

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting, September 16, 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, September 16, 2008, in the Board Room at Bloomington High School South, 1965 S. Walnut Street, Bloomington.

Board members present:

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| Teresa Grossi | President |
| Jeannine Butler | Vice President |
| Valerie Merriam | Secretary |
| Sue Wanzer | Assistant Secretary |
| Jim Muehling | Member |
| Lois Sabo-Skelton | Member |
| Vicki Streiff | Member |

Board member absent:

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| Sue Wanzer | Assistant Secretary |
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Also present:

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| Timothy F. Hyland | Superintendent of Schools |
| Tim Thrasher | Comptroller |
| Peggy Chambers` | Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Personnel |
| Mary Lovejoy | Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction |
| Mike Shipman | Director of Assessment and School Operations |
| Kathleen Hugo | Director of Special Education |
| Mike Scherer | Director of Extended Services |
| Janet Tupper | Administrative Assistant |
| Jan McCollough | Assistant Director of Special Education |
| Deb Prekert | Title I Specialist |
| Jeff Henderson | Principal, Bloomington High School North |
| Mark Fletcher | Principal, Bloomington High School South |
| Sarah Morin | Reporter, <i>The Herald Times</i> |

In addition to the above, 24 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 Francesca Sobrer, theater teacher at Bloomington High School North, who was nominated by her principal, Jeff Henderson. She said she began her career with MCCSC as a student teacher at Batchelor and then as a teacher in 1996 at Tri-North and BHS South before joining the faculty at BHS North. In his nomination, Mr. Henderson noted that teachers who are involved in teaching courses in the performing arts spend countless hours outside the normal day preparing students for public performances. He said Francesca is a shining example of dedication. Dr. Grossi expressed appreciation to Ms. Sobrer for her dedication and said it is the Board's pleasure to recognize her as one of the school

system's shining *Faces of Education*. Ms. Sobrer accepted the award and expressed appreciation for this honor. Two BHS North students publicly thanked Ms. Sobrer for the wonderful experiences they have had in her classes. They agreed that she is an amazing teacher and an amazing person.

3. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE**

On behalf of the Board, Dr. Grossi introduced interim superintendent Dr. Timothy Hyland and welcomed him to the school system.

Bob Dodd of the Audubon Society said that he and others were present to speak in favor of the chimney swifts at the Fairview School site and what they would like for the Board to do. He talked about the specialty of this species and how they depend on chimneys for roosting. He said because many chimneys are being capped, the swifts are in danger.

Dawn Hewitt said she lives close to Fairview. She said although there is no law protecting roosting sites for migratory birds, to tear down the chimney at Fairview while the swifts are nesting would be in violation of international law. She said there could be eggs in the nest through September; therefore, it is important to make sure the chimney is taken down between late October and the beginning of April.

Chris Sturbaum said he heard about these birds in the Planning Commission. He suggested the practical thing to do is to build a chimney to recreate their current roosting place. He said it could be the feature of a garden or in a corner of the property. He will get other estimates but received one for \$9,000 to build a 38-foot tall chimney. He suggested that the Audubon Society could raise one-third of the money, the Mayor could go to the Bloomington Enterprise for one-third and perhaps one-third could come from the school system. He said they would like to put a plaque on it, which could be large enough to have an etching of the original building and an educational explanation of the swifts. He said perhaps a camera could be mounted later so the children could see the swifts coming in and out. Mr. Sturbaum concluded that this practical solution would help the birds, teach kids and do something positive.

Marti Crouch said she walks by Fairview a couple of times each day and notices the chimney. She said the book *Last Child in the Woods* describes a nature deficit disorder (NDD), i.e. people are not thinking beyond themselves. She said having a place set aside for wild nature on the school grounds would be important for children to interact in their daily lives. She said it may be an anecdote to NDD and would bring the community in and make Fairview special. She said you learn just as much from outside of the classroom education in that it is more than an activity of reading and writing. She suggests it is a tangible connection to the past. Mr. Sturbaum said the group would like to be added to the agenda to share details at a future meeting.

Dr. Grossi thanked visitors for their presence and for sharing information, including possible solutions. She explained that we are substantially over budget for this building so the architect is working to try to keep the project within budget. She said the architect and Mike Scherer are aware of the concerns. She said it will stay on the radar but we are not close to having a solution.

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

4. **PROGRAM SHOWCASE: Special Education**

Kathleen Hugo, Jan McCollough and James Robinson presented results of a survey of special education services. Dr. Hugo explained that the survey was started last year when Ms. McCollough was new in her position as Assistant Director of Special Education and Mr. Robinson was on an internship with her. (A copy of the presentation is included with the agenda for this meeting.) They reviewed next steps and

talked about their commitment. They responded to questions and agreed that it would be good to find out how students feel and what they say about their experiences.

Noting that Dr. Hugo has not been with the school system very long, Dr. Grossi said this is a wonderful first step. She said we do have a number of fabulous teachers. On behalf of the Board, she expressed appreciation for this informative report.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS**

Dr. Hyland reported that he and five Board members attended a meeting with state, county and city officials to review HB 1001 and its implications for funding. He said in other states fees have become popular to provide services and resources for schools.

Dr. Hyland mentioned that his time has been spent visiting schools and meeting with faculty. He said he has had two meetings with MCEA and will be meeting with AFSCME and the special education discussion group. He briefly commented on familiar associations he has renewed and said he looks forward to getting into classrooms.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Dr. Grossi called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda: (a) donations and field trip requests; and (b) Allowance of Claims. Dr. Butler so moved. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion. Dr. Grossi reviewed donations received. Following a time for additional comments, Board members voted on the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Aye: Butler, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, and Streiff. Motion carried.

7. **CONTRACTS**

Mr. Muehling moved approval of contracts as recommended. Dr. Butler seconded the motion. In response to Dr. Butler's request, Ms. Prekert explained that schools in improvement must offer supplemental educational services (SES), which is free tutoring for students who are in those schools. She said Fairview and Highland Park are schools now in that status. She said the Department of Education (DOE) allows companies to apply and DOE approves providers. School systems must offer the names of all providers and parents choose which one they want to provide service to their children. She said the providers are graded – by her, principals and parents and visitors to the DOE website may grade them and the ratings are shared with parents. Ms. Prekert further explained that we get a per pupil expenditure from DOE that tells us how much per child they will give us for tutoring. She said although the money came late last year, we were given \$1,133 per child for this service. She said each child usually receives 30 hours of tutoring, although Huntington provides 35 hours, and all will be reimbursed the same amount of money as mandated by DOE.

Ms. Merriam said it is interesting for schools that are in improvement that the DOE would require services offered from a provider that only gets a D+ rating in effectiveness. She thanked Ms. Prekert for the clarification. Ms. Prekert said she does try to educate teachers and parents but we have to offer the names of all providers.

Following a time for additional comments, Board members voted on the motion to approve contracts as recommended. Aye: Butler, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, and Streiff. Motion carried.

8. **PERSONNEL REPORT**

Ms. Chambers noted that our major hiring season has ended, although there will be openings throughout the year. She said the last person on the 22-person recall list from last spring has now been called back and an additional 90 new teachers have been hired. She recommended approval of the Personnel Report as submitted. Ms. Streiff so moved. Ms. Merriam seconded the motion.

In response to Ms. Streiff's question, Ms. Chambers said we had seven kindergarten classes open at the start of school and about one-half were filled with people who started the year as substitutes in those classes. She explained that a change in the collective bargaining agreement deleted the non-posting period, which meant we had to post every position before offering the job and sometimes there is a domino effect. She said we have been talking with the MCEA about it and they recognize the problems this has caused for the start of the year and are supportive of finding a resolution.

Following a time for additional comments, Board members voted on the motion to approve the Personnel Report as presented. Aye: Butler, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, and Streiff. Motion carried.

9. **TEXTBOOK AND INSTRUCTIONAL FEES – SECONDARY – 2008-2009**

Mr. Thrasher recommended approval of secondary textbook and instructional fees for 2008-2009 as proposed. Dr. Butler so moved. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion. Following a time for questions, Board members voted on the motion to approve secondary textbook and instructional fees for 2008-2009 as proposed. Aye: Butler, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, and Streiff. Motion carried.

10. **REDUCTION IN TRANSPORTATION COSTS TO OFFSET PROJECTED BUDGET SHORTFALL OF \$150,000 IN 2008 DUE TO INCREASING FUEL COSTS**

Dr. Hyland presented this proposal, noting that the increasing cost of diesel fuel is creating problems. He said we need to provide transportation but must stay within the budget. He said this recommendation does not include a recommendation for continuing elementary and middle school summer school. He said we will also continue to examine the strings program. He added that high school principals were in attendance to respond to questions and recommended approval of the plan for reduction in transportation costs as proposed. Mr. Muehling so moved. Ms. Streiff seconded the motion.

In response to Ms. Merriam's question regarding transfer of \$66,000 from the School Bus Replacement Fund to the Transportation Operating Fund, Mr. Scherer said the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) will need to approve the transfer. Mr. Thrasher added that the DLGF could not answer the question of transfer approval because it had never been asked. He said they suggested that we submit the plan amendment and it will be considered and they are meeting monthly at this point.

For purposes of clarification, Mr. Thrasher said long term we will be comfortable with a \$350,000 savings. He shared a first draft of the School Bus Replacement Fund Plan (a copy is included with the agenda for this meeting). He reviewed the summary of estimates and said since 2005 we have had a 10-year plan for buses but he thinks it will change to 12 years to coincide with the law. He explained that the logic of transferring some costs to the School Bus Replacement Fund is that some of the payment made to contract drivers is for their buses and DLGF considers that part of the payment for their buses.

Dr. Butler asked if in the long term we would discontinue the elementary strings program. Mr. Scherer said it is difficult to predict but the savings would be continued. He added that a recommendation will come to the Board at a future meeting regarding continuation and/or changes for the elementary strings and elementary and middle school summer school programs. Mr. Thrasher credited the music teachers and elementary principals at Summit, Binford and Rogers for making it possible to continue the elementary strings program while realizing a savings. He said they were enthusiastic about the program

and did everything they could to make it work.

In response to another question regarding \$20 student fee for participation in extracurricular activities that require transportation, Mr. Henderson said they had a lengthy discussion at BHS North about where will money come from for students who cannot afford to pay the fee. He said he met with Cougars for Better Education and they pledged their support. He said in addition, two booster clubs pledge to continue what we have always done in Bloomington to provide for students who cannot afford to participate. He said we continue to be sensitive to not allow financial burdens to eliminate activities for kids. Mr. Fletcher reported that the same pledges have been made by parent groups at BHS South.

Mr. Muehling noted these recommendations do not consider any major changes in transporting students such as extending the walk-in zone. Mr. Scherer said walk-in zone, school start time and single tier bus routes will require long-term discussion. Mr. Muehling mentioned that at a previous meeting Sue Wanzer asked about possible collaboration with the city and/or Indiana University to save money on transportation. He asked if more small activity buses could be added. Mr. Scherer said if there is a need, additional buses could be purchased. He said they could be used for curricular trips but it could be used to transport only 14 students and the teacher would have to drive.

Mr. Henderson noted that a regular driver's license is all that is required to drive a 14-passenger bus. He said there may be some ECA organizations in our schools that boosters would cover the cost and they want to leave that flexibility. He said they will look at each activity and the number of students in each and cover the costs in a way most appropriate. In response to another question, he said the school will not generate enough money to make a difference. He said there are 669 participants in various sports and of those, 539 are unique. He said 130 students participate in multiple activities.

Mr. Fletcher shared their estimates on the number of trips. He said there are 508 athletic events and 132 of those could be accommodated with two buses. He said if we progress to the second year, they will be able to see a total savings.

Mr. Scherer confirmed that the small buses may be used at the middle school level if they are available. Mr. Henderson added that they could also be used for small class trips, although we would want two chaperones since one would be driving. Ms. Streiff asked who would drive the other bus if there are enough students for two buses. Mr. Fletcher said the draft proposal is that they will need two employees on each bus. He said for small teams there may be only the coach or one assistant. In response to additional questions, he said coaches will not be paid for driving the bus and they will have to work out the details for other employees who will be on the buses. Mr. Muehling expressed thanks to the many people who put in a lot of work on solving this problem.

Pete Lenzen, BHS North parent, said they have been very happy with the school system and he is happy to hear the Board's commitment. He said this is a challenging problem. He noted that the booster club supports many activities to improve sports: uniforms, equipment, sound systems, banners, cameras, etc. He said when this came to their attention that the school system needed money and the booster club was asked to help, it was disconcerting. He said last year they paid \$6,000 to help with transportation and their concern is if that goes to \$18,000 it will hurt parent enthusiasm to participate. He agrees that collecting student fees is a better solution. He said many sports have more than 14 athletes and asked about the possibility of getting two buses the first year. Instead of two employees, he suggested one school employee with the other a parent volunteer. He thanked the Board for helping resolve this very challenging issue.

There was no further discussion and Board members voted on the motion to approve short term and long term steps to reduce transportation costs due to increased fuel costs as recommended. Aye: Butler, Grossi, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff. Motion carried.

Dr. Grossi explained that the administration will continue to look at steps to save transportation costs. In response to a question, she confirmed that the Board approved \$102,000 plus strings savings and long term \$379,000, in addition to continuing to explore summer school and strings.

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

Julie Hammond said her family was affected by the kindergarten confusion this year. She asked about the status of the Kindergarten Task Force. Dr. Grossi asked her to contact the Superintendent and he will identify the appropriate staff to meet with her.

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

Mr. Muehling said he spoke to a number of parents relative to the kindergarten situation and he hopes that next year we can avoid some of the problems that came about.

Referring to the discussion about money, Mr. Muehling noted that the state is going to take over the General Fund and say they will take care of schools. He mentioned that the school system budget is about \$90,000,000 and the General Fund accounts for 67% of that. He said we are now funded in the bottom 20% of the state and he expects the state to bring us up to the middle. He said in reality we do not know how much money we will receive in funding and that is why these other things must be considered. He said we are trying to keep operations as they are and he appreciates the work to come up with solutions.

Ms. Merriam said she has some concerns with state funding. She said she has seen ads on TV recently that talk about proposals for the next four years. She said you have to read between the sentences. She said for a number of years we have tried to get more money directed toward teachers and the classrooms and some of the ads are under the guise that school corporations do not spend enough money on teachers, but they do not include counselors, social workers, librarians, therapists, etc. She said there are three areas we are mandated by the state and federal to work with students who have IEP's and we are funded at 40%. Ms. Merriam said she is concerned with politicians talking about what they want to do when the implication is they will tell you how many teachers you will have. She added that we have strong support in our county for public education but that is not true statewide, adding that we have a candidate who would like to remove collective bargaining for teachers.

Dr. Butler announced that at their next meeting the Historic Preservation Committee will consider demolition of Fairview Elementary School. She suggested that it is important for Board members to attend this meeting so we can proceed with building a new Fairview School that would be appropriate for children in that area. She encouraged people in the community to attend if they feel strongly that the school is needed. She provided details for the meeting. {The date of the meeting was later changed to 3:30 p.m. on October 23 in City Hall.}

13. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Grossi declared the meeting to be adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

ABSENT

Valerie Merriam, Secretary

Susan P. Wanzer, Assistant Secretary

Jim Muehling, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

Vicki Streiff, Member