

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Work Session, March 24, 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 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 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; Tim Thrasher, Comptroller; Kathleen Hugo, Director of Special Education; Deb Prekert, Title I Coordinator; and Janet Tupper, Administrative Assistant. Also present from the Friends of Fairview Committee were Fairview Principal Karen Adams, Assistant Principal Trudy Litz; School Improvement Administrator Kim Sechler and the following Fairview Teachers: Carol Bodnar, Beth Crowe, Kathy Heise, Eve Prost, Erin Ritchey, Jeannette Stolz and Mary Wicker.

President of the Board, Jeannine Butler, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Report from the *Friends of Fairview*

Dr. Butler noted that the purpose of this meeting was for the Board to listen to a report from the *Friends of Fairview* – a committee formed to work on Fairview restructuring efforts.

Mr. Sechler shared a summary of the work of the committee. He also reviewed some statistics of students who attend Fairview, mentioning that 92% are on free and/or reduced lunch and that the population will change by 50% from 2008-2009 to the opening of the 2009-2010 school year. He shared with the Board a document that outlined restructuring options considered by the committee (a copy is included with the official record of this meeting).

Ms. Stolz reviewed option 2, noting that the committee focused on doing something to make people want to be at Fairview. She said their conversations led them to think about combining with two other K-6 schools with all remaining K-6 with each school adopting a theme or focus such as arts, science/math/technology, or social studies. She said this would encourage a mix of population – perhaps keeping K-2 in their home schools and people apply to school for grades 3-6.

Ms. Prost reviewed option 9 – moving the current Fairview boundary to the east to bring in new students. She said with this option Fairview would remain Pre-K through 6th grade. She said the intent of this option is to reduce the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch to 50%. She noted that students in poverty have more disabilities and have more needs, at school and at home.

Ms. Heise said they met with people at Indiana University about another opportunity – the Leonard Bernstein Institute. She said they would like to move the Institute from Gettysburg to the I.U. campus, hoping to offer a masters degree in artful learning. She said when they looked at this they saw a possibility for Fairview to become a Bernstein Learning Center. She said they have a program specifically targeted to underachieving schools – very much like BHS South's AVID program in that you ask students to generate questions to find answers. She said the program includes curriculum and teacher training; it is an on-going process.

Ms. Adams said they asked the faculty to tell them what they were interested in continuing to explore. She said some are interested in a K-6 school with attendance boundaries changed, some are interested in the Bernstein Learning Center and some are interested in both.

Discussion ensued regarding the Bernstein Learning Center option. Ms. Adams said she is aware of centers in California and Georgia with similar populations. She said some are demonstration schools and they invite other people to come. Regarding possible funding sources, Ms. Adams said they would need about \$70,000

the first year for professional development and she thought a Lilly Grant may be an option. Dr. Hyland said perhaps money from the stimulus package could be used for that purpose. Board members asked questions and committee members shared ideas and thoughts, including the fact that they do not want to lose their current students. They hope to build upon these ideas so that all Fairview students will be successful. It was agreed that any plans for change would be in place in 2010 when the new school opens.

In response to a question, Ms. Adams said most faculty members were more interested in changing boundaries and implementing the Bernstein Learning Center. Ms. Stolz said everybody is committed to doing what is best for the kids. She said they hope to alleviate some of the transiency of the school's population in that it would widen the area and they could still come to Fairview. Ms. Adams also pointed out that not all families are interested in keeping children in the same school.

During ensuing discussion, Ms. Prost said she is concerned that we will lose kids to the Project School and she thinks the Bernstein Learning Center would be attractive to a lot of students. She said they hope to make it a wonderful school and others will want to come. Ms. Wicker said hearing impaired children come to Fairview for the program but they like the services and stay through 6th grade.

Mr. Sechler confirmed that there were nine options on the table when the process started in January. He said as people were asked to pick three or four they thought were more interesting, the two presented to the Board kind of evolved. He said they did not rule out anything and still could combine some options. He said he thinks everybody feels comfortable with where they are now. He said 50% free and reduced lunch is a goal and they are still continuing with academic initiatives. Ms. Prost said the problem is because of AYP, students may choose to go elsewhere. Ms. Prekert confirmed that about 60 Fairview students have opted for school choice.

Mr. Muehling said he understands the idea is to generate a more homogeneous population. He recalled that the Board looked at moving Fairview's boundary to the east and over the years they talked about combining Arlington and Fairview and decided what impact that would make is probably not tremendous. He said another option might be to move the G-T classes to Fairview. He said he would be interested to see numbers and what effect it might have to pick up Tulip Tree students. Ms. Adams said they have been talking about a lot of different things, pushing more this year to come to a decision and the staff and community would like to know what will happen in 2010. She said they would like to move toward some decision. She said they think they need guidance from the Board and administration.

Discussion followed. Dr. Hyland said there are already some things we have started to do in conjunction with Dr. Coopman and he will be the person to help lead this to a decision. He said Dr. Coopman has met with Mr. Sechler and Ms. Adams and he has been kept up to speed. Ms. Prekert confirmed that DOE requirements are that we need to have a 50% change in population and those students cannot come from AYP schools.

Mr. Hamilton said it seems that the Bernstein Learning Center is a good idea and he likes the idea of school choice to make it available to other students. However, he encouraged the committee not to jump to only that option but to focus on how we make Fairview an exciting place.

On behalf of the Board, Dr. Butler thanked committee members for this update. She noted that she has been meeting with the committee for two years and can appreciate their work.

The work session adjourned at 7:00 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