

Monroe County Community School Corporation  
**BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES**  
Regular Meeting, Tuesday, December 15, 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, December 15, 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
Keith Klein	Member
Jim Muehling	Member
Lois Sabo-Skelton	Member
Sue Wanzer	Member

Also present:

J.T. Coopman	Superintendent
Tim Thrasher	Comptroller
Peggy Chambers	Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Personnel
Mike Scherer	Director of Extended Services
Janet Tupper	Administrative Assistant
Tom Bunger	School Attorney
Andy Graham	Reporter for <i>The Herald-Times</i>

In addition to the above, several teachers and/or citizens, including those mentioned in the minutes, were in attendance and two representatives of Bloomington Community Access TV were present.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Board President, 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 Keri Gross who was honored for being a vital component to the New Tech team. She was nominated for this honor by the staff at Bloomington New Tech High School (BNTHS). She started her career with MCCSC as the school counselor at Batchelor. She then worked predominantly with the freshman class at BHS North and was one of the original five members of BNTHS. Principal Alan Veach said that Keri has had to fill many roles and he could not have asked for a better teammate in this endeavor. He said she is always pushing to ensure that their programming meets the needs of all students and she meets individually with each freshman student and parent to create a four-year plan. Keri is dedicated to ensuring that each student is equipped with a post-secondary plan that will lead them to success in the field of choice. One of Keri's New Tech students reported that when he thinks of Ms. Gross the first thing that comes to mind is "that #1 smile she always has glued on her face and somehow, that same smile is ALWAYS genuine." The student says that Ms. Gross is a miracle worker when it comes to schedule changes or social problems or figuring out how to make your high school career best for YOU. He said, "She is always there and her door is always open. Whether your problem is big or small, she is there to listen and help you through ... Ms. Gross is there to understand and put things in perspective for me."

Board members commended Ms. Gross for her hard work and passion to ensuring students are cared for on a daily basis and prepared for life.

3. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE** – There was no response to Dr. Butler’s invitation for public dialogue.

4. **SCHOOL SHOWCASE: Bloomington New Tech High School – New Tech Demonstration Site**

Principal Alan Veach shared an informative report about New Tech’s (BNTHS) recent designation as a New Tech Network Demonstration School. This achievement is rare – an honor fewer than half of schools in the New Tech Network accomplish. The school will serve as a visitation site for those interested in seeing how the approach works and a site where prospective New Tech school staff will be trained. To maintain this status, BNTHS teachers must continue to design interesting, rigorous projects tied to state and district standards, students must be fully engaged in the learning process and build upon the culture of trust between them and their teachers. BNTHS will be featured on the New Tech Network website. In addition to Mr. Veach, the Board recognized and applauded the accomplishments of BNTHS teachers and staff who were present: Keri Gross, counselor; Joann Novak, business; Ann Burke and Scott Wallace, science; Pam Gunkel, social studies; Drew Schrader and Claire Roth, English; Loren Wood, math; Rich Schmelz, IT; Sara Provenzale, secretary; and Chen-Lien Hsu, world languages.

5. **FOR INFORMATION: BHS North Choir Program**

Louise Wohlfacka, choir instructor, reported on the many facets of the BHS North choir program. She explained that the various choirs celebrate diversity and noted that students are challenged to grow individually and taught to support the total choral community both in their assigned choir and the four choirs combined. After every concert, students write reflections, using ISTEP standards, regarding their performance and goals. The Board commended Ms. Wohlfacka for developing an outstanding choral program at BHS North.

6. **FOR INFORMATION: BHS North Challenge Day Presentation**

Principal Jeff Henderson said BHS North is transitioning to small learning communities and to make school a more welcoming place for all students. He said they have wonderful things going on to address threatening behavior, harassment, teasing, etc. which exist in schools just as they do in society as a whole. They have a Human Understanding and Diversity Council which has dedicated a significant amount of time investing in programs they can bring to school to deal with these issues. Council representative and art teacher Diane Davis-Deckard explained one program they want to bring to North has been featured on some national news – Challenge Day. She said with 1500 plus students it is imperative to make sure students do not fall through the crack and many students who fail do so because of issues that do not have to do with academics. She talked about Challenge Day and noted that the focus of this program is ‘challenging you to be the change’. She said on Challenge Day 50 adults meet with 100 students during a 6 and ½ hour program on the school campus. The cost is \$3,000 plus travel for a team of individuals trained to address issues of violence, racism, teasing, stereotyping, tobacco, drugs and alcohol. Forty students are already working on these issues and want to be a part of Challenge Day. The school is receiving tax deductible donations to support the program. Mr. Henderson suggested that interested citizens learn more at [www.challengeday.org](http://www.challengeday.org).

7. **SUPERINTENDENT’S COMMENTS**

In his report to the Board, Dr. Coopman referred to information from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) regarding a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the *Race to the Top* grant

that the State of Indiana will be applying for through the federal Department of Education. He said the template provided was vague and ambiguous but he has talked with other school districts in the state and there is apprehension to signing the MOU without more information. However, he believes there have been some amendments and he feels more comfortable about signing so that MCCSC has an opportunity for financial rewards that accompany signing the document. He said the MOU has to be signed by both the superintendent and the teachers' union president.

Dr. Coopman said we continue to hear about financial constraints and the Governor announced today that there will be a 3% reduction for public education, which means \$1.8 million of funding that the Monroe County Community School Corporation will lose. He said this is in addition to the \$2 million we are already underfunded for 2010. He said this translates into larger classes, program deductions and elimination of a minimum of 50 teaching positions. He reiterated that this is a state funding issue that will affect every school district in Indiana. He mentioned how some other school systems are making cuts (such as closing schools) and said it is incumbent upon our Board to have information as soon as possible. Dr. Coopman noted that on the flip side, to meet federal and state mandates we will be asking our teachers to do more with less and larger class sizes. He mentioned that the state now controls General Fund (GF) budgets and if they cannot afford to pay, they will not pay. Personnel and benefits comprise 91% of the GF budget. Discussion regarding budget issues will continue.

Mr. Muehling noted that we are talking about the General Fund and that is used to pay teachers and fund programs. He said some people question why we are building new schools and making improvements to schools but the money to operate schools is being reduced and that is from a different fund. He explained that MCCSC is funded in the lowest 20% of all schools in the state and now more money is being taken away. He said the only place to look to when making these kind of spending cuts is in staff. He said when you look at ECA programs, they all cost money but we must offer a core curriculum and it will be in large class sizes. Mr. Muehling mentioned that in California kids are walking to school and that will be the case in some areas in Indiana. He talked about a woman in another state who pays 2.3% property tax on assessed valuation. He said we have a 1% cap and all services for the community, including schools, must be paid with that tax money. He concluded that we have big problems and larger ones down the road.

Regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that school systems will be asked to sign, Ms. Wanzer said she knows some of the language is vague but she thinks this money from *Race to the Top* is coming when we are in dire straits and she would like to reconsider signing it. Ms. Merriam said she thinks school boards are being coerced into signing the MOU; she does not want people to get their hopes up that money will come through to save cuts. Dr. Butler said people need to understand that along with the cut came a Legislature decision to fund schools from their (state) money instead of local tax money, i.e. they decided they will fund our General Fund. Ms. Merriam noted that communities are left with the alternative of a referendum.

8. **FOR INFORMATION: Construction Update**

Mike Scherer reported that current construction projects are progressing according to schedule. Administration Center renovation is expected to be completed in February. Binford has a new library, new windows and classroom renovation. A new driveway has been developed connecting Binford and Rogers and there have been partial window replacements at Rogers. Fairview should be completed by August 1; construction is about six months behind schedule but they hope to catch up. Templeton has a new corridor and flooring and upper level windows have been replaced at Unionville. Tri-North has new classrooms, renovated auditorium, terrazzo hallways, partial roof replacement, and an ADA compliant ramp to the football field. Total renovation is being accomplished at the Hoosier Hills Career Center, including two new classrooms, a new main entrance and a new addition on the south

side for industrial technology. The new Transportation/Service building is scheduled for completion in August 2010 and renovation of the current service building will begin when the new building opens.

9. **CONSENT AGENDA**

Dr. Coopman reviewed donations and recommended approval of the consent agenda as presented including: (a) donations, ECA expenditure and a field trip; and (b) allowance of claims. Ms. Sabo-Skelton so moved. Ms. Merriam seconded the motion. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

10. **CONTRACTS**

Mr. Thrasher recommended approval of contracts as presented, including: (a) Bloomington Montessori School and Meredith Sullivan; (b) SchoolSecure; (c) Change Orders; (d) Bell Trace Disaster Plan; (e) White River Co-Op Petroleum Fuel Purchase Contract; and (f) Citibank, NA, Corporate Resolution for Banking. Ms. Wanzer so moved. Dr. Sabo-Skelton seconded the motion.

In response to questions, Mr. Scherer explained that prices for fuel purchase are today's prices and the overall average is about \$2.20 per gallon. He said last year a similar contract saved the school system from \$300,000 to \$400,000 more than if fuel was purchased on the open market. Mr. Scherer said the contract with Bell Trace is a continuation of service; no money is received for this service.

Board members voted on the motion to approve contracts as submitted. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

11. **PERSONNEL**

Ms. Chambers noted that Charlie Thomas, head custodian at Highland Park will retire on February 1, 2010. She said he joined the service staff in 1989 and has been at Highland Park since 1991. She recommended approval of the Personnel Report as presented. Mr. Muehling so moved. Ms. Merriam seconded the motion.

Board members congratulated Mr. Thomas and thanked him for his service to the school system before voting on the motion to approve the Personnel Report as presented. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

12. **APPROVE WINDOW REPLACEMENT PROJECTS AT ROGERS AND UNIONVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

Mr. Scherer recommended that the Board approve phase II of the window replacement projects for Rogers and Unionville Elementary Schools as proposed. Ms. Streiff so moved. The motion was seconded by Ms. Merriam.

Following a time for discussion, Board members were polled on the motion to approve window replacement projects. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Streiff, Sabo-Skelton, Wanzer. Motion carried.

13. **APPROVE RESOLUTIONS AND NOTICE OF HEARING ASSOCIATED WITH MCCSC 1996 SCHOOL BUILDING CORPORATION FIRST MORTGAGE REFUNDING AND IMPROVEMENT BONDS**

Mr. Thrasher reviewed resolutions and notice of hearing associated with the MCCSC 1996 School Building Corporation First Mortgage Refunding and Improvement Bonds. He recommended approval of (1) resolution approving refunding; (2) resolution reapproving Building Corporation; (3) resolution approving form of amendment to lease; (4) notice of hearing on proposed amendment to lease; and (5) resolution approving continuing disclosure undertaking. Ms. Merriam so moved. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion.

Mr. Thrasher noted that Mr. Bunger was available to respond to legal questions. He said he expects the tax rate will be lowered in the Debt Service Fund. He pointed out the request to reappoint Mark Bradford and Virginia Rose to serve as the board of the 1996 School Building Corporation. He noted corrections: Exhibit C, page 2, October 29, 1992 should be October 29, 2002. The same change should be made in the legal ad announcing the hearing for January 19, 2010. Mr. Thrasher reviewed some of the projects to be completed and said this increases the lease rental to a maximum \$100,000. During ensuing discussion, Board members agreed to hold the hearing on January 19 as proposed.

Board members voted on the motion to approve resolutions and notice of hearing as recommended. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

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

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

Ms. Wanzer read an e-mail that parent liaison Anna Lynch sent to PTO presidents asking others to attend School Board meetings. Ms. Lynch was unable to attend this meeting and Ms. Wanzer expressed appreciation for her efforts. She said she is excited for someone like Ms. Lynch to step up and get involved.

Ms. Merriam wanted to make sure that Dr. Coopman shared information about the Memorandum of Understanding (Department of Education) with the newspaper.

Ms. Merriam shared her experiences with the Reality Store recently held at Tri-North. She thanked the Franklin Initiative for sponsoring this event. She reported on the Artful Learning meeting and expressed delight that the Indiana University School of Music has agreed to continue with the violin program for Fairview students through the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Ms. Merriam reported that the Insurance Committee has continued to meet and it looks like participation in the insurance program is about the same as last year. She said the Health Savings Account feature has been added and several employees have elected that option thereby cutting their premiums in about half. She said the committee has sent out RFP’s (Request for Proposals) to different clinic operators in the state to be received before the end of January with the hopes of bringing a proposal for a health clinic to the Board in March.

Voicing concerns about cuts, Ms. Merriam said the Governor talked about a 3% cut to schools and does not think teacher positions will be cut and she is incredulous about this. She said an article in

Sunday’s newspaper talked about our students not being prepared and we have no idea what programs will be cut but we need to look at what our students need for the future.

Mr. Klein said he is also harried when he sees what is going on. He expressed congratulations to students who have been giving back to the community and expressed thanks to the faculty and staff.

Mr. Muehling thanked the faculty and staff for their hard work and expressed best wishes to all for a safe holiday.

Ms. Streiff echoed concerns about budget cuts. She said she is very excited about the Challenge Day program that North is working to bring. She said it has great potential to dramatically improve the ability of certain students to get everything possible out of high school.

Dr. Butler agreed with comments regarding work that our schools do and she agreed with Mr. Muehling’s comments about financing. She wished everyone a great holiday vacation and announced that the next meeting of the Board would be held on January 5, 2010.

16. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Butler declared the meeting to be adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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Jeannine Butler, President

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Valerie Merriam, Vice President

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Victoria I. Streiff, Secretary

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Keith Klein, Member

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Jim Muehling, Member

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Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

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Susan P. Wanzer, Member