

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

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

Also present: James Harvey, Superintendent; Mary Lovejoy, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Kathleen Hugo, Director of Special Education; Deb Prenkert, Title I Coordinator; Cathy Diersing, Director of Literacy; Beverly Elkins, Secretary/Recorder; and Mercedes Rodriguez, Reporter for *The Herald-Times*. Karen Adams and Trudy Litz, Fairview Principal and Assistant Principal, respectively, were also present.

President of the Board, Teresa Grossi, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Dr. Grossi noted that this meeting was scheduled for the Board to discuss the Fairview Restructuring Plan.

Fairview Restructuring Plan

Dr. Lovejoy presented an overview of the Fairview Restructuring Plan. Because Fairview School has not met yearly progress requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act for five-plus years, the MCCSC had to submit a restructuring plan. She began by saying that the original plan, which was sent to the state in May, calls for a district office school improvement administrator to be installed at the school. The purpose of the administrator would be to provide support for the achievement of school academic and attendance goals and other duties as outlined by the Fairview principal. The proposed position will be a half-time position. The state recommends that the improvement administrator have experience with special education and with central administration. The school improvement administrator would report directly to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

Special attention was given to the fact that the state responded informally by saying that the plan set forth by MCCSC will not be approved until the guidelines dictated by DOE are met. One of the main concerns of the state is that the newly proposed position seems vague and does not appear to have “significant responsibility” enough to merit approval. Dr. Lovejoy also stated that a Title I representative from the state, Jamie Miller, has agreed to meet with the Board upon request. According to Ms. Miller, the MCCSC must re-submit the proposal.

Mr. Harvey stated his frustration with DOE and that he feels uncomfortable in posting this position until there is something in writing from Title I. He supported this statement by saying that DOE holds the purse strings, and that if MCCSC wants the money, we will have to do what they want. He also stated that this position will be fully funded from Title I allocations.

Dr. Lovejoy noted that DOE’s response to MCCSC stated that the responsibilities of the improvement administrator should be at the discretion of the superintendent and the Friends of Fairview committee. She spoke about the meeting with the committee, and she does not feel that this time was wasted. Her opinion is that MCCSC is on the “short list”.

Ms. Wanzer stated that she feels that everything that has been done on the part of MCCSC has had good results.

Various Board members asked Dr. Lovejoy if DOE is going to appoint this individual.

Mr. Harvey responded by saying that quite frankly the MCCSC does not have anyone who meets the criteria that DOE has outlined. He emphasized, however, that Karen Adams is truly qualified as a principal and that her experience with special education is unique to elementary principals.

Dr. Butler also stated that the quality of the staff at Fairview has never been in question. She stated that the staff is to be commended for their work, and that MCCSC is being forced to do this. She feels that the community needs to be aware of this fact.

Mr. Muehling stated that the improvement administrator will have to be very professional, and that the personality of this person is critical.

Ms. Diersing spoke about the political reality and said that what Mr. Harvey refers to is that none of us are in a bubble. She stated that DOE is getting pressured from Spelling's office, so the demands are not so much coming from an individual as it is the "filtering down" from the higher officials.

Discussion followed.

Ideas were thrown out such as what if the school is closed and re-opened under a new name. Dr. Butler referred to the Richland-Bean Blossom Corporation where the elementary school went from Edgewood Elementary to Edgewood Primary School to Edgewood Intermediate School. Her point was that this was done without any change in the school population.

Ms. Wanzer asked that if we add more students, would this make an impact?

Dr. Grossi asked what is the next step?

Mr. Muehling stated that he felt that Karen Adams, Principal, should do the new job. However, DOE wants someone to supervise Ms. Adams.

Dr. Lovejoy responded by saying that a meeting with Jamie Miller from DOE will be arranged for sometime next week. She feels very strongly that MCCSC will have to get together with DOE to meet their demands. Dr. Lovejoy will ask Ms. Miller to be here for the June 25th Board meeting.

It was a consensus that DOE needs to tell the MCCSC what to do.

Mr. Harvey said he felt that the Board should submit a plan that will be approved by DOE and that the Board should be careful in the discussions with Ms. Miller.

Dr. Grossi proposed that a list of questions that the Board would like answered be compiled and given to Ms. Miller in advance.

Mr. Harvey told Board members that after the meeting on Wednesday, June 25, he would like to have a revised plan from the Board submitted to him by Friday, June 27th. He feels that a quick turnaround is needed. He wants everything in place by the July 8th Board meeting so that the position can be posted.

Dr. Lovejoy said that she feels that the growth of Fairview is hidden. The school has worked very hard for all the children, especially the special needs students. Test scores verify this fact. She feels that the committee

needs to look at the growth and progress statistics. She feels that MCCSC is moving in the right direction.

Mr. Harvey brought out the fact that the hearing impaired class is at Fairview. There is a support network within the school to work with the hearing impaired. Also, the full-time kindergarten is housed at Fairview. He said that MCCSC tried to do things the right way.

Dr. Grossi talked about the progress that has been made at Fairview and commended the faculty.

Dr. Butler said that she hoped that DOE/Title I understand that Fairview has made tremendous growth and that this positive does not reflect anything negative about the staff at Fairview.

Mr. Harvey reiterated that he needs something in writing from Jamie Miller, because right now he has nothing to go on. Everything to this point has been verbal.

Dr. Butler reiterated that the community is aware that whatever the Board is required to do is coming from the state and that it has nothing to do with the Fairview leadership or staff.

The work session adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Teresa Grossi, President

Jeannine Butler, Vice President

Valerie Merriam, Secretary

Susan P. Wanzer, Assistant Secretary

Jim Muehling, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member