

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting, March 4, 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, March 4, 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

In addition to the above, 24 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 Tina Peterson, Executive Director of the Foundation of Monroe County Community Schools (FMCCS), who was nominated by media specialist and Foundation building representative Verna DeLuce. She noted that the FMCCS awarded its first grants in 1976 and is expected to exceed \$1 million in cumulative funding to the school corporation this school year. She said this remarkable level of expansion and attainment in recent years is due to the vision, leadership and community partnership that Tina inspires. Quoting and in agreement with Ms. DeLuce's comments, Dr. Grossi said Tina's dedication to the Foundation has truly deepened the bond between Monroe County and its schools and she has expanded our definitions of generosity and philanthropy. She said it is the Board's pleasure to recognize Tina Peterson as one of the school system's shining *Faces of Education*. Ms. Peterson graciously accepted the award and said it is an honor to do what they do everyday at the Foundation. She commended Foundation Board members and office assistants and said it is a pleasure to serve a School Board and Superintendent who are passionate about education.

3. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE**

There was no response when Dr. Grossi invited public dialogue; however, she recognized students from Indiana University and BHS North who were present to observe the meeting.

At 7:08 p.m., the Board moved to the next item on the agenda.

4. **SCHOOL SHOWCASE: Broadview Learning Center**

Melanie Hunter, Promotions Director for Broadview Learning Center (BLC), shared slides of BLC's everyday activities while the following individuals came forward to share brief but very sincere comments about their connection with BLC, each ending with the exclamation: "I am BLC"

Eileen Crane teaches students who are age 19 and older;

David Allen is an ABE (Adult Basic Education) student who is headed to Ivy Tech Community College when he passes the GED test;

Deb Kloosterman teaches basic literacy skills;

Tammy Rogers is a teaching assistant at the Monroe County Correctional Center where inmates study for and take the GED and Ivy Tech entrance exam;

Brian Bowman teaches high school credit classes that are highly individualized and self-paced and taught in an alternative setting; he noted that the ATS (alternative-to-suspension) program at BLC provides a structured setting for these students and help for home-schooled students;

Lacey Spicer thought she had no choices when she had to drop out of school and now she is getting her GED;

Sandy Bender teaches two levels of English-as-a-Second Language and helps international students living in Bloomington to communicate in English;

Nicaraguan native Violeta Gomez lived here for 20 years but did not have time for English classes until this year; the ESL class has helped a lot and two weeks ago she became a U.S. citizen and now she feels connected;

Parvin Hadji Ghassemi from Iran is the mother of two children and BLC was recommended to her; she has studied English for more than two years and she feels the recommendation was correct; students work together to create projects and practice oral and written English, preparing them for jobs and continued education;

Mary Jo Barker is a GED examiner to student inmates in jail and administers special testing; she is the last door for GED hopefuls to go through;

Gloria Grant took more than 40 years to get her GED and she failed the math test more than once; she has passed the GED and feels better about herself and met wonderful friends along the way;

Mary Anne Williams of Workforce Development arranges for customized classes through BLC for area businesses; Workforce education is funded in part by the Department of Education;

Joann Novak, along with Matt Hankins, brings technology immigrants up-to-speed in a low cost and low stress environment;

Joyce Teague has taken several computer classes at BLC that have helped her tremendously on her job; she would like to take additional classes and cannot say enough about the BLC teachers and staff and the impact these programs have on the community;

Sally Harvey came to BLC as a volunteer last year and as an adult education teacher substitute; she wanted to meet new people and give back to the community; not only has she done these things but she found that she learned as she taught;

As marketing and public relations director, Melanie Hunter sells the program to the community and is also the BLC volunteer coordinator; she helps find child care for evening students and helps low income people file taxes;

Ginny Boshears is the secretary for the Adult Education program; she is the first person seen and heard when people visit or call BLC; she mentioned that in addition to basic programs BLC offers a reading lab,

Youth Outreach for middle school students, Family Resource Center, a play group, support for international families, family literacy, Head Start classes, evening child care, a park and two large community rooms for community use all housed in a renovated building of which they are very proud.

Sherry Dick, Director of MCCSC Adult Education, said she believes passionately in life-long learning and she is very proud of their great programs and wonderful building. She said she is proudly BLC.

The Board recognized others who came to support this presentation but did not speak. Ms. Dick and others responded to questions. Board members thanked Ms. Dick and all who spoke with such conviction on behalf of BLC for sharing this informative and very motivating presentation.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Harvey shared a report of commendations for the BHS North Science Olympiad Teams; BHS North musicians who won top prizes at the Jazz Fest; BHS North Advanced Jazz Band for receiving top band honors at the Jazz Festival in Idaho; and Lilly Endowment Teacher Creativity Fellowship grant recipients. He also noted that United Way contributions to the School Assistance Fund have been increased significantly this year. He announced that Honey Creek School was used for a WTIU *Wilderness Plots* program which will be airing in March. Noting this week is School Social Work Week in Indiana, Mr. Harvey recognized MCCSC social workers and the professional skills they bring to our students and staff.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Dr. Grossi called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda: (a) approval of minutes of meetings held on February 5 and January 19, 2008; (b) donations and a field trip request; (c) Contract; (d) Personnel matters; (e) Financial Report; and (f) Allowance of Claims. Ms. Wanzer so moved. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion.

In response to Dr. Grossi's request, Dr. Hugo shared background information regarding the proposed contract with Theraplay. She said MCCSC has two full time occupational therapists and they are working overtime with over 100 students each while serving 22 schools. She said they were invited to 34 case conferences in the month of January and 19 evaluations are due soon and with the growing number of students, it is impossible to meet these loads. Dr. Hugo said Theraplay works with Richland-Bean Blossom and Martinsville schools as well as with some nursing homes. She found them good to work with and they provide excellent services. She said the arrangement will be re-evaluated at the end of the year; they have worked out a tentative schedule with the two occupational therapists (OT). Responding to questions from Dr. Sabo-Skelton and other Board members, Dr. Hugo said once a student is identified to have a disability the OT may be one of the services provided. She said generally they assist in handwriting or with students who have difficulty with formulation of letters, sometimes eating skills and technology – usually focusing on fine motor skills. She said typically they meet with students one-on-one but they may also be meeting with teachers to help them see how to carry over in the classroom. She confirmed that the recommendation is to approve the contract for twenty hours per week for the remainder of this school year.

Ms. Merriam offered a correction to page 4 of the minutes of the February 19 meeting. Ms. Chambers commented on the Mary Ellen Porter's pending retirement. Ms. Porter is a custodial supervisor who began her career with the school system in 1991. She will retire on July 10. Mr. Muehling noted that at the February 5th work session the Board discussed paperless meetings and on March 5th they will have a training session to prepare for the first paperless meeting on March 18.

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

7. **CONTRACT BUS ROUTE EXTENSION**

Mr. Scherer recommended approval of a bus route extension for Matt Floyd, bus #165, for a new daily rate of \$224.11. Dr. Sabo-Skelton so moved. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion. Following a time for comments, the Board voted unanimously to approve the extension as proposed.

8. **APPROVE SCHOOL CALENDAR FOR 2010-2011**

Mr. Harvey reviewed some features of the proposed calendar and recommended Board approval. Ms. Wanzer so moved. Dr. Sabo-Skelton seconded the motion.

Mr. Muehling said living in a university town, we do align closely to Indiana University's (I.U.) calendar for many reasons and there is pressure to end the semester at the winter break rather than try to come back and take exams after two weeks away from school.

Ms. Wanzer said her first year on the Board she asked if we needed to tie our schedule with I.U. She said she was working for the city at the time and many people informed her that families use I.U. students for child care and she heard that there are a lot of other good reasons. She said if the Legislature is going to mandate the start date of public education, she wonders if they will do the same for public universities.

Dr. Grossi said when we moved the start of school to an earlier date it was to allow teachers more opportunity to prepare for ISTEP and now that is going to change. However, she noted that most school corporations across the state start even before we do. Ms. Wanzer noted that if we do not end early enough teachers cannot enroll in classes at I.U.

Dr. Butler said another thing that has posed a problem for us with I.U. is if we start early to balance the calendar, in a lot of our schools we have students that do not come until I.U. starts. She also noted that we have to have more days per year than I.U.

Ms. Merriam said she thinks we start school too early and she even asked what does the public feel about the start date. She asked for feedback before the next meeting and only one person contacted her. Although she would like to start later because of vacation plans, she said she heard from no one until receiving copies of a couple of e-mails this week. She also noted that I.U. starts later.

Mr. Harvey agreed that I.U. starts later and ends earlier. He said there was a time when I.U. was more similar but they transitioned semesters so the school system cannot match either the beginning or ending dates.

In response to a question posed from a citizen during public comment, Mr. Harvey said the calendar as it is presented would end school without snow days prior to Memorial Day but Commencement is scheduled on the following Saturday which allows four days during that week to make-up days canceled due to inclement weather. He said some school systems build in 'snow days' and have days off if they are not needed; this calendar has time at the end of the year for make-up.

There were no additional comments. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

9. **SABBATICAL LEAVE REQUEST FOR 2008-2009**

Mr. Harvey recommended approval of a sabbatical leave request for the 2008-2009 school year for Kathy

Nesbitt with all terms of the current collective bargaining agreement applying in granting the leave. Ms. Daniels so moved. Dr. Sabo-Skelton seconded the motion. Ms. Nesbitt responded to specific questions from Board members and the Board voted unanimously to approve the sabbatical leave request as recommended.

10. **BLOOMINGTON NEW TECH HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE**

Bloomington New Tech High School (BNTHS) Principal Alan Veach and Mary Lovejoy, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, presented an informative report regarding the progress of BNTHS. A copy of the text of their report is included with the agenda for this meeting. In response to questions, Mr. Veach said 84 students have been accepted for the first freshman class to open the school in 2008-2009. He shared demographic information for these students, noting that it is very similar to the demographics for the school system's total student body.

Mr. Veach said they are talking about offering three languages: Spanish, Chinese and Japanese. He said there is a possibility they could arrange for other language instruction if a student is interested in taking a different foreign language. He said they could arrange the same for the arts; his hope is that they could always be flexible.

Regarding physical education requirements, Mr. Veach said they will work with students to develop a plan that would not cost money. He said if they are already participating in a class, then they could be given credit for what they are already doing. He said the state has not been flexible on the number of physical education hours required but there is flexibility in allowing personal plans to be developed. Mr. Harvey confirmed that P.E. is an example of how the State Board of Education is moving and is receptive to proposals to do things differently. He added that New Tech is in the beginning stages of wanting to create centers of excellence where school corporations that have a New Tech High School would take on staff development opportunities for their own faculties and also become regional service centers in NT and in project based learning.

Mr. Muehling suggested that Mr. (Jeff) Rudkin's B-TV class at Batchelor could document what BNTHS is doing. Mr. Veach said some bring middle school students over to let them see what is going on. He said a journalism class at I.U. brought him in as a client for their project. He said four groups are using it as a marketing tool and they have put in hours of work to develop a marketing campaign. He is anxious to see what they turn out.

Board members expressed appreciation for this informative report. Dr. Butler commented that she would like to receive information reports during the public dialogue section of the meeting so that people could ask questions and learn about these programs. She said there might be people who would want to ask questions and the Board could answer during public dialogue.

Ms. Wanzer noted that when she first started on the Board they had Board comments at the beginning of the meeting but moved it to the end so that Board members could respond to comments given during the meeting.

11. **FOUNDATION OF MCCS**

Executive Director Tina Peterson mentioned the grant reception to be held on March 19. She said State Superintendent of Instruction Suellen Reed will be the speaker. She said Kathy Loser, Media Specialist at BHS North, will be the grant speaker this year and Mr. Harvey will be speaking. She said 67 grant recipients will be recognized at the reception to be held at 4:30 p.m. at the Convention Center.

Ms. Peterson shared information regarding the number of grant applications received and the amount of awards given. She said they find it difficult to say no to applicants and try to give all some money if not the entire amount requested. She said \$35,000 was donated for BNTHS this month, including \$10,000 from TASUS Corporation. She reported that 1,300 grants have been awarded since 1986.

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

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

Ms. Merriam congratulated BHS North student Victoria Ison who was recognized at the Indiana Statehouse today for her essay on the First Amendment. She also extended congratulations to BHS North student Nathan Pratt who had just been notified he is one of two people in Indiana who received a perfect score on his ACT. She said he is one of only 39 students in the nation to achieve this accomplishment. She extended kudos to both students.

Ms. Wanzer said she had been reading *The Herald-Times* on-line comments about why we did not dismiss school early when others in the area did. She said she does not think people understand the mechanics of closing school early. She noted that it takes two to two and one-half hours to get bus drivers together. She said they work only in the morning and afternoon and many have other jobs during the day. Ms. Wanzer noted that some people were concerned about the safety of children driving home from school; she suggested that parents may want to consider having their children ride the bus to school on bad weather days. She also mentioned that deciding at 11:00 a.m. to close early means at the earliest a 1:00 p.m. dismissal time plus the fact that working parents have no way of knowing that their children will be home earlier. Ms. Daniels agreed that there is a problem with getting information out to people to let them know of early dismissal decisions. She and Ms. Wanzer agreed that even if they do know, some parents cannot leave work early and it is a difficult situation.

Mr. Harvey reviewed procedures for determining the advisability of closing schools, delaying start time and/or early dismissal. He said Mike Scherer, John Carter and Mike Clark – among others – drive a lot of roads and they are in continuous contact with the highway and county road departments. He said if school start time is delayed two hours, we will probably not close schools unless it deteriorates rapidly. He said if parents think their child will be getting on the bus and then we cancel some children could be left alone. He explained the situation when schools were dismissed slightly early on March 7, i.e. secondary schools were dismissed at 2:10 p.m. instead of 2:30 p.m. and bus drivers were told to go on with elementary routes as soon as they finished the secondary routes. Mr. Harvey said he received complaints from parents that their children got home early. He noted that we do serve a custodial function in addition to an educational one and we are reminded of that on those days. He added that we do try to make good decisions.

Mr. Muehling thanked Volunteers Reading Across America, including a number of athletes at I.U., as well as other volunteers for their help.

14. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Grossi declared the meeting to be adjourned at 8:50 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