

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting, March 18, 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 18, 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
Kathleen Hugo	Director of Special Education
Karen Portle	Director of Information 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 7:05 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 Denise Hill, Media Specialist and Librarian at Tri-North Middle School, who was nominated by Tri-North Principal Gale Hill. She said the Tri-North staff believes the credit for the media center's success can be directly attributed to Denise who always approaches her job with a spirit of excellence. She said Denise is the consummate middle school librarian – eager to help teachers make full use of the library and tireless in making the library, computer labs and herself available. She said Denise joined MCCSC in 1977 after teaching fourth grade for three years. Dr. Grossi said it is the Board's pleasure to recognize Denise Hill as one of the school system's shining *Faces of Education*. Ms. Hill accepted the award and expressed appreciation to Dr. Hill for the nomination and to the Board for this honor.

3. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE**

Mary Vandeventer, MCCSC contract bus driver, voiced concern about some aspects of the contract bus route bid specifications approved by the Board at the last meeting. Specifically, she said her route used to be 59 miles and now it could be 120 or a former 63-mile route may be 111 miles. She said the additional

mileage has a lot to do with going to 'right hand' pick-up. She was concerned about how long children will be on the bus. She was also unclear as to how old a bus could be and still comply with specifications. She said they can bid for two, three or four years and if they have a 1996 school bus they would want it to be in compliance for four years.

Noting the ever-increasing cost of fuel, contract bus driver Lori Snoddy said she was concerned about how the fuel escalation clause is written. Even though the cost would be included in what she is paid, she did not want to install a GPS system. She said it would cost \$6,120 for one year and \$12,240 for two years and this addition to the 50 corporation-owned buses and reimbursement to contract drivers would be a huge and unnecessary expense for the school system. She suggested that contract bus drivers should bid for two years with the ability to negotiate for an additional two years.

Board members thanked these drivers for their comments. Dr. Butler noted that there is a meeting tomorrow night to explain this bid process. Ms. Vandeventer said the meeting will explain what they need to bid, security bond, etc. but will not change the specifications.

Contract bus driver Gerald Freeman said one of his concerns is the length of these routes; some went from 30 to 50 miles more per route and he believes this is not conserving fuel. He is also concerned about ride time. Different drivers who were present but did not identify themselves spoke out regarding the increase in miles on their current routes.

In response to questions, Ms. Vandeventer said the right-hand pick-up policy was started in high traffic areas but is being expanded to other areas. Ms. Snoddy said she has been on her route for 12 years and on past contracts right-hand pick-up was for elementary students. She said in that time she has not had any near accidents when picking up students who had to cross the street to board the bus.

Dr. Grossi said the next step is to ask more questions. She thanked bus drivers for sharing their comments.

At 7:25 p.m., the Board moved to the next item on the agenda.

4. **SCHOOL SHOWCASE: Jackson Creek Middle School**

Donna Noble, Jackson Creek Principal, explained that there is a huge difference in junior high and middle school and stated that Jackson Creek (JCMS) embraces the middle school philosophy wholeheartedly. She introduced JCMS students Michael Bower, Savannah Michel and Jonathon Cooke-Akaiwa who were present to share information about their school. She thanked the school's public relations committee for their work and music teacher Bob Austin for providing music for the presentation.

Michael said this is JCMS's 10th year and it continues to change and improve; they have 539 students this year and a projected enrollment of 545 next year. He said students participate in teaming, looping and exploratory classes. He said the goal is to make JCMS seem smaller to enhance a sense of belonging.

Savannah talked about looping, an excellent program where teachers develop a two-year curriculum with the second year building upon the first year. Regarding the teaming program, Savannah said the teams provide behavioral and academic support for students and teachers.

Jonathon explained the rotation of classes in the exploratory program. He said these elective classes change every six weeks and include arts, family and consumer science, business tech/keyboarding, foreign language, band/orchestra/choir and physical education. Each of the students responded to questions from the Board about what they will miss when they are no

longer at Jackson Creek and what would they tell incoming 7th graders about middle school. Jonathon said he would tell them to be prepared to open their lockers pretty fast because there is not much time between classes. Savannah said she came from a private school and JCMS helped her to become more independent. She would tell new students to be ready for new teachers and new classes; she will miss the teaming. Michael said he would suggest that joining clubs is a good way to get adjusted to middle school; he will miss the gym.

In response to other questions, Michael said students select two electives per year and take six-week rotation classes. He said they can take music and a foreign language. Each of the students shared what they feel is the best and the worst about JCMS. Board members thanked the students for sharing this informative report.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Harvey shared that Fairview and BHS South are two out of 35 schools in the state named 2007-2008 Healthy Hoosier School Award winners. He commended the schools and Jennifer Staab, Healthy Schools Coordinator, for this accomplishment. He recognized BHS North students who were chosen to play in the All-State Band and extended congratulations to Binford and Childs Elementary Schools for qualifying for the 2006 Four Star School Award.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Dr. Grossi called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda: (a) donations and ECA expenditures; (b) Contracts; (c) Personnel matters; and (d) Allowance of Claims. Mr. Muehling so moved. Dr. Butler seconded the motion.

In response to Dr. Butler's question regarding security cameras in schools, Ms. Portle confirmed that we have security cameras at BHS North, BHS South and Batchelor. She said the contract with DirectLine Communications is for additional cameras that BHS South elected to install and paid for with their equipment budget. She does not think the Board has an overall policy to install video cameras in all the schools.

Ms. Chambers said when Batchelor was renovated a decision was made to install cameras. She said the nearly 600 students and 23 adults created a safety reason for the installation of 16 cameras in the building.

Regarding the Personnel Report, Ms. Chambers said Claire Schaffer withdrew her request for an extended professional leave; therefore, it should be deleted from consideration. She acknowledged the contributions of retirees Susan Nowling and Mary Louise Cunningham. Ms. Nowling, an English teacher at Batchelor, retires with 22 years with MCCSC and 26 years in education. Ms. Cunningham has been with MCCSC since 1984 and is completing 24 years in education.

In response to Dr. Grossi's question, Dr. Hugo said the Community Based Transition Coordinator (Jenn Sawyer) left at the end of last year and Kathryn Bruner will assume that position. She said it is primarily for students with significant disabilities.

Ms. Merriam asked if the Board approves a leave and someone wants to change it, will it come back to the Board. Mr. Harvey said yes, it would come back to the Board.

Board members voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda.

7. **CREATE TEMPORARY PRINCIPAL-ELEMENTARY SPECIAL PROJECTS POSITION AND AUTHORIZE TRANSFER TO FILL POSITION**

Mr. Harvey recommended that the Board approve the creation of a temporary position Principal-Elementary Special Projects for the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year and if needed for the 2008-2009 school year, and authorize the transfer of Jennifer Baker into this position effective March 17, 2008, at her current contract terms. He further recommended that the Board approve the appointment of Betsy Walsh as acting principal at Grandview Elementary for the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year. The appointment is a half-time (.5) position and the salary will be in compliance with the Administrators' Agreement. He said Eric Gilpin, Assistant Principal at Batchelor, will also serve as a part-time assistant principal at Grandview Elementary to assist Ms. Walsh during the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year. Dr. Sabo-Skelton so moved. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion. There were no questions or comments. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

8. **CREATE MATHEMATICS CONTENT SPECIALIST POSITION, SET TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND AUTHORIZE POSTING AND FILLING POSITION**

Mr. Harvey recommended that the Board create a Mathematics Content Specialist Position, set terms and conditions of employment as noted in the report and authorize posting and filling the position. Ms. Merriam so moved. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion.

Dr. Lovejoy explained that this position would complement the other content specialists we have in place. She said these are three-year positions and they parallel textbook adoption cycles. They assist with revising and rewriting curriculum and support the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and teachers as we work through textbook adoption. She said they are teachers also and work approximately an average of 2.5 hours per week. They are paid from money in the Title II, Part A Grant.

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

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

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

Mr. Muehling thanked individuals who have been so generous to donate over \$7,000 to support a variety of programs. He said schools could not do the job they have to do without that support. He said at the earlier work session Tommy Richardson (Lakeview Principal) talked about the importance of continuing their literacy program that cannot run without private donations and that is true throughout the district. Mr. Muehling pointed out that if this school district just received the average amount that the state formula generates for other Indiana school systems, we would have \$3.9 million more in our budget. He mentioned that MCCSC is in the lower 20% for state funding and in the top 20% in performance. He expressed appreciation for the work of our teachers and reminded those present of the Foundation reception scheduled for March 19. Ms. Wanzer also extended an invitation for everyone to attend the Foundation reception at 4:30 p.m. at the Convention Center. She said Suellen Reed, State Superintendent for Instruction, will be the speaker.

Following a brief discussion, by consensus Board members agreed to implement a suggestion made at the March 4 Board meeting: Information Reports will be moved from the end of the agenda to after the Superintendent's Report.

Dr. Butler noted that the Board heard from a number of bus drivers. She asked if there is a meeting planned to answer some of their concerns, i.e. will we look at some of their comments and decide if we need to re-think some of the specifications. Mr. Harvey said he met with some of the drivers at noon

today (March 18). He said he did not know exactly where we are in terms of timeline and to what extent we can address their concerns; he does not know what is at stake if a driver needs to purchase a new bus.

Mr. Harvey explained that the mobility of students in our school system makes it difficult to bid routes for a long period of time and the Middle School Task Force is still working and one topic of discussion is the possibility of moving 6th grade into middle school. He said if that would occur, we would have to re-bid bus routes. He understood that drivers do not know what to do about the fuel situation and he knows that right-hand stops are part of the reason for additional miles. He said they had conversations about GPS but he is not sure to what extent we can re-do the bid specifications because of timelines.

Admitting that she did not ask what was new in the bid specifications, Dr. Butler said after receiving numerous phone calls, she did read every word of the specifications today. She said it would have been helpful to have it pointed out that new language was in italics.

Dr. Grossi said given tomorrow night is an information meeting and bids must be turned in by April 1st we have less than two weeks to get a response to the drivers. Mr. Harvey said he could pursue it. He expressed appreciation to the drivers for coming to see him to share their concerns. He believes that GPS and additional mileage are the two major concerns. Dr. Grossi asked the Superintendent to e-mail the Board when he has had a chance to talk with Mr. Scherer and Mr. Clark.

Ms. Merriam said the Legislature changed the law and moved the guidelines for buses to a 12-year time period. Mr. Harvey will check to see if that law is applicable to contract buses.

Dr. Butler said some drivers said they think the school system is trying to do away with contract buses. Mr. Harvey said that is not an objective of the school corporation and it is not a part of this. He said the number of routes being bid is the same as currently in place. He noted that some drivers said they hoped if some routes did not have bids that they are put out for bids again instead of taking over those routes as corporation routes. Mr. Harvey assured the Board that we are not interested at all in not having contract buses; we are not in a position to do that. He added that all corporation buses have GPS, although he knows there are concerns about requiring that system. But he said there are times when you need to know exactly where that bus is; he said we monitor our own drivers. He mentioned that he gets complaints from parents that drivers are early or late 5 or 10 minutes; the GPS verifies exact location and time. Dr. Butler thought it is a good idea to see if the bid deadline could be extended by one week.

Ms. Merriam thanked Mr. Harvey and Mr. Scherer for sitting for four hours last night before the New Tech proposal came up before the City Plan Commission. She expressed appreciation to *The Herald-Times* for putting a notice in the newspaper about the work session. She said she went back and checked the minutes on February 19 and confirmed that something was mentioned at that meeting. She encouraged people to call or e-mail if they have a question.

Ms. Daniels said when school is out early as it was last Friday, what would be the feasibility of having an automated calling system contact parents. Mr. Harvey said the Indiana Public School Superintendents met recently in Hamilton-Southeastern Schools and they have an automated calling system. He does not know the details but will follow-up to find out more about it. He knows that people are at work and may not know to check announcements. Ms. Daniels recalled that it takes a long time to assemble people to dismiss early and it is very rare that we do that. She was in Indianapolis and received a call that schools would be dismissing in an hour; she said some of the responsibility falls on the individual parent to check websites.

Dr. Butler thanked Ms. Portle for her work in preparing the Board for this first 'paperless' meeting; she said it worked very well. She would like to be able to add notes in proposals from the public.

Dr. Grossi agreed that this worked very well. She said she did not have notes so she found downloading from the website was a little quicker. Ms. Portle said she was impressed with how well Board members have adjusted to paperless meetings.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Grossi declared the meeting to be adjourned at 8:30 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