

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Work Session, March 18, 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, March 18, 2008, at the School Administration Center, 315 E. North Drive, Bloomington, Indiana.

Board members present: Jeannine Butler, Susan Daniels, Teresa Grossi, Valerie Merriam, Jim Muehling, Lois Sabo-Skelton and Sue Wanzer

Also present: James Harvey, Superintendent; Tim Thrasher, Comptroller; Peggy Chambers, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Personnel; Mary Lovejoy, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Mike Shipman, Director of Assessment and School Operations; Mike Scherer, Director of Extended Services; Karen Portle, Director of Information Services; Janet Tupper, Administrative Assistant; Jeff Henderson, Principal of Bloomington High School North; Mark Fletcher, Principal of Bloomington High School South; Tommy Richardson, Principal of Lakeview Elementary School; and Mercedes Rodriquez, Reporter for *The Herald-Times*.

President of the Board, Teresa Grossi, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Board members received information about and discussed Budget considerations. Dr. Grossi explained that the purpose of the work session was to ask clarifying questions for understanding and not to make budget decisions.

In advance of the meeting Mr. Harvey had forwarded to Board members several pages of information including requests received from principals that would impact the Budget. The information was not in any priority order because he wanted to review the process during preliminary discussion with the Board. A copy of this packet is included with the official Board agenda and is available electronically.

Since this was the first budget discussion, at Dr. Grossi's request Mr. Thrasher shared an update of the financial picture for the school corporation. He explained the advisability of maintaining an operating balance that represents 8% to 10% of the operating budget. He also explained how the operating budget is reduced significantly if any of the money is used for recurring expenditures (such as salaries, utilities, etc.), i.e. it is important to recognize that the operating balance does not represent a recurring source of funds.

Mr. Thrasher commented briefly on the uncertainty of what is going on with the State Legislature and expressed concern that an increase in sales tax would be sufficient to offset the decrease in property tax. He said state revenue projections are done and income could continue to decline, i.e. just because the formula says we receive 'x' amount does not necessarily mean that is a confirmed amount of money. He noted that a few years ago the state had a shortfall, we lost our operating balance and it is taking a long time to rebuild it.

In response to a question about schools counting on increased county tax for income, Mr. Thrasher said based on what he heard it is possible that schools may receive some of that money but it is probably more economy sensitive than property tax. Mr. Harvey noted that our county does not have a certified assessed valuation (AV) figure and it appears that our tax bills will be late, without benefit of a status quo tax bill being sent.

Mr. Thrasher said our interest income in 2006 and 2007 was in the \$465,000 range; in 2003 it was \$460,000 but as of today interest rates dropped so we do not know if we can count on that continued increase in income.

As proposed by President Grossi, the Board heard first from Mark Fletcher, Jeff Henderson and Tommy Richardson. Each reviewed budget items of concern to them and responded to questions from Board members regarding what they consider to be priorities for programs in their schools. During ensuing discussion, Board members shared comments and questions in an attempt to understand the budget process, assignment of FTE

(full time equivalency) staff to each building, how pupil-teacher ratios are determined and the differences in how those decisions are made for elementary and secondary schools.

When talking about literacy and remediation funding, it was suggested that if money is invested at the elementary level we might not need to add those resources at the high school level. Another suggestion was to explore how each school's PTO and other volunteers can help. Mr. Shipman noted that literacy dollars have decreased or been eliminated in buildings where children are passing ISTEP. He said the State moved to spring for ISTEP and hoped to be able to provide additional information for students in K-8 before the next school year. He said we have to see what is finally decided about paying for remediation. Mr. Richardson said one teacher said she would rather have 24 students instead of 20 and keep literacy groups. He explained that the first year he was at Lakeview 153 students did not pass ISTEP; last year 75 did not pass and funds received for remediation were cut in half. He further explained that there is no money for professional development that is provided to Title I schools. Mr. Harvey added that if we spend General Fund money on four schools we have to spend it on the other ten schools whereas Title I schools do have these resources. Mr. Richardson estimates each school would need \$12,500 per year to continue literacy groups. He said Crane volunteers are doing tutoring in the morning (Breakfast Club) but some families cannot provide transportation to take advantage of this opportunity. Mr. Richardson responded to specific questions regarding class size and indicated that it is a building choice to have some larger classes instead of having split classes, although they are looking at the possibility of including some ungraded classes next year to lower class sizes.

Board members agreed that they wish to continue discussion regarding Budget considerations at the work session on April 1. The list of work session topics will be revised to accommodate this decision.

The work session adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Teresa Grossi, President

Jeannine Butler, Vice President

Valerie Merriam, Secretary

Susan P. Wanzer, Assistant Secretary

Susan Daniels, Member

Jim Muehling, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member