redistricting. He added that adjustments will be made in May when the last of three ADM reports is due and adjustments will be made again in the fall when students enroll. Mr. Harvey said from an historical standpoint the high school areas have been in place about ten years and middle school and elementary ratios have been in place since the mid-1980s. He said kindergarten and grades 1-3 are included in Prime Time funding and that is still part of the school funding formula. He said our overall financial situation has not changed and our resources are limited.

Mr. Muehling said it would be nice to be able to have resources for schools that struggle, such as at Fairview. He said it would be great to do that but we would be taking away from another school and that would be a discussion the Board would have to have. Ms. Merriam suggested that she was talking equity, not equality. She noted that we committed to Fairview. Mr. Harvey explained that we committed resources to all Title I schools with the exception of Arlington and Highland Park for assistant principals. He said that does not mean there is not something more that could be done. Mr. Shipman further explained that you cannot take Title I dollars and spend where General Fund would have been spent, i.e. you cannot supplant General Fund dollars with Title I dollars.

Mr. Harvey said we will be meeting with parents from four schools that are not Title I schools and they have literacy groups and as they improve, they do not receive state money. He said the most researched topic in education is the relationship of class size to achievement. He said reducing one or two students will not make a significant impact. He noted some ways that schools are creatively accomplishing smaller class sizes such as looping at Jackson Creek and adapted physical education at Tri-North.

Referring to enrollment at Bloomington New Tech High School (BNTHS), Ms. Merriam asked how the high school population can be reduced by 87 and ratios are the same for this year and next year. Mr. Shipman said BHS South will lose 41 students to BNTHS and will lose some staff. He said the projections of students are slightly higher than what they have now. He said the number changed by 14 students today. He said high schools will be looking at student schedules. Mr. Muehling noted that it takes 8% more staff at BHS North to support the block schedule. Dr. Butler said in reality it takes 3.2 additional staff. She said when you look at staffing at North, South and middle schools it is not 28 to 1. She suggested that North is 20.9 to 1; South is 22.4 to 1; Batchelor is 18.9 to 1; Jackson Creek is 19.4 to 1 and Tri-North is 20.3 to 1. She said some of our elementary school class sizes are higher.

In response to Dr. Grossi's question, Mr. Shipman explained information included on the spread sheet and talked about adjustments made for teacher prep periods. For example, 15 teachers result in 12.86 teachers with prep periods removed. He said if you account for elementary prep period you have to add into elementary the extra staff required. He said when you look at the numbers at North it is calculated

based on 1518 students who can make 16 choices (8 each semester) and we have class size 28 to 1 by taking the number of classes divided by 28 tells the number of sections and divide by 12 because that is how many classes each teacher teaches per year. He said the calculation is different at South and Aurora because both are on trimester schedule. He said at the middle schools there are 14 periods and teachers teach 12 periods during the year. He said they are asking the Board to approve ratios that we are trying to work from – an average of 28 students in each high school classroom. He said when students move to BNTHS or leave our school corporation that will generate actual number of staff Ms. Chambers is allowed to approve. Mr. Shipman further explained that we work from the ratio and try to calculate where students will arrive and what they will take. He said if 56 more youngsters move in you would have approved two additional teachers because you approved the ratio.

Dr. Butler said she understood the Board was being asked to approve ratios. She said last year she and others had questions about class size ratios. She said they were not satisfied with those ratios that they approved but would not approve a second year. She said she does not know whose responsibility it is to change those class size ratios but she would not vote for this because she said last year she would not approve a ratio of 28 to 1 for grades 4-6.

Dr. Grossi said she does not know where is our ‘pot of money’ but grades 4-6 are critical because by the time they get into middle school and high school we are losing them. She said she would like for us to take a look at grades 4-6.

In response to a question, Mr. Harvey said if looking at middle school, 28 students are in seven periods but the teachers only teach six periods. He said if you multiply you will find middle school class sizes with an average of 32 and it is diminished only because of ESL, High Ability, etc. He said high school calculations are very similar. He said calculations for elementary starts with the assumption there will be 28 per class in grades 4-6. He said secondary class sizes are probably in the low 30s.

Dr. Grossi said last year when she was reading at Lakeview she felt she was crawling over children in the classroom. She said those are things she thinks about and 28 to 30 in classes for grades 4-6 are really high. In response to Dr. Butler’s question, Mr. Harvey said it is his responsibility to bring a recommendation to the Board, although ultimately it is the Board’s decision and the Board could lower class size ratios as it looks at all priorities.

Dr. Grossi understood that if the Board approves class size ratios at this time it also has the ability when the budget is prioritized to come back and look at how to lower class sizes for grades 4-6. Mr. Harvey said yes, the Board can lower them but cannot raise them. He said part of the issue of doing this at this time is because between now and March 18 people will be notified if they are not going to have a position in the fall. He said according to state law and our collective bargaining agreement, this timeline must be met and establishing class size ratios is the way to determine the number of and what positions can be confirmed. He confirmed that if class size ratios are not approved, we revert to last year’s adopted ratios.

Ms. Daniels said she is in favor of small class sizes. She said they personally lived with 35 students in their daughter’s class. She noted, however, that these ratios are in line with what the principals requested. She wondered how they determine what to request. Mr. Harvey said these are historic figures that people learned to live with because they know there is not a ‘pot of gold’ somewhere. He said to drop from 28 to 27 per class is about \$50,000 per grade.

In response to other questions, Mr. Shipman said if a principal has 52 youngsters moving into 5th grade he/she will ask for two teachers. If they have 21 they will ask for one but if they have 40 they may ask for two. He said when you look at averages across the corporation they are different than at the building level when you look at wholes or halves. Mr. Harvey added that Board members received staffing reports

verbatim but he thinks what they ask for is tempered by expectations as to what they can reasonably expect. He said this has evolved over a period of time and part of the decision to keep Marlin and Unionville (small schools) open was with the understanding that it would result in split classes.

Ms. Chambers further explained that we have tried to offer more class size assistants. Last year our contract provided \$50,000 for classroom assistants; this year it is \$62,500 and next year it will be \$75,000 and most of this money has gone to elementary schools. She said teachers are the one who write reports and seek money. She said these requests are due the 10th day of each semester and a committee meets on the 11th day to make decisions. She said there are eight class size assistants in elementary schools and two of those are at Rogers.

Mr. Muehling said he also knows that volunteers, many on a full time basis, as well as paid aides assist in the schools. He said we have one of the great systems of education that allows classroom teachers to work independently with children who need additional assistance. He said in terms of budget, if we reduce class size in grades 4-6 we will have to find more money, reduce elsewhere or cut programs or cut pay. He suggested that we do not have much choice in this; however, the discussion could be continued when the Board discusses budget priorities. Dr. Grossi suggested that this should be a topic for a work session. *[Note: Class Size Ratios was a topic of discussion at a Board Work Session on May 15, 2007.]*

Beth Smith, teacher at Childs Elementary, asked if the \$75,000 is for additional aides or to increase salaries for current aides. Ms. Chambers said although they recognize assistants are not paid what they deserve this does not provide for an increase in salary but for an increase in personnel.

Terry Daugherty, teacher at Batchelor Middle School, reminded the Board that middle school teachers have 900 student contacts per week. He said it wears on you and it is tough to get to know the kids personally and they beg for it at this age. He said these are touch numbers and we all understand.

Dr. Grossi noted that the Board has contractual issues and these ratios are what were approved for last year. She said the Board can revisit that again in work session, i.e. the impact if class size ratios are lowered for grades 4-6. There was a call for the question. Aye: Daniels, Grossi, Muehling. Nay: Butler, Merriam. Motion carried.

10. APPROVE BIDS FOR WINDOW REPLACEMENT AT BINFORD ELEMENTARY

Mr. Scherer recommended that the low bidder, Keusch Glass, be awarded a contract for \$260,468.00 for window replacements at Binford. Mr. Muehling so moved. Dr. Butler seconded the motion. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling. Motion carried.

11. APPROVE CONTRACT BUS ROUTE SPECIFICATIONS

Mr. Scherer recommended that the Board approve contract bus route specifications for a two-year contract 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 with an option for MCCSC to extend into the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years as included in the attachment to his report. Ms. Merriam so moved. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion. Following a time for questions and comments, Board members voted unanimously to approve the recommendation as proposed.

At 8:50 p.m. the Board agreed to a five-minute recess.

12. HIGH ABILITY TASK FORCE

Dr. Lovejoy and Kim Williams, High Ability Coordinator, shared an informative report including an

update of the work of the High Ability Task Force. Dr. Lovejoy said this task force began working in the fall of 2007 with 44 people. She said in addition to committee meetings, the group divided into sub-committees and is continuing work in that format. Ms. Williams reported on the work of the high school sub-committee. In response to questions, she said currently there are currently 90 students in the ALPs program – 30 in grade 4, 26 in grade 5 and 34 in grade 6. She reported the number of students in high ability middle school classes: Batchelor – grade 7 = 22, grade 8 = 21; Jackson Creek – grade 7 = 27, grade 8 = 26; Tri-North – grade 7 = 29, grade 8 = 23.

Following a time for discussion, Mr. Harvey noted that legislation passed last year identifies this program as High Ability and it is a part of the Division of Exceptional Learners at the Department of Education. Ms. Williams said the school system received a state grant in the amount of \$33,000 last year; this year we received \$74,000. Board members thanked Dr. Lovejoy and Ms. Williams for this informative report.

13. **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Mr. Thrasher explained that the fiscal year for Indiana school systems is the calendar year. He shared specific details of data shared with the Board. He said the operating balance should be 8.3% to 10% of annual expenditures and for the last several years we have been moving up from a low period in 2003. He said it is difficult to make much head-way but we moved to 3.5% in 2004, 4.7% in 2005, 4.86% in 2006 and 5.25% in 2007. He said annual expenditures are going up each year so the operating balance had to be increased by \$99,000 to maintain the same percentage. Mr. Thrasher noted that the operating balance is a one time source of income if it is treated as income and if committed to recurring expenditures, after the first year the balance would decrease annually.

In response to a question about the bond issue, Mr. Thrasher said a decision has not yet been made. Mr. Muehling thought it would be a competitive sale. Mr. Thrasher said as of now they are looking at competitive. He offered to share additional information about this at a work session. Board members agreed they would like to schedule a work session for this purpose and expressed appreciation for this informative report.

14. **INFORMATION, PROPOSALS OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** – There was no response to Dr. Grossi's invitation for public comments.

15. **COMMITTEE REPORTS AND PROPOSALS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

Ms. Merriam reported that the Comprehensive Health Issues Committee met last week and they have a comprehensive strategic plan – with goals and measures and outcomes. She said they sent letters to all PTOs asking them to consider offering healthier food choices at school carnivals. She said the committee is also talking about following up on the survey on sexual attitudes in high school. She said several forums on how to talk to your teen about sex have been held and one is scheduled to be held at BHS South on March 12. She also noted that there are more teen pregnancies in our school corporation now than ever and most are sophomore students. She urged parents to attend one of the forums if they have difficulty talking to their teens about sexuality issues.

In response to questions, Mr. Harvey reported that the environmental inspection and lease documents are being prepared for the BNTHS site. He expects the school system will have occupancy by spring break.

Mr. Harvey mentioned that February 21 is BHS North Habitat for Humanity fund raiser to help build North's eighth house in eight years. He expressed kudos to Pat Wilson, BHSN teacher and BHSN Habitat chapter sponsor, and to Ms. Merriam for their work with this active and successful group of students.

Mr. Harvey extended congratulations to Dr. Butler who was honored by Indiana University with the Anita Aldridge Alumni Award.

Dr. Butler said when the BNTHS report is presented to the Board she would like to have a breakdown of population, i.e. comparative information representative of our student population.

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Grossi declared the meeting to be adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Teresa Grossi, President

Jeannine Butler, Vice President

ABSENT

Valerie Merriam, Secretary

Susan P. Wanzer, Assistant Secretary

ABSENT

Susan Daniels, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

Jim Muehling, Member