

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting, May 7, 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, May 7, 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

Board member absent:

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
Karen Portle	Director of Information Services
Janet Tupper	Administrative Assistant
Linda Richardson	MCEA President
Chuck Holloway	Principal, Aurora Alternative High School
Mercedes Rodriguez	Reporter, <i>The Herald-Times</i>

In addition to the above, 27 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 Jeanette Brown, health aide for Arlington Elementary School, who was nominated by MCCSC Nurse Molly Black. In her nomination she said Jeanette wisely works with numerous students who have a number of health issues. She said her 'roll-up-your sleeves' approach to her job has made her a vital part of the Arlington family. Ms. Black said that Ms. Brown gives 110% on a daily basis and Principal Linda Black said it is great to celebrate her contribution. Dr. Grossi said it is the Board's pleasure to recognize Jeanette Brown as one of the school system's shining *Faces of Education*. Ms. Brown accepted the award and said she is pleased to be a part of the Arlington team. Those present applauded Ms. Brown's dedication to her job and to the school system.

3. **FOUNDATION OF MCCS – DUKE ENERGY DONATION**

Tina Peterson, Executive Director of the Foundation of M CCS, introduced Alan Veach, Principal of Bloomington New Tech High School (BNTHS), and Steve Bahr from Duke Energy Foundation. She explained that they have been in the midst of raising money for BNTHS and they are well over the timeline goal, especially so when a check for \$25,000 was received from Duke Energy Foundation. Mr. Bahr said Duke Energy Foundation is committed to the communities that they serve and this is a small token of that commitment. Ms. Peterson reported that they have included funds to ‘kick-off’ a Science Resource Center. She noted they are great friends to the school system.

4. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE** – There was no response to Dr. Grossi’s invitation for comments from the public.

At 7:10 p.m., the Board moved to the next item on the agenda. Dr. Grossi said Mr. Muehling was out of town.

5. **SCHOOL SHOWCASE: Aurora Alternative High School**

Chuck Holloway, Aurora Alternative High School Principal, introduced students and teachers who had prepared the evening’s presentation. He said throughout the school year they have talked about redesign efforts and a Foundation grant gave them an opportunity to move forward with some redesign plans.

Acacia Seitzinger, student, said she came to Aurora because she was having a baby and needed a different schedule. She said she has learned so much while raising a child and having a job. She said they are trying a new Veterans’ History Project and even though it is experimental this trimester it is interesting and fun.

Bill Peeler, student, said he started coming to Aurora because he was not doing very well academically and he knew Aurora offered more one-on-one instruction and smaller classes. He said he is now getting A’s and B’s. He said he has talked to a lot of people in conjunction with the Veterans’ History Project and he is making a lot of friends at school as well.

Micah Webb said he was also having a baby and could not continue high school and his sister told him about Aurora. He said he had been missing a lot of classes and was not making good grades but now he is making A’s and attends school every day. He said it is a great experience and a great staff.

Cheryl Poindexter, student, said she loves Aurora and her move from BHS North to Aurora when she was a freshman helped her achieve goals. She shared enthusiastically about the Veterans’ History Project and said her teachers help with everything; they are teachers but more like friends and Chuck Holloway is too.

Becky Rupert, English teacher, shared a power point presentation on the Veterans’ History Project as well as pictures of all students in the new block. She said the Veterans’ History Project is sponsored by the Indiana Institute on Disabilities and Community at Indiana University. She explained that students interview Veterans and write up the information. Lisa Thompson, para-educator, said the block includes 28 students, two teachers and one para-educator. She said students are earning credit while participating in a hands-on history project. Ms. Rupert added that speaking to Veterans is a pretty moving experience for many of the students and for the Veterans and teachers. She said one Veteran brought in all the letters he wrote to his mother, pictures and his uniform and one woman spoke on behalf of her father. She said they will look at data at the end of the year but it appears they are meeting goals.

Explaining the schedule for this redesigned block, Ms. Thompson said they start the day with a focus on team building and incorporate a physical activity. She mentioned some specific activities at school as well as the community service component, such as picking up trash at Cascades Park. She said three students presented at the National Learning Service Festival in Minnesota and I.U. students come in and help

students write and revise interviews.

Listing flexibility as a big advantage of the block, Ms. Thompson said students are not forced into a specific schedule. She said projects are coordinated between teachers; field trips, guests and community service are easier to schedule; groups can be changed often and students get to know each other; and three teachers work together to ensure each student's success.

Dr. Grossi said she attended the open house and Aurora did a fabulous job; she commended the principal, teachers and students for a job well done. She noted that she is one of the co-directors for the Veterans' History Project and she has witnessed some very moving moments as Veterans were interviewed. She hopes they will do a presentation to a group of teachers in Indianapolis on August 7. On behalf of the Board, Dr. Grossi extended congratulations and thanked Aurora for this presentation.

6. **SUSAN DANIELS RESIGNS**

Ms. Daniels said she had a mixed emotions announcement; she will be resigning from the Board effective June 1. She said this is really hard for her and she is sad to be leaving the Board. She said she will be moving to West Virginia and her husband will be taking an assistant professorship there with the University of West Virginia in Morgantown. She said it is a great opportunity for him but bittersweet for her. She said they have loved living in Bloomington and it is a great community. She said she did not know what she was 'biting off' and it was a great deal to chew when she was elected to serve on the Board. However, she just wanted to serve our community and Ms. Daniels said she is grateful for having had that opportunity.

Dr. Grossi said once the Board has Ms. Daniels' official letter, we will be asking for applications for a replacement and that person will be named by July 1.

7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Noting this is National School Nurse Week, Mr. Harvey said it was appropriate that we honored one of our health officials in the schools. He extended thanks to our school nurses and health aides. He said it is impossible to keep up with all the awards our student groups win. He noted the BHS North Symphonic Band and director, Janis Stockhouse, earned the grand championship in the National Adjudicators Invitational. Mr. Harvey also thanked Sherry Dick and the Broadview Learning Staff for hosting a volunteer appreciation celebration. He also commended Choonhyun Jeon, ESL Coordinator, and Cathy Diersing, Director of Literacy Services, who with Ms. Dick honored some 190 volunteers for the contributions to their programs. He acknowledged a second award given to the school system by United Way for increasing pledges during the last campaign.

8. **DRUM CORPS INTERNATIONAL – USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

Mr. Harvey said this information was presented in advance of an action report which will be included on the agenda for the next Board meeting. He said the Drum Corps world championship will be held in Bloomington and they are requesting housing in schools. He said they have been talking about what schools might be available since the dates of the event are so close to our start of school year. He said the three middle schools and Binford Elementary have been identified as possible locations. He said Mr. Scherer has been working with the group of mostly college and a few high school age participants. Dr. Grossi recalled a few years ago the Board looked at the Use of School Facilities policy and the possibility of opening them up for a few groups to use. She asked what would be the modification to policy. Mr. Harvey said this group would fit in category 3 and they are looking at 24-hour use of facilities. He said the administration continues to work on the facilities policy but it was put on a back burner in favor of

completing revisions on the discipline and attendance policies. He confirmed that the Drum Corps would pay a fee. He said a recommendation will come to the Board on May 20.

9. **UPDATE FROM THE 401(a) 403(b) PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Mr. Thrasher explained that the 403(b) Plans provide an opportunity for staff members to defer a portion of their income into tax deferred accounts and earn income. He said in 2000 the school system added 401(a) which provided that MCCSC employees would contribute for a specific matching amount. He said over the years the balances in these accounts have grown. He said 1700 403(b) accounts total \$36,200,000 and there are 1400 401(a) accounts with a balance of over \$7,800,000 with a match of \$921,000. He said there is a lack of independence with the vendors who market 403(b) programs and the fee structure is not as clear as it should be.

Mr. Thrasher explained that in July 2007 the IRS issued new regulations regarding 403(b) programs. At that time a committee was formed to study and make recommendations for other options if there were better ways to manage these programs. He said with previous IRS plan requirements it was not clear who was responsible for correct administration of 403(b) programs, i.e. the school corporation or the vendor. He said the new regulations were clear that it is the school system's responsibility. He said the committee will be recommending that all employees are eligible to participate in the plan.

Following a review of the contents of the committee's report, the Board met committee members who were present: Randy Tackett, Gina Arthur, Norma Owens, Virgil Franks, Sandy Steele, Linda Richardson, Gray Estabrook, Terry Daugherty, Billie Carlson, Sherry Olson, Barbara Buckner, Peggy Chambers, Tim Thrasher and Jim Harvey. Mr. Thrasher said they met many times over the course of the last year and we are grateful for each member's participation in the process. He said they have learned that we are paying substantially more for services under the multiple vendor approach, \$270,000 more in administrative services under the current system than under the 'unbundled' approach. He explained that employees pay the plan cost so that \$270,000 will set in collective accounts. He said on May 20 the committee and administration will be recommending a change in the program that will lower those costs. He said there will be changes to the 403(b) plan – loans will be eliminated except for hardship – and staff members will be encouraged to participate. He said they will recommend that an 'opt out provision' is required, i.e. participation is automatic unless the employee 'opts out'; he said participation in the 403(b) plan is required to receive the school system's 401(a) contribution.

Mr. Thrasher introduced the professionals who worked with the committee: Doug Johnson and Mary Beth Braitman. Mr. Johnson reviewed the current plan looking at options and evaluating vendors. He said there was an apparent lack of transparency in the charge of administrative fees and assist based management fees. He said employees would be allowed to stay with their current vendor if from an efficiency standpoint or if it would be in the best interest of the individual would be in a single 403(b). He said the 401(a) would move without penalty to individual participants at this time. He said we would need an independent advisor to give advice to participants of the plan; we would not want there to be a financial incentive for an advisor to give advice. He said they talked with several independent advisors and will make a recommendation that David Hays is contracted for that service. He said under the new structure almost all of the advisors are on a flat fee basis. Mr. Johnson said over time this will continue to be a much more efficient approach.

Ms. Braitman reported that it had been an incredible pleasure for her to work with this committee. She said they brought questions, challenges and vigor to the process. She reviewed some high points in terms of benefit design changes, the 403(b) changes and reasons for those changes. She said 2008 was a transition period for school corporations, colleges and universities to review their 403(b) arrangements and what they wanted to do to move forward. She said there are a number of new rules and the committee

most frequently came up with the most progressive approach. She cited an example is a requirement that the 403(b) savings vehicle be made available to all employees. She said the IRS gave some exceptions and the committee worked through the exceptions but wanted to make it available to everybody getting paid by the school corporation. She said the recommendation will be that anyone who receives a W-2 form can participate. Ms. Braitman said daily evaluation reports will be available to review online. She said federal law made changes to make retirement plan assets and encourage employees to keep those assets. She said committee members decided they want to make options available for rolling in and out of the plan. She advised that there will be a number of contracts included for recommendation on May 20 to confirm the school system's responsibility but delegating to appropriate contractors. She said the plan will encourage participation and encourage savings.

Dr. Butler asked what will it cost the school system. Ms. Braitman said generally all of these fees are being paid by reduction in earnings of individual accounts. She said in the new structure it will be built into the account but in fixed fees so individual participants will still be paying for a majority of the costs. Mr. Thrasher added that administrative costs in the current plan are incurred when withdrawn from employee checks and submitted to the vendor. He said there are now five authorized vendors so the administrative cost will be no greater and probably less. He further explained that the administrative cost consists of time spent in payroll and in the benefits office (to write checks). He said there will be no additional cost other than what we are already incurring.

Dr. Butler understood that people in current plans do not have to move from those companies but they cannot continue to invest through our school system. Mr. Thrasher said that is correct. Responding to another question, Ms. Braitman said they would use individual savings for investment in current vendors; Schwab will just be the custodian and the investment will primarily be Vanguard funds. Mr. Johnson noted that these are the same questions the committee wrestled with. He said the problem is to get those Vanguard funds today it goes through two or three companies, each taking a fee. Example: money sent to VALIC goes to Texas, Schwab gets the money and then sends it to Vanguard; now it would go directly to Vanguard. He said the school system should not pay any more money than paying now.

Ms. Merriam understood for employees to get a match they would have to go to the new unbundled program; however, they could stay with the current vendor but would not get the match. Mr. Johnson said that is correct. In response to Dr. Sabo-Skelton's question, Mr. Johnson said participants will have a lot of questions during the process. He said the committee was concerned about relaying this effectively to employees. He said they felt it is important to have an independent advisor and their advice is to contract to provide that advice. He said employees would have help for two individual meetings, continuing education program, after school services and services during the transition process in September. He further explained that the IRS changed the rules of the game with the new tax law. He said the good news is that there is an opportunity for every participant in plans to be better off in terms of an investment standpoint because dollars saved are going back in participants' pockets. He pointed out that the committee kept at the forefront the best interests of employees.

On behalf of the Board, Dr. Grossi thanked committee members for their work and Mr. Thrasher for his leadership. She also extended appreciation to Doug Johnson and Mary Beth Braitman for their counsel.

10. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Dr. Grossi called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda: (a) approval of minutes of meetings held on April 1, April 4, April 8 and April 15, 2008; (b) donations and field trip requests; (c) Contracts; (d) Personnel matters; (e) Financial Report; and (f) Allowance of Claims. Ms. Wanzer so moved. Dr. Sabo-Skelton seconded the motion.

Dr. Grossi raised a question about contracts. She said having hired individuals for professional development contracts she noted the Pieces of Learning contract is \$2900 per day. She said she is in this field and knows what it gets and the Board will be approving someone at the rate of \$1800 per day on another contract. She suggested that most educational rates are between \$1000 and \$1800 per day for workshops. She noted that \$2900 per day is a lot of money for professional development in a week. Dr. Lovejoy said her experience has been that about \$2500 is the going rate for international speakers. She said the person she is bringing in is internationally known for her work in differentiation and is highly recommended by the High Ability Department and English as a New Language Department out of the Indiana Department of Education. She said she has worked in Monroe County and has been highly received. Dr. Grossi reiterated that this is what she does for a living and she thinks the charge is very high. She said she would expect a better rate for a full week, noting the charge is \$2900 per day plus travel, etc. She said she understands that people have to make a living but she thinks it is very high and she wants to make sure our teachers know what we are paying and hope we get more attendance and good feedback. Dr. Lovejoy said she worked with high school teachers and they requested that this presenter return. She said when we have a workshop attended by 25-30 people per day it is more cost effective to bring someone in rather than pay for them to go elsewhere. She said that is our purpose for bringing her here. She added that people are more available during the summer and they will be paid a stipend. She said the presenter will be working specifically with our Early College High School staff regarding what you do with underachievers. She said the presenter will work with elementary and middle school teachers on high ability. Dr. Grossi said she will support this but the amount per day just jumped out to her. Dr. Lovejoy said she would like to have conversation about this because she had not had the same experience. In response to Ms. Merriam's question, Dr. Lovejoy said the school system and/or individuals can record the sessions to use in-house.

In response to Dr. Butler's question about Woodlinn Enterprises, Ms. Chambers said when she began her position she noted that employees in the same category were paid different salaries and people began to meet with her about their salaries. She said one group was secretaries and when she asked for history she found information in the basement back to the 1970's. She discovered at one time all of the clerical positions were categorized and job requirements were listed according to difficulty, responsibility for making choices, extent of supervision provided, physical effort, etc. She said the committee used a point scale and reviewed individual requests. She said with changes of personnel and passage of time that committee was disbanded and decisions seemed to be based on difficulty of filling positions and experience given to new employees. She struggled with how to bring all of this into perspective and into the current situation. While at an HR Directors meeting in Indianapolis, Ms. Chambers said she heard a presentation from a consultant who does this and she met with her here to find out if she could help address these concerns. She reviewed Kim Woodward's credentials, noting she is School Board president in Avon, an independent consultant and a former HR executive. She said after Mike Scherer heard her talk about it in Cabinet meeting, he called her because he has experienced the same problems with maintenance employees. She said Ms. Woodward believes that within two weeks working with secretaries she can help. Ms. Chambers said she believes this is a good first step.

Mr. Harvey reviewed donations received, noting a \$1,700 donation to help support the Veterans' History Project that Aurora students had mentioned in their presentation and more than \$6,000 donated to the BHS North Science Olympiad Team. He also noted several friends of Fairview who make regular contributions to the school and donations from Tri Kappa to BHS South, BHS North and Bradford Woods as well as a significant contribution of \$5,000 in new clothes to Adult Education for TLC students.

Ms. Chambers shared information about several teachers who will be retiring at the end of this school year, including Andrea 'Finney' Aufder Heyde (34 years), Michelle Brentano (18 years), Debbie Jewell (31 years) and Catherine Rush (26 years).

There were no additional comments. Board members voted on the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

11. **AWARD CONTRACT BUS ROUTES**

In Mr. Scherer's absence, Mr. Harvey said at the last meeting the Board approved the award of contracts for 32 of 34 bus routes. He said the six bidders who did not receive bids were invited to bid on the remaining routes and based on low bids, he recommended that route 126 be awarded to Lori Snoddy and route 197 be awarded to Karen Cain. Dr. Butler so moved. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion. There were no comments or questions. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

12. **CREATE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

Ms. Chambers recommended authorization to create the position of Assistant Director of Career and Technical Education with terms as noted in the report. Ms. Daniels so moved. Ms. Merriam seconded the motion. Dr. Butler asked why this recommendation was not included with other Personnel matters. During ensuing discussion, by consensus the Board agreed that any newly created position should be included on the agenda as a separate item.

Ms. Wanzer asked if this person will be doing something else half time. Mr. Brown said he hopes that it would eventually grow to full time and he is doing a lot of grant writing in hopes to put grant money behind it to increase the position to full time.

There was no further discussion. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

13. **INDIANA BOND BANK 2008 MID-YEAR WARRANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Mr. Thrasher said the Board may have noticed that we have not received property tax bills yet and we are also behind in receiving tax payments. He said it is difficult for the county to tell us when we will receive money; therefore, he recommended that the Board adopt the resolution authorizing participating in the Indiana Bond Bank's 2008 Mid-Year Warrant Assistance Program. Dr. Butler so moved. Dr. Sabo-Skelton seconded the motion.

Mr. Harvey reported that May 20 is the hearing with the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF). He said they will approve tax rates but it will probably be July or August when bills are out. Ms. Merriam noted that it is the state that is delaying this because assessments are ready from the county assessment. Ms. Wanzer suggested the state should pay interest when we have to borrow for this reason.

There was no further discussion. Aye: Butler, Daniels, Grossi, Merriam, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

14. **INFORMATION, PROPOSALS OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Tina Peterson said the Foundation is raising money in support of the local "Dancing with the Stars" fund raiser. She extended a huge 'thank you' to Dr. Gerardo Gonzalez, Dean of the I.U. School of Education, for choosing the Foundation of MCCS as the charitable organization designated for donations in support of his dance efforts. She said we have received over \$2,500 so far and people continue to buy stars. She said the event is on May 24 and is sold out. Dr. Grossi noted that Dr. Gonzalez sent out a delightful e-mail to the faculty. Ms. Peterson said it has generated a lot of fun at the School of Education and here.

Ms. Peterson noted that Fox network will be covering the drawing for the car in the *Be Cool Stay In School* program sponsored by Curry Buick. She said 117 students are still eligible for the car that will be awarded by drawing at 6:00 p.m. on May 23.

Ms. Peterson reminded those present that another community conversation is scheduled for 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. on Monday, June 2, at the BHS North Library to talk about middle education; everyone is welcome.

While sharing a summary of projects funded by the Foundation, Ms. Peterson also talked about various ways that donors can make contributions.

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

Dr. Grossi told Ms. Daniels that she is happy for her to be on the gorgeous campus in West Virginia but she will be missed.

Ms. Merriam noted that May is a busy time for all of us and she is trying to go to as many school activities as possible. She mentioned a few that she had attended and commended faculty, staff and students for their work. She mentioned the BHS North band performed well and came in 5th in state competition and the BHS South *Sounds of South* did not compete until 5:00 p.m. and she could not stay that long to hear them.

Ms. Merriam reminded those present that the second drug forum is coming up on May 14 at 7:00 p.m. at Jackson Creek Middle School. She said there is a lot of controversy whether there should be drug testing in schools for participants in extracurricular activities. She said whether we do or not, she wants parents to be aware that we have problems. She said many parents contact her and some parents are not seeing it. She said two weekends ago she went to the funeral home for a former student out two years who accidentally overdosed. She said we are having these funerals and she would like for parents to come and to ask what they know about what is going on. She added that we should not be hiding our heads in the sand about it.

In response to Dr. Butler's question, Mr. Thrasher said the claims list looks different because they got into a situation when transferring to the new chart of accounts. He said it temporarily made it impossible to generate our claims list in the regular format. Ms. Portle further explained that a conversation is scheduled for tomorrow so there may be one more Board report that we have to run in this format before going back to the original format.

Dr. Butler said she went to BHS North's Honor Day and it is nice to see how many students do so well. She said during the day they honor seniors and all other students including a video that shows activities through the year. She said students were there two hours and they behaved very nicely.

Ms. Daniels said she thinks our website is outstanding. She said she has been doing some research on the school system website in their new community and she could not find anything. She reiterated that our website is topnotch.

Mr. Harvey said he received e-mails regarding why we did not have school on Primary Election Day instead of returning one day after the Memorial holiday. He explained that 15 schools are used as polling sites and over the last several years requirements for polling sites have become stricter. He said it is difficult to have school during that time. He pointed out that we do not have school in session on Primary or November elections for the next three years.

Ms. Wanzer thanked Aurora faculty, staff and students for their presentation. She also congratulated people who won the election yesterday, specifically local friends and friend Lois (Sabo-Skelton) who was elected as a delegate to the State Democratic Convention.

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Grossi declared the meeting to be adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Teresa Grossi, President

Jeannine Butler, Vice President

Valerie Merriam, Secretary

Susan P. Wanzer, Assistant Secretary

Susan Daniels, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

ABSENT

Jim Muehling, Member