

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting, February 5, 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 5, 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
Sue Wanzer	Assistant Secretary
Susan Daniels	Member
Lois Sabo-Skelton	Member
Jim Muehling	Member

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
Tom Bunger	Board Attorney
Chris Finley	Principal, Marlin Elementary School
Brady Gillihan	Reporter, <i>The Herald-Times</i>

In addition to the above, 37 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.

2. **FACES OF EDUCATION**

Dr. Grossi explained that at every Board meeting an employee or volunteer is recognized for outstanding accomplishments. She introduced Carl and Diane Miller, parent volunteers at University Elementary School, who were nominated as honored 'Faces of Education' by Paris King, Secretary at University Elementary School. She noted that Ms. King referred to them as 'amazing' volunteers who began volunteering four years ago. She said they work tirelessly in the library, classrooms or office – Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Principal Janice Bizzari concurred, noting that Mr. Miller creates amazing bulletin boards and the staff recently talked about what they would do without them. She said their impact will be felt for years to come. Dr. Grossi said it is the Board's pleasure to recognize Carl and Diane Miller as two of the school system's shining *Faces of Education*. Mr. and Mrs. Miller thanked Ms. King for her nomination and graciously accepted the Board's award.

3. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE**

Joe Jachim, Marlin parent, asked about a new policy for student tardiness. Specifically, he said his child was considered tardy for the day when he left early for a dental appointment. The Superintendent will follow-up on Mr. Jachim's concern.

Ms. Merriam said she recently attended a conference on the implications of changed property tax legislation. She shared a web site address: www.agecon.purdue.edu/crd/localgov and noted that questions can be posed and answers will be posted on the site.

At 7:10 p.m., there were no additional comments from the public and the Board moved to the next item on the agenda.

Agenda Adjustment – Dr. Grossi proposed an adjustment to the agenda. She said following discussion of the Middle School Task Force, the Board would discuss Class Size Reports and the recommendation to create a Director of Learning position would be moved from an action to an information report. The agenda adjustment was approved by acclamation.

4. **SCHOOL SHOWCASE: Marlin Elementary School**

On behalf of students, staff and their school community, Principal Chris Finley introduced Marlin's presentation. He said renovation at Marlin is finished and they are moving closer to their goal to create a first class learning environment. He said they have carpet in all classrooms and two classrooms have been added giving them some much needed additional space. He said an exciting piece of the renovation has been the media center and now they have an incredible computer lab. He said as a district we have done a good job and he is proud of the Marlin faculty and what they are doing daily with their students. Looking at No Child Left Behind, he said they are meeting the standards at Marlin but in addition to that they also aspire to look forward. Mr. Finley said Marlin has 230 students and when he comes in at 8 a.m. students are singing and at 5 p.m. kids are studying nature and the Student Council is having a food drive. He said Marlin parents are very active and all of this creates a unique learning environment for students.

Mr. Finley introduced students who shared information about what is going on at Marlin. Sophie Pershing talked about the Peer Mediation program; Greg Darling shared examples of Student Council projects; Shelby Allgood mentioned topics discussed by Nature Club members; Kristin Keough said the Student Council is helping the school and community through fund raisers; and Kierra Neal said she explained what she likes about being a part of the Nature Club at Marlin. Karen Bennett, music teacher at Marlin, led the choir in a song and noted that these students met on two nights a week for 45 minutes to prepare for a concert to be held at Brownsburg with hundreds of other elementary students. Singers included: Eva Zollars, Katherine Ramage, Jade Mohler, Tony McKnight, Kristin Keough, Annalise Haldeman, Elizabeth Grooms and Kadie Freeman.

Mr. Finley concluded Marlin's presentation with photos of recent renovation. He noted that all Marlin teachers and some family members were present.

Following a time for questions, Board members thanked students and adults for sharing information about some of the many great things going on at Marlin.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. Harvey recommended approval of the Consent Agenda: (a) approval of minutes of meetings held on January 8 and January 22, 2008; (b) donations, ECA expenditure and field trip requests; (c) contracts; (d)

Personnel matters; (e) Financial Report; and (f) Allowance of Claims. Mr. Muehling so moved. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion.

Board members commented on various items included on the consent agenda and expressed appreciation for the many donations received. Ms. Merriam suggested a change in minutes for the January 8 meeting, page 4, to clarify that the Board voted not to renew and to change some administrator contracts since not all of these contracts were cancellations. Karen Portle responded to questions about contracts with Smithville Digital and Smithville Telecom.

Mr. Harvey read into the record names of donors. Ms. Chambers recognized the contributions of retirees: Sharon Finley, teacher with 34 years of service; Saundra Kahl, MCCSC secretary for 29 years; and Danny Porter, who served a total of 23 years as a bus driver and then maintenance employee.

Following a time for additional discussion, Board members voted on the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

6. **PURCHASE OF MILLER DRIVE PROPERTY**

Noting that the Board talked about this property several months ago, Mr. Harvey summarized that it is located across the street from the Service Building, includes three buildings on three acres, 26,000 square feet, and has about 100 parking spaces. He reminded the Board that the plan is to locate offices from the Administration Center during renovation in 2009. Additionally, this space gives some flexibility in regard to renovation of the Service Building and the possibility of expanding alternative-to-expulsion and alternative-to-suspension programs. He said the plan is to purchase the property on contract with a balloon payment in five years with the expectation to save money in the Capital Projects Fund Plan to pay off the contract when the balloon comes due. He recommended that the Board enter into a contract purchase agreement with HECD, LLC, in the amount of \$2.2 million for property located at 401 East Miller Drive subject to the terms and conditions in the purchase agreement. Ms. Wanzer so moved. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion.

Ms. Merriam voiced support for expansion of alternative-to-expulsion and alternative-to-suspension programs. Mr. Harvey said it may also be a possible site for homebound instruction, explaining that home bound teachers cannot be sent to homes if adults are not present and presently we use sites in the community (such as the library). Mr. Muehling said over the course of the last year we have looked at this property and have been advised by knowledgeable people that it is an excellent investment.

In response to a question from Brady Gillihan, Mr. Harvey said the lease with current tenants in one of the buildings runs through 2009. He said they occupy slightly less than one-half of one of the buildings and the school system's needs would not invade that space. He said once the lease is up, we will talk with them about their plans; he said that he understands they may have building plans and stated that the school system will try to work with them.

Board members voted on the motion to approve purchase of Miller Drive property as recommended. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

7. **CARRY-FORWARD OF UNOBLIGATED BALANCES IN THE CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND**

Mr. Thrasher recommended that the Board adopt the resolution authorizing the administration to carry forward 2007 unencumbered balances in the Capital Projects Fund projects listed in the report to be expended in 2008. Ms. Merriam so moved. Dr. Sabo-Skelton seconded the motion. There were no

questions from the Board or public. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

8. **CLOSING BUDGET FUNCTIONS FOR 2007**

Mr. Thrasher commented on this matter and recommended that the Board adopt the resolution authorizing the budget adjustments necessary to avoid having expenditures and encumbrances exceed appropriations in major functional accounts as included in this report. Ms. Wanzer so moved. Dr. Butler seconded the motion. Following a time for questions and comments, Board members voted on the motion to adopt the resolution as noted. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

9. **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING PATRON PETITIONS, APPROVING THE FORM OF THE LEASE, APPROVING PRELIMINARY PLANS AND COST ESTIMATES, AUTHORIZING ACTION BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS AND THE MCCSC 1996 SCHOOL BUILDING CORPORATION**

Mr. Thrasher presented three petitions with 122 signatures to the Board. Mr. Bunger reviewed the resolution which acknowledges receipt of signatures approving the form of the lease, approving preliminary plans and cost estimates, and authorizing action by the Superintendent and the MCCSC 1996 School Building Corporation. He said this resolution also authorizes putting a notice in the newspaper advertising a hearing on this matter to be held on February 19. Mr. Bunger explained that the building corporation had met and approved the form of the lease and this is the next step in the process. He noted that citizens will have an opportunity to speak at the hearing on February 19. Mr. Thrasher recommended approval of the resolution as described. Ms. Wanzer so moved. Ms. Merriam seconded the motion.

During ensuing discussion, Mr. Bunger explained that there is no time limit for building corporation members to serve. He said these are voluntary roles and community members who agree to serve come to meetings and read everything that comes before the School Board for approval. He said the school system has been fortunate over the years that people have been willing to serve. He said they take title to property and sign a trust indenture. Mr. Thrasher added that rather than form a new building corporation, the school system has used the same building corporation for multiple projects. Mr. Bunger confirmed that the building corporation owns the property, the school system leases it from the building corporation and when it is paid off, it belongs to the school system. He said 1996 is the original name of the building corporation, i.e. when it first came into existence.

There was no further discussion. Board members voted on the motion to approve the resolution as proposed. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

Mr. Harvey extended thanks to Mr. Thrasher and Mr. Bunger and building corporation members Virginia Rose and Mark Bradford for their work and service on behalf of the school system.

10. **MIDDLE SCHOOL TASK FORCE**

Dr. Lovejoy shared an update of the work of the Middle School Task Force. She said shortly after she assumed her position with the school system she was asked to look at middle school best practices. Her report on the work of the task force is included with the official record of this meeting. Dr. Lovejoy responded to questions and said her understanding is that the Board needs to know if there is a grade level recommendation and a goal of the task force is to bring a recommendation in May. She said they have not heard from parents yet and agreed with Board members that parent input is critical to the success of the process.

In response to a question, Mr. Harvey explained that committee members do not have to be members of the MCEA (Monroe County Education Association). However, the appointments must be approved by the MCEA. He added that this is an area of the collective bargaining agreement and it is a responsibility, obligation and right of the MCEA to approve committee appointments.

In response to other questions, Dr. Lovejoy said the committee is in the process of evaluating other models that exist, what works and what has been successful. She mentioned some specific models under study. Board members thanked Dr. Lovejoy for this informative report.

11. **CLASS SIZE REPORTS**

Ms. Chambers referred to provisions of Article 2.14 of the MCCSC-MCEA collective bargaining agreement pertaining to staffing needs study. She presented copies of Class Size Reports as submitted by each building and indicated that she would come back to the Board at the February 19 meeting with recommendations regarding class size ratios. In response to questions, Ms. Chambers said Mr. Harvey and Mr. Shipman are working with her on data to use to set class size ratios, specifically at the high schools since the number of students going to Bloomington New Tech High School (BNTHS) has not been determined. She briefly talked about differences from last year, mentioning additional money allocated for classroom assistants this year.

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

Dr. Grossi noted that this agenda item was moved from action to information because some Board members had questions about it. Mr. Harvey said the recommendation is to create a Director of Learning position which replaces the Director of Literacy Position that will be eliminated at the end of this school year. He said the Middle School Task Force report illustrates what he is trying to do with creation of this position, i.e. consider how to better serve the needs of the school corporation. He said literacy will continue to be a priority but this position will assist the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in many areas. He noted at least seven task forces and committees that meet monthly or more often: Middle School, Early College High School, New Tech High School, High Ability, Professional Development, Fairview Restructuring, and Major Textbook Adoption committees. He said we need to look at how we program high ability students in all programs and it seemed to him that we need more help in these critical areas. Mr. Harvey acknowledged that the Board had talked about budget priorities and noted that he has tried over the last one and one-half years to reduce or maintain administrative cost. He does not believe the school system has added to the administrative structure over that period of time.

Dr. Grossi mentioned that many school districts this size have a focus with one for elementary and one for secondary. She asked if this position would focus on K-12. Mr. Harvey said they talked about adding a Director of Elementary Education and a Director of Secondary Education but received negative feedback. He said ultimately he thinks the school system should go in that direction. Dr. Lovejoy said we need continuity of programming and she sees this person being involved in all areas. She added that she sees it as a partnership where she will be focusing on AYP (adequate yearly progress). She said many schools have not made AYP and we must focus our attention on school improvement. Board members noted the overwhelming responsibilities included in the job description for this position. Dr. Lovejoy said she would be working in tandem with this person.

In response to another question, Mr. Harvey said the person in this position would work 220 days and the salary is expected to be in the mid-to-low \$80,000 range – about where middle school principals are on the salary schedule. Dr. Butler said her concerns are always where we have to cut to fund this position.

Ms. Merriam encouraged using college interns for some of the activities listed on the job description. Dr. Sabo-Skelton agreed this is a good idea for some areas but noted that would not take the place of a professional that is needed long-term to lead and develop a program. She said she sees the need for this position.

In response to another question, Mr. Harvey said until this year the High Ability Coordinator was a half-time position. He said he recommended that it is full-time by using one-half of the FTE (full-time equivalent) from Summit because of a change in state law. He said it was intended to be full time this year only.

Ms. Wanzer said she supports this position in that she believes curriculum is one of the most important areas in the school corporation. She mentioned many of the tasks assigned to the curriculum office and said when the Board hired Mr. Harvey as Superintendent he was authorized to organize the central staff. She suggested that this is not a new position and when the Director of Literacy position was eliminated Board members told the public that action would not eliminate literacy work.

In response to Dr. Butler's question, Dr. Lovejoy said she would cover areas in the Director of Literacy position that are unaccounted for. Dr. Butler concurred that a promise was made that those services would not be lost but they are not included in this job description or in the assistant superintendent job description. Dr. Lovejoy said the job description is lengthy but it is one of her responsibilities to make sure that literacy services are not lost. Mr. Harvey said he worked on the job description with Dr. Lovejoy. He confirmed that not everything is included from the Director of Literacy job description, but central functions of that position are embodied in this one. He said he would like to bring this recommendation back to the Board for action at the February 19 meeting because of the timeliness for posting the position. He said the internal posting period is for two weeks and the external posting period is a month. He would like to fill the position by July 1. Dr. Grossi confirmed that this item will be brought to the Board for action on February 19.

13. **INFORMATION, PROPOSALS OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** – There was no response to Dr. Grossi's invitation for public comments. She recognized two BHS North students who were attending for a government class assignment.

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

Ms. Merriam expressed disappointment that the Board sets meeting dates a year in advance and schools have many activities on those nights that she would like to attend. Ms. Wanzer said perhaps schools could be more helpful by checking the calendar when scheduling events.

Dr. Butler said she would like for the Board to consider that in some schools phones are very inaccessible to parents. Specifically, she said when you cannot talk to a person when you call a school it seems to be in direct opposition to our goals. She said she has called, got a recording and called again. She said the recording never gave her an opportunity to press zero to get a person. She added that she is not a parent and she is persistent so she kept calling back and finally got somebody. She noted that she identified herself because she thought that was the only way she would get to speak to a person. Dr. Butler said parents do not like to call schools because they feel challenged and unwelcome. She said we talk about making our schools welcoming to parents and our phone systems do just the opposite. She said if we want schools to be computerized we accomplished it but if we want welcoming schools, something needs to change.

Dr. Sabo-Skelton said she has also had that experience and said if there is an emergency and the parents need to reach someone, they cannot do that. Ms. Merriam said she called two schools today and got a

secretary in both schools. Dr. Grossi pointed out that the new telephone system is not in place in all the schools. She suggested that especially in elementary schools it is absurd to get an answering machine. She also noted that when a teacher calls her it comes up on caller ID as an 'unknown' number. She said perhaps if it said 'MCCSC' parents would be more likely to pick up.

Ms. Daniels asked if the answer to the question about 'tardy' designation could be shared with the Board. She is interested in the answer because she has had the same experience. Mr. Harvey responded that part of this is being driven by the state in terms of the way they are counting attendance and consistency of reporting must be the same across the district. He said some is driven by state reports. Ms. Daniels suggested it would be good to get that information out to parents so they are aware as well.

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Grossi declared the meeting to be adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Teresa Grossi, President

Jeannine Butler, Vice President

Valerie Merriam, Secretary

Susan P. Wanzer, Assistant Secretary

Susan Daniels, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

Jim Muehling, Member