

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Work Session, March 3, 2009

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 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, 2009, at Bloomington High School South, 1965 South Walnut Street, Bloomington, Indiana.

Board members present: Jeannine Butler, John Hamilton, Valerie Merriam, Jim Muehling, Lois Sabo-Skelton, Vicki Streiff and Sue Wanzer

Also present: Tim Hyland, Superintendent; Tom Bunger, Board Attorney; and Janet Tupper, Administrative Assistant.

President of the Board, Jeannine Butler, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board Bylaws Regarding Residential Requirements for Board Membership

Dr. Butler noted that at the last meeting, Ms. Merriam commented about changing the Board's Bylaws regarding residential requirements and Ms. Wanzer said she would like to look at more than just residential requirements. After discussions with Dr. Hyland, Tom Bunger was asked to be present at this meeting to review the process for changing the plan and then the Board will come to agreement as to whether to proceed.

Mr. Bunger provided copies of applicable statutes regarding the Organization Plan for the school system. He said when the school corporation organized, districts were established and Board residency requirements are a part of that plan. He explained that the plan was approved by the Department of Education and the only way to amend it is to go through the amendment process which can be initiated by constituents or by Board resolution. He said the process includes legal advertisements in the newspaper to give people a chance to file a remonstrance and then a hearing is held. He said the final step is for the Board to adopt the changes and then it is sent to the Indiana Department of Education and they review it and set a hearing and review it to determine if the changes are appropriate.

Mr. Bunger further explained the plan was amended one time in 1994. In the original plan, each township (or a cluster of townships) had a member and there was an at-large member. In 1994, the plan was amended but it was not done without a lawsuit. Mr. Bunger provided copies of the statute that refers to what are the options for districts. He pointed out that we now have residential districts; the statute says that is fine for identifying members but all citizens vote for all members. He said this is an at-large Board in that everybody votes on all members. He reviewed statutory provisions for changing the plan and said it would be at least a six month process to make changes.

In reviewing changes made to the organization plan in 1994, Mr. Bunger explained that the at-large position was removed and all seats were made residential districts. He said at that time they were balanced with the number of voters in each district. He pointed out that if the precincts are changed to match current ones, the Board would have to go through the same process for changing the plan. He said the plan could be amended insofar as residential districts and residential requirements, but it would take six months so it makes sense to consider all changes now rather than one or more now and others at a later date.

During ensuing discussion, Ms. Wanzer suggested that the Board look at a proposal for residential requirements and anything else the Board wants to explore for changes. In response to Mr. Muehling's question, Mr. Bunger said throughout the state some Board members are appointed but the majority are elected now and because so many came from townships, many include township representation. Mr. Muehling said he is interested in seeing other districts that have similar demographics; he believes one year is enough to establish residency in a specific district.

In response to Ms. Merriam's question, Mr. Bunger explained that only items that are included in the Organization Plan must be changed in this manner. Other sections of the Bylaws may be changed by the Board in the manner outlined. (Ms. Tupper will send Board members a copy of the Organization Plan and Amendments.)

Dr. Sabo-Skelton agreed that she would like to review by tracing our history and consider if we have the best plan at this time or if we need to make changes. Ms. Wanzer reiterated that she would like to look at everything and explore Ms. Merriam's suggestion and any other changes. Ms. Merriam confirmed that she would still like to consider residential districts for one year instead of two. Mr. Hamilton said he did not feel strongly about changing it. He suggested that as the Board looks at goals to consider whether this rises to the level of expending energy. He said it is important to have public input if changes are going to be made. Dr. Butler noted that a hearing is part of the requirement. Mr. Hamilton said he would want to reach out and ask people for feedback.

Consensus: Board members will review the organization plan and amendments and continue discussion at a work session prior to the regular meeting on April 7.

The work session adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Jeannine Butler, President

Valerie Merriam, Vice President

Vicki Streiff, Secretary

John Hamilton, Assistant Secretary

Jim Muehling, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

Sue Wanzer, Member