

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting, September 1, 2009

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 1, 2009, in the Large Group Room at Bloomington High School South, 1965 South Walnut Street, Bloomington.

Board members present:

Jeannine Butler	President
Valerie Merriam	Vice President
Vicki Streiff	Secretary
Lois Sabo-Skelton	Member
Sue Wanzer	Member

Board members absent:

John Hamilton	Assistant Secretary
Jim Muehling	Member

Also present:

J.T. Coopman	Superintendent
Tim Thrasher	Comptroller
Mike Scherer	Director of Extended Services
Janet Tupper	Administrative Assistant
Ed Brown	Director, Hoosier Hills Career Center
Terry Daugherty	Teacher and MCEA Representative
Andy Graham	Reporter, <i>The Herald-Times</i>

In addition to the above, twelve (12) individuals 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, Jeannine Butler, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. **FACES OF EDUCATION**

Dr. Butler explained that at every Board meeting an employee or volunteer is recognized for outstanding accomplishments. She introduced Cassidy Rockhill who was honored for his skill and devotion to students. He was nominated for this honor by the Special Education and Human Resources Departments. Mr. Rockhill joined the Grandview staff this fall as a special education teacher, leading a self-contained classroom. Although he is first year teacher, he is a skilled special educator who consistently honed his craft during his earliest years with MCCSC as a substitute teacher in 2002. He became a paraprofessional in 2004, in a special education classroom at Highland Park. During this time, he completed his special education endorsement. Having seen the excellent work Cassidy has done as a paraeducator, both special education director Kathleen Hugo and assistant director Jan McCollough express excitement about the opportunities he will create for students as a teacher. He is equally high regarded at Highland Park and Grandview principal Lily Albright believes that he is a wonderful addition to their faculty. Board members commended Mr. Rockhill for his achievements as a substitute teacher and a paraprofessional and look forward to witnessing his growth and development as a classroom teacher.

3. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE**

Allysen Grice, student at Bloomington New Tech High School, shared with the Board some compelling statistics to support her proposal for starting middle and high schools later in the day. Specifically, she said that it is difficult for teens to get the amount of sleep necessary to function well at school. She said teens who get more sleep have a better attitude, higher GPA, sharper focus, better relationships, test scores, etc. Additionally, she noted that a dangerous time for teens is between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. and if schools start later they would end later. She suggested that middle and high school students go to school from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. to give teens the extra two hours they need for sleep.

Dr. Butler noted that Ms. Grice had done a lot of research. She said her comments indicated that elementary schools should start earlier and secondary later and the question is do we want younger or older students waiting on buses in the dark. Board members commended Ms. Grice for her presentation.

Ms. Merriam said she had the privilege of hearing a national authority on sleep deprivation and he also talked about power naps, nothing more than 20 minutes, which is recommended for college students as well. She commented that we also have bus drivers that have more than one job and she was not sure how to address that conflict if school times are altered as suggested.

Ms. Wanzer also thanked Ms. Grice for her research and work; she hopes the Board will continue this conversation. She suggested perhaps something different could be done, such as split shifts.

4. **SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS**

Dr. Coopman said conversation continues regarding state funding for vocational education programs and Ed Brown, Director of the Hoosier Hills Career Center, is very active in testifying with the Department of Education and meeting with others that may have input on how these programs are being funded. He said he does not necessarily agree with vocational funding recommendations and wants the public to be aware of some of those issues. He said the same thing is happening in adult education as well. He has asked Sherry Dick, Director of Adult Education, to testify since she has a great deal of knowledge in this area. Along with a number of other people, she will testify on Thursday, September 3.

Dr. Coopman reported that we are beginning conversations about curriculum mapping and Title I district mapping must be done by May. He commended Cameron Rains and Jan Bergeson for starting that process and moving it forward. He said he had conversations with the teachers association today about curriculum mapping and the need to establish a good understanding. He said he has had conversations with the MCEA (Monroe County Education Association) on a variety of topics and in many cases they saw eye to eye on many concerns.

Noting he had an opportunity to meet with Tim Thrasher and Mike Scherer and a retired superintendent whom he trusts, Dr. Coopman said they will be working on energy conservation to save the corporation money. He will rely on Mr. Thrasher and Mr. Scherer for programs in place. The only cost to the school corporation is to purchase software and the cost for an employee to oversee the program – could be someone retired or a current employee or community member. He said this is not a new program; it is used throughout the nation.

Dr. Coopman reported that they are continuing conversations with Fairview about school improvement plans, leading up to Dr. (Bob) Barr's visit in October. He had an opportunity to meet with the architect that designed Fairview and who is working with renovation of the administration building.

Board members shared comments and thanked Dr. Coopman for this update on his activities.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Dr. Coopman reviewed donations and recommended approval of the Consent Agenda: (a) minutes of previous meetings on August 4, August 18 and August 26; (b) donations; (c) Financial Report; (d) Appropriation Balance Report and (e) Allowance of Claims. Ms. Merriam so moved. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion. Aye: Butler, Merriam, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

6. **CONTRACTS**

Mr. Thrasher withdrew the Indiana University 21st Century Grant for School Age Care and recommended approval of contracts as amended, including: (a) Kirkwood Photo Lab and New Tech HS; (b) STAR Autism Support for training; (c) University of Northern Colorado for a food service intern; (d) New Harmony Inn for professional development; (e) Wireless Generation for Fairview training; (f) Foundation of MCCS for Barr Consulting; (g) Study Island for Fairview and Highland Park; (h) Study Island for training; (i) Bloomington Chamber of Commerce Foundation Alcohol Prevention Grant; (j) NCS Pearson for professional development. Ms. Wanzer so moved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Merriam.

Following a time for additional discussion, Board members voted on the motion to approve contracts as amended. Aye: Butler, Merriam, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

Referring to professional development plans, Ms. Merriam commented on recent proposals from the Indiana Superintendent of Instruction that deal with methodology; the State Superintendent is saying professional development is not needed while teachers are saying that this is what they need. She said they know their content area but need different methods and approaches to reach these kids. She is glad we are doing this. Dr. Sabo-Skelton agreed that we are seeing some wonderful programs offered.

Dr. Butler said if we have contracts for methodologies and pedagogies, she thinks it would be of benefit to the Board and public if teachers report what they learned and how they are using information in their classrooms.

7. **PERSONNEL REPORT**

Mr. Thrasher pointed out that the Personnel Report included a support staff retirement notice from Marcia Rush who has been his secretary for nearly 15 years. He said she is a wonderful and dedicated employee with MCCSC and he is grateful to have had the opportunity to work with her. He recommended approval of personnel matters as presented. Dr. Sabo-Skelton so moved. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion. Board members were happy to see the empty RIF (reduction-in-force) list and welcomed new employees. There was no further discussion. Aye: Butler, Merriam, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

8. **AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE 2010 BUDGETS, CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND PLAN AND SCHOOL BUS REPLACEMENT PLAN**

Mr. Thrasher said it is time to officially begin adoption of the 2010 Budget. He explained that the advertisement for the 2010 budgets notifies the public of the hearing on September 15 and the plan to adopt the budgets on October 6. He said the advertisement also advises how citizens may file an objection to the budgets. He said the advertisement will (1) establish a maximum levy for each fund, (2) establish a maximum for the budget, and (3) establish a maximum tax rate, although we cannot advertise the tax rate because we do not have the assessed valuation at this time. Following a review of some specifics of the budget, Mr. Thrasher recommended that the Board authorize the administration to advertise 2010 Budgets, Capital Projects Fund Plan and School Bus Replacement Plan. Ms. Merriam so moved. Ms.

Wanzer seconded the motion.

Mr. Thrasher responded to questions. He said the recommended tax rate for the Capital Projects Fund Plan allows us to stay on our 20-year plan for maintenance. He said based on the assumption that our assessed valuation goes up two percent (2%) the tax rate could increase as much as eight cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

Mr. Thrasher indicated the Legislature approved funding for public school corporations at the lowest level in many years. This, coupled with a significant decline in enrollment, means the MCCSC will receive virtually no new money for the General Fund through the school funding formula. Normally, a funding increase of at least 2% is needed just to provide sufficient new money to cover routine cost increases for expenses such as utilities, insurance, maintenance and salary schedule annual increments. He stated that, until the past two years, the MCCSC had been able to count on sufficient cost savings from retirements to offset the annual salary increments built into the various salary schedules. These annual salary increments provide automatic increases in salary for staff members who have not reached the top of their salary schedule. However, due to the current economic conditions, there were only enough retirements in 2009 to offset approximately one half of the \$600,000 annual increment cost. The result is that the MCCSC will need to reduce General Fund expenditures a minimum of 2% below current levels just to maintain a minimal operating balance in the General Fund.

Mr. Thrasher responded to questions. He said the recommended tax rate for the Capital Projects Fund Plan allows us to stay on our 20-year plan for maintenance. He said based on the assumption that our assessed valuation goes up two percent (2%) the tax rate would increase eight cents per \$100 assessed valuation.

Ms. Wanzer said it seems that the Project School will have about 200 students and this is not efficient since it, too, is funded with public money. She said charter school legislation meant for schools to be under the school corporation as alternative education and she hopes Ball State will look at how they are chartering and what it is doing to public education. She commended Mr. Thrasher for doing his best with funding we have.

During ensuing discussion, Mr. Thrasher explained that each school has an allocation for technology funds, location specific. He said schools cannot afford to replace all computers at one time so a few years ago a five-year replacement plan was developed. He said money allocated to schools is determined by enrollment for the basic amount; high schools receive additional money for orchestra and band.

Ms. Merriam told Mr. Thrasher that she always appreciates his calm presentations because we are going to have some heavy cutting to do and much of it will be in personnel, with larger classes and fewer services.

There was no further discussion and Board members voted on the motion to authorize advertisement of the 2010 budgets. Aye: Butler, Merriam, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

9. **INFORMATION, PROPOSALS OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** – There was no response to Dr. Butler's invitation for comments from the public.

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

Dr. Sabo-Skelton encouraged people to listen again to Senator Vi Simpson explain how we got to the situation we are in (regarding funding) so they can understand how to vote in the future. She said we need to elect people who support public school education. She said people can call Bloomington Community

Access TV (B-CAT) to watch her presentation.

As the Board's representative to the MCCS Foundation, Ms. Wanzer shared a handout that Tina Peterson, Foundation Executive Director, gave to teachers. She said it lists all the different programs the Foundation supports and tells people what they need to do to apply for grants.

Ms. Merriam reported an incident when a special needs bus was loading a child who was in a wheelchair and a motorcycle whizzed by. She reminded the public to stop when school bus stop lights are on. She noted that while in Montana recently she talked with school board members and learned that because of long trips school buses must make they have to charge and people pay according to the distance the bus travels to pick up their child(ren).

Ms. Merriam thanked students who worked for the United Ministries food drive this weekend. She said the help was much needed and greatly appreciated.

Ms. Merriam noted billboards around town that say "Not in my house" to encourage homes not to provide alcohol to students. She said the same campaign is going on in Montana, noting that drinking is the #1 abuse among students. She said it is time we start talking with parents and applauded whoever put up the billboards. Dr. Coopman thanked Ms. Merriam for recognition of this issue.

Dr. Coopman said we just received word that our School Board is going to receive an honor this fall at the Indiana School Boards Association meeting for Board members' attendance at meetings. Board members have earned enough CAP points for recognition as an outstanding Board. He said he would like for as many as possible to attend the meeting on September 28-29. He voiced appreciation for the dedication they demonstrate in a part-time job.

Ms. Streiff commended Allysen Grice for her poised presentation and said she thinks it would be wonderful if we could follow her recommendation.

Dr. Butler said she is pleased that we are beginning the process of curriculum mapping and dispelling teacher concerns.

Dr. Butler and Board members spent some time talking about personal schedules to make sure there is a quorum at the next few meetings; Board members will be polled. Dr. Butler thanked Ms. Streiff for attending this meeting because there was a conflict with an open house at her children's school and she chose to attend this meeting. The Board agreed to meet in executive session prior to the regular meeting on October 6.

Dr. Butler said she would like for our community to understand that we are not alone in facing budget constraints.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Butler declared the meeting to be adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Jeannine Butler, President

Valerie Merriam, Vice President

ABSENT

Victoria I. Streiff, Secretary

John Hamilton, Assistant Secretary

ABSENT

Jim Muehling, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

Susan P. Wanzer, Member