

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Work Session, October 14, 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 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, October 14, 2008, at the School Administration Center, 315 E. North Drive, Bloomington, Indiana.

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

Board members absent: Jim Muehling and Vicki Streiff

Also present: Timothy F. Hyland, Superintendent; Tim Thrasher, Comptroller; Mike Scherer, Director of Extended Services; Mike Shipman, Director of Assessment and School Operations; Joe Childers, Principal of Binford Elementary School; Mark Conrad, Principal of Rogers Elementary School; Karen Adams, Principal of Fairview Elementary School; Linda Richardson, MCEA President; Mary Krupinski, Fairview Project Architect; and Janet Tupper, Administrative Assistant.

President of the Board, Teresa Grossi, called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

1. **Binford Renovation Project** – Dr. Hyland reviewed the reason for this work session. He said when he and Dr. Grossi attended a Middle School Task Force meeting last week there was discussion about rumors that renovation of the Binford library was to accommodate a middle school program. He wanted to make sure Board members were in the loop to know what is happening with this project.

Mr. Scherer said a few years ago he was under the impression that Binford may become a middle school; however, the way the project is going to be bid it has no impact one way or another. He said it can stay in a 3-6 grade configuration and the project is fine. He said they are only replacing windows, carpet, classroom finishes and an expansion of the library. He said the plan for the five room addition on the east side is not included in the bid package. Mr. Scherer explained that the budget was proposed to DLGF (Department of Local Government Finance) and it was approved to do that expansion so the budget is higher than needed if the addition is not included. He said we would need to sell the rest of the bonds to do that expansion at a later date, within a year of construction. He said he went into this project thinking that about 2010 Binford would be a middle school.

Dr. Grossi asked what would happen if we sold the bonds and did not use them. Mr. Thrasher said it would depend on when we used the money. He suggested that the Board decide before the bonds are sold since we are required to spend or rebate some interest earned on the money. Dr. Butler said her understanding when we did the 20-year plan was that Binford would be remodeled and if it becomes a middle school then additional things would happen.

Dr. Grossi acknowledged rumors but confirmed that the Board has said to the Middle School Task Force that no decision has been made to make Binford a middle school. She said peripherally the Board has talked about where everybody would go if kindergarten goes full day, but the Board has never said move forward with Binford as a middle school because a new superintendent will be hired and such a decision would be a few years out.

Ms. Richardson said many teachers on the task force were studying other configurations too. She said the rumors were more what they were hearing in the community and because there was so much information out there they thought it had been decided.

In response to Ms. Wanzer's question, Mr. Thrasher said he thinks we could use the money for other

projects only if they were part of the bond issue. He said depending on the size of the bond issue, we could sell bonds later if a decision is made to change Binford to a middle school. Mr. Scherer said the renovation project is a good opportunity to clean up some of the traffic issues at Binford/Rogers. He said the engineering group is looking at that possibility. He reiterated that the renovation taking place would not change if it is an elementary or a middle school; we are not doing anything now to prepare it to be a middle school. He confirmed that what we are doing now is what is in the 20-year plan – remodeling only.

Mr. Scherer said the bond issue would give us opportunity to fund parking and traffic issues. Dr. Butler asked if we did that and later wanted to convert Binford to a middle school, would we have spent the money on parking. Mr. Scherer said we will make sure it is flexible enough to go either way. He said they are looking at traffic flow, entrances and exits; there are five entrances into the Binford/Rogers area.

During ensuing discussion the Board discussed the impact of making Binford a middle school; i.e. Rogers could not be a K-3 school so all of that needs to be considered.

Mr. Scherer said the bond issue includes \$5.9 million for Binford and the project we are bidding in December will probably be between \$3 million and \$3.5 million. He said that may help Fairview. He said he does not have the budget for parking yet but it will not be millions of dollars.

2. **Fairview Building Project** – Dr. Hyland said because of budget considerations, the architect had to cut six classrooms out of the plan and include them as an alternate for the project. He said his concern was the extent to which the Board was privy to that information.

Ms. Adams said they hope that the Fairview population will be expanded to have a broader socio-economic student mix. She said last year they finally opened a pre-school program and although there is no funding this year Head Start came in and now there are two and one-half pre-school classes. She said the majority of the students live in the Fairview district. She is afraid that one pre-school classroom would not be enough and pre-school is needed to help prepare these students for school. She noted that it is easier to get parents involved when students are younger and parent involvement is a big piece of improving attendance, homework, etc. She said they hope to have a family resource room in the new building but there would be no space for that without the added six classrooms, although there may be a small office space for the PTO.

Ms. Krupinski said construction costs in general, including materials, experienced an incredible increase in the past two years. She said general construction has gone up 6% this year by the end of June and steel is up 25% so that had an impact on the construction trade. She said DLGF limits construction costs to \$150 per square foot and that is a tough number to fit. She said they went through a re-design effort to try to minimize the cost. She shared drawings of the project, noting the alternate for the six classrooms.

Dr. Hyland asked what it would cost to get the six classrooms back. Ms. Krupinski said it would cost \$2 million to add six classrooms and another series of alternates. Ms. Merriam asked if the excess from the Binford project could be used to add classrooms at Fairview. Mr. Thrasher said when we went to DLGF we said how much we would spend on each project but since then he has been surprised at the flexibility we have. He said he would need to go back to bond counsel for advice on this possibility. Ms. Wanzer noted that the Board has struggled for years on what to do with Fairview and some ask why we are bothering to do it. She said it is a waste of money if we cannot provide needed space, especially pre-school. Dr. Grossi said she also wants Fairview to have flexibility as they look at restructuring.

Dr. Butler noted that the Board has talked about the need for a family resource center and it was planned

to make easy access and we talked about the need for pre-school because we need to intervene with those kids as early as possible. She said she understands money constraints but she also understands we have talked a lot about what Fairview needs.

Dr. Hyland said Mr. Thrasher will check on the flexibility between the two projects. Ms. Wanzer asked what we can do if there is no flexibility. Dr. Grossi recalled that bond counsel said we could have some private funds going into the plans. Ms. Merriam thinks DLGF might be flexible considering the increase in costs. Mr. Thrasher said he does not think we will have to go back to DLGF and we do not want to do anything that will jeopardize approval of future projects.

In response to questions, Mr. Scherer briefly talked about other alternates that will be included for bid, in addition to the six classrooms. Ms. Krupinski also reviewed various alternates that would be included, such as sun shades and screened glass. She said the primary effort is to save energy costs. She said when they made the major designs the building went from a three-story to a four-story building with a ground floor that does not go under the entire footprint. She said the base bid is 74,520 square feet versus 82,910 square feet with the six classrooms. She said the four levels permit more play area and more accessibility as well as more parking. She said without the six classrooms, the capacity of the building would be 290 instead of 410 students. Dr. Butler noted that significantly impacts what could happen at Fairview short-term and long-term. She said when the Board first talked about Fairview they talked about not building it to current capacity but to what they wanted it to go.

Dr. Hyland said he wanted to make sure that Mr. Scherer is on target with bids and said the Board will be informed about alternates. Mr. Scherer confirmed that the DLGF approved \$40,685,000 for the projects.

Ms. Krupinski said we are going back to the Zoning Appeals Board and the Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) about taking down the existing chimney. Dr. Butler said because she is on the HPC Board, she will not vote but she encouraged people to attend and to speak in favor of Fairview. Ms. Merriam noted that Dawn Hewitt wrote a wonderful article on other places where Swifts roost at night; she will share the article.

Board members thanked Ms. Krupinski for attending the meeting.

The work session adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

Teresa Grossi, President

Jeannine Butler, Vice President

Valerie Merriam, Secretary

Susan P. Wanzer, Assistant Secretary

ABSENT

Jim Muehling, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

ABSENT

Vicki Streiff, Member