

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting, June 3, 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, June 3, 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
Lois Sabo-Skelton	Member

Board member absent:

Jim Muehling	Member
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Also present:

James Harvey	Superintendent of Schools
Tim Thrasher	Comptroller
Peggy Chambers	Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Personnel
Kathleen Hugo	Director of Special Education
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, 6 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 Betsy Walsh, Interim Principal at Grandview Elementary School, who was nominated by the MCCSC Human Resources Department, represented by Peggy Chambers, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Personnel. She noted that Ms. Walsh began her career with MCCSC in 1977 as a counselor at University Middle School. She then worked as a counselor at the Area Vocational School, then as an assistant principal at Binford, was named Binford's principal in 1984 and retired from that position in 2002. Since then she has accepted seven, part-time interim principal and three temporary principal assignments. Ms. Walsh was applauded for bringing to each placement dignity, wisdom, stability and needed leadership. Dr. Grossi said it is the Board's pleasure to recognize Betsy Walsh as one of the school system's shining *Faces of Education*. Ms. Walsh accepted the award and said there are some who say public education is failing and schools are failing but in Monroe County that is not true. She said in each of her assignments she found dedicated teachers, support staff and parents who care deeply about their kids. She expressed appreciation for the support of people with whom she worked

and for central administrators who help give her the answers. She said it is a joy to help. Those present applauded Ms. Walsh's dedication to the school system and her support of public education.

3. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE**

Valerie Merriam said she wanted to address The Project School and the meeting held on June 2nd because Board members received calls. She displayed the small classified ad that was included in *The Herald-Times* advertising the meeting. She mentioned that when MCCSC has program changes in the making we hold many forums and talk to the community and parents, whereas this group's advertisement consisted of one small advertisement in the newspaper. She said people are surprised and feel slighted and the legal notice says it was to be a public meeting to take comments from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. but the first 45 minutes was them telling us what The Project School will be. Ms. Merriam said it was their right to have orchestrated this meeting but some actually 'booed' some who asked questions and she believes it was totally uncalled for to boo parents. She noted that people want to know and it appears to be a group of dedicated progressive educators building the school of their dreams. However, she said it began because of unhappy teachers who were upset because of a change of principal in their building.

Ms. Merriam noted they (Daniel Baron, director, and supporters) said they offered to work with us on philosophical differences; however, they have never asked for collaboration. She said she asked about transportation and was told there would be transportation for all students whereas one said a child would carpool and another would go home with another student. She said the Ball State representative said they did not have to provide transportation but she did not know how that would be possible. She said they talked about working out transportation collaboratively with Bloomington Transit, I.U. bus and Rural Transit and focus on the five Title I schools. However, I.U. buses do not go to these schools, Bloomington Transit goes to three and Rural Transit is struggling to stay in business. Ms. Merriam said she asked about handicap accessibility and Mr. Baron said sure. She suggested if they cannot provide transportation it is becoming an elitist school because only those who can afford to transport will attend.

When the issue of funding was raised, Ms. Merriam said Mr. Baron stated that money follows the child so there would be no impact on MCCSC. She noted that if two children from every classroom signed up for The Project School we would need the same number of teachers but \$1.1 million would go to The Project School instead of to the MCCSC. She suggested that the money for staffing would have to come from cutting things that are not mandated by law and she does not want to make those choices. She pointed out that it is not simply a matter of money following the child; we still have to provide teachers. She said she does not think The Project School group has really ever addressed that.

Ms. Merriam said this will affect our kids; we are not talking about School Board or Superintendent and what they may want but what is best for kids. She said nothing in their presentation talks about before and after school care. She said if we cut teachers and keep special areas we would have to make classes larger and that might mean we would have to have major redistricting. She noted that we have four-year bus contracts so that would be a problem. She added that if MCCSC were one of the top funded school districts in the state, it might not be as much of an impact, but the entire state does not know what will happen when the state takes over funding. Ms. Merriam confirmed that money follows the child but said it affects the school corporation in major ways: class size, special areas, etc. She said our philosophical ideals meet juncture with fiduciary responsibility.

Ms. Merriam observed that there could have been collaboration but they (The Project School group) never asked about the possibility of a charter perhaps for Fairview or to focus on Title I schools. She asked how small a school can be before we have to close it, noting low enrollments at Marlin and Fairview. She said at what point do we have to ask the question about how many children can we lose. She said she hopes The Project School does not get a charter.

Sue Wanzer said she was also disappointed in the forum and ways in which conversation was not sought. She said it was disappointing that no conversation took place with the School Board until a month ago, noting how much better we could serve children in this community if we work together. She mentioned that we share dedication to serving each child and the goals, mission and values are the same as MCCSC so she understands the disappointment in the lost opportunity to learn from each other. Ms. Wanzer said she asked why they felt their efforts were better than our efforts at Fairview and they did not know what has been done. She suggested that The Project School will drain resources from MCCSC and provide less money for the school system. She believes it would be more productive to combine our resources. She concluded that a charter school is not necessary in that it has not produced data or research and it lacked openness and transparency in that it has not involved the greater community and especially those most directly affected. She urged people to contact Lori Serak [lserak@bsu.edu] at Ball State University. She said it is too soon to make a decision on a charter school when our community has not been involved.

At 7:20 p.m., the Board moved to the next item on the agenda.

4. **FOUNDATION OF MCCS – Update**

On behalf of Tina Peterson, Executive Director of the Foundation of MCCS, Jim Harvey said the *Dancing with Celebrates* fund raiser was very successful in that Dr. Gerardo Gonzalez raised \$13,000 for the Foundation. He extended thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Gonzales for their support. He also extended thanks to the Indiana University Credit Union for sponsoring the Foundation's Leadership Awards this year.

Ms. Peterson asked him to also mention that a nice crowd of teachers, parents, administrators and community attended the middle level education forum. Mr. Harvey said the Foundation is beginning plans for next year and a part of that is constructing a budget. He asked that suggestions and/or ideas be forwarded to Tina Peterson.

Although a public presentation will come later, Mr. Harvey shared that the Rogers Group and Rogers Group Investment donated \$30,000 to Bloomington New Tech High School and that would purchase 40 computers for the school. He expressed gratitude to Rogers' executives Andy Williams and Jerry Neely for this generous gift.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Harvey said on May 27 the school system received notice from the Department of Local Government Finance that our proposal for Phase I of the building project has been approved. The project cost is \$40,685,000 and includes Fairview, improvements at Tri-North, Binford, Aurora and to the Administration Center. He thanked Tim Thrasher and Mike Scherer for their work in getting approval.

Mr. Harvey expressed appreciation to Curry Buick-Cadillac-Pontiac-GMC Truck Inc. for sponsoring the *Be Cool Stay In School* Program. On May 23rd 117 MCCSC high school students who had perfect attendance were present for the drawing for a new car donated by Curry's. He extended a special thanks to Cary Curry and Craig Richards for making the program work.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Dr. Grossi called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda: (a) approval of minutes of meetings held on May 7 and May 20, 2008; (b) donations, a field trip request and disposal of obsolete books; (c) Contracts; (d) Personnel matters; (e) Financial Report; and (f) Allowance of Claims. Dr. Butler so moved. Dr. Sabo-Skelton seconded the motion.

Mr. Harvey shared information about donations received and thanked donors for their generous support of our schools. In response to questions, BHS South teacher Harold Green said this is the fourth year that the Social Studies Club has taken a major field trip during the summer. He mentioned previous trips and reviewed plans for this trip to Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii. He said they will visit historic sites and visit different cultures that they talk about in the classroom. He added that they come back as different people. He said plans for the trip start in his classrooms but any student may participate. He said all of the students participated in the fund raiser and they raised a lot of money by working. They sign up in September and raise money during the year.

In response to Ms. Merriam's question, Mr. Harvey said the Foodservice Solution Group will assist with the design and selection of equipment and that is done during the design phase. He said the architect for Fairview expects to be well along with design by July and ready to be bid in September.

Ms. Chambers reported that twenty-two teachers were on the RIF (Reduction in Force) list, eighteen had been recalled and two more were included on the agenda for this meeting. She hopes to find a place for the two who remain on the list.

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

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

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

Ms. Merriam commended the BHS North Science Olympiad Team for winning 10th place in national competition. She mentioned the BHS South Bike Team will be going to Japan. She also congratulated MCCSC athletes for their excellent showing in competition this year, including first three-time state winner Rachel Deloney.

Dr. Butler congratulated our high schools for excellent graduation ceremonies. She said the student speeches were good and very challenging. Dr. Grossi agreed, noting it really is a day about kids and they are to be commended. Ms. Wanzer said each principal thanked Board members for being there and she wanted to thank them and the students and their families for the privilege to be there.

Mr. Harvey noted that the next regular meeting for the Board is scheduled for June 17 and the Board talked about scheduling an executive session on June 13 as well as meetings on June 18 and June 25 to deal with applicants for School Board. He said a response is expected from the state regarding the Fairview Restructuring Plan and suggested the Friends of Fairview might be invited to a June 18 work session. Board members agreed to advertise a work session for this purpose at 5:00 p.m. on June 18. A special session will follow the work session if needed to interview candidates for the School Board position.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Grossi declared the meeting to be adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Teresa Grossi, President

Jeannine Butler, Vice President

Valerie Merriam, Secretary

Susan P. Wanzer, Assistant Secretary

ABSENT

Jim Muehling, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member