

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Work Session, February 19, 2008

MEMORANDA

The Board of School Trustees of the Monroe County Community School Corporation met in work session, for which proper notice had been given, at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 19, 2008, at the School Administration Center, 315 E. North Drive, Bloomington, Indiana.

Board members present: Jeannine Butler, Susan Daniels, Teresa Grossi, Valerie Merriam, and Jim Muehling

Board members absent: Lois Sabo-Skelton and Sue Wanzer

Also present: James Harvey, Superintendent; Peggy Chambers, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Personnel; Mary Lovejoy, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Mike Shipman, Director of Assessment and School Operations; Ed Brown, Director of the Hoosier Hills Career Center; Chuck Holloway, Principal of Aurora Alternative High School; Mark Fletcher, Principal of Bloomington High School South; and Joe Doyle, Assistant Principal of Bloomington High School South; and Janet Tupper, Administrative Assistant.

President of the Board, Teresa Grossi, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Board members received information about and discussed high school status progress reports from Aurora Alternative High School and Bloomington High School South.

1. **Aurora Alternative High School** – (5:00-5:55 p.m.) Mr. Holloway said as a part of the Graduation Work Group looking at different models, he and the Aurora faculty attended a CELL conference eighteen months ago. He said they felt good about it because they were doing some of the things suggested at the conference. He said they have also studied about and visited “Big Picture School” and Early College High School. He said the teachers liked the idea of internships and dual credit, etc. Mr. Holloway said they began meeting as a staff and the general consensus was they wanted to remain a school of 100-125 students but they also wanted to know what they could do to enhance what they have. With that enthusiasm, they worked on grants from New Tech High School and Early College High School to incorporate some of the Big Picture School and Early College High School. He said Mr. Harvey visited Aurora and asked some specific questions and then in March 2007 they were advised of some renovation plans at Aurora to be completed in the fall of 2009.

Mr. Holloway shared a preliminary sketch for renovation of and additions to Aurora and discussed how this would work with their plan to have a hybrid model of the best of some things from many school models. They will divide the school into two blocks, four classrooms each with a group meeting room and lunchroom facilities. He said they have family meetings but the schedule is traditional in set-up. He said teachers like working with students with more personalized time but had not found a way to have collaborative time together. He mentioned how MCCS Foundation grant funds were used to send two staff members to an in-depth conference and to fund a teacher to teach NovaNet classes in the afternoon.

In response to questions, Mr. Holloway discussed specific attributes of schools visited and how they may take the good parts from each and have it ready to go in fall 2009. He explained how Aurora may make the ‘Big Picture School’ fit into the Aurora mold. They expect to have two blocks next year and practice with the current enrollment and prepare for a school of 120 in 2009. He said in order to qualify for alternative grant money they must have a 15 to 1 class size ratio. He confirmed that Aurora will need to do more public relations to let kids know what they are doing. He said they accept students at all grade levels and although some freshmen may choose New Tech High School there will be 10th and 11th graders who will be looking for an alternative. He said they are taking 21 new students this trimester.

When asked to list three or four things that will be different, Mr. Holloway said teaming, block, advisory and the family group will change because those activities will happen within the blocks. He said they sent people to visit the Renaissance School in Warren Township and one teacher went to Spencer to see their internship program. He added that one teacher is taking courses to become a career coordinator for the school. He noted that with such a small enrollment they have trouble offering advanced algebra, geometry, etc; those classes are often covered with independent study.

Board members agreed to send additional questions to Mr. Holloway via e-mail. Mr. Holloway will share information with the Superintendent regarding the outcome of a grant proposal he recently submitted to Cook Planning Foundation.

2. **Bloomington High School South** – (5:55-6:50 p.m.) Principal Mark Fletcher and Assistant Principal Joe Doyle presented a status progress report for BHS South. Mr. Fletcher shared an informative flow chart and explained in more detail each section of the chart. He said their intent was to answer four questions: (1) What do we want students to know? (2) How do we know when they learn it? (3) What do we do when they don't learn it? (4) What do we do when they do learn it?

Mr. Fletcher noted that the Graduation Work Group (GWG) began in 2005, completing on a system-wide basis at the end of the 2006-2007 school year. The three important “R” words stressed by that group’s study were: relationships, relevance and rigor. He said BHS South developed eight action committees to address findings from the GWG and all teachers were committed to one or more of those groups. They found that a greater number of students have needs beyond English and math.

Reviewing specifics of the flow chart and 2001 initiatives, Mr. Fletcher explained in some detail what they are currently doing, general themes of 2008 committees and future initiatives. The 2001 Initiatives include: (1) strong transition plan; (2) professional learning communities {advisor/mentoring program}; (3) four guiding questions {programs to personalize education}; (4) expansion of career and tech opportunities; (5) Graduation Work Group {high quality staff development}; (6) 21st Century learning skills {scheduling}; and (7) eight guiding principles {school within school for discipline}. He noted some ways that BHS South is currently promoting successful transition for 9th grade students: “PRIDE”, Freshman Academy, Panther Preview, Summer School for incoming 9th graders, and orientations.

Mr. Fletcher mentioned the general themes of 2008 committees: (1) Relationships need to be continually expanded to meet students’ new social needs. (2) Relevancy through curriculum and pedagogy that directly impacts student engagement. (3) Rigorous expectations for all and support to attain those goals. (4) Timely and systemic assistance to all students. (5) Directive assistance that is a shared expectation. (6) Variety of assistance opportunities available to all students. He reviewed future initiatives as they relate to these general themes.

Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Doyle responded to questions and shared statistics. Mr. Doyle said there are students taking AP (Advanced Placement) classes who are not ‘AP kids’ but their PSAT scores indicate they would be successful in some AP classes. Mr. Fletcher advised that BHS South assistant principal Jay True is responsible for recruiting students for the Early College High School Program. He will team with a counselor to support that program. He discussed safety nets in place to support all students.

The work session adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Teresa Grossi, President

Jeannine Butler, Vice President

ABSENT

Valerie Merriam, Secretary

Susan P. Wanzer, Assistant Secretary

Susan Daniels, Member

Jim Muehling, Member

ABSENT

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member