

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Regular Meeting, January 5, 2010

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, January 5, 2010, 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	Assistant Secretary
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
Janet Tupper	Administrative Assistant
Tina Peterson	Executive Director, MCCA Foundation
Andy Graham	Reporter, <i>The Herald-Times</i>

In addition to the above, although they did not sign the visitor list 14 visitors 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 7:00 p.m.

2. **ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD**

Election of Officers: Mr. Muehling moved approval of the following slate of officers to serve for 2010 and establishment of bonds as proposed: Jeannine Butler – President; Valerie Merriam – Vice President; Vicki Streiff – Secretary; Keith Klein – Assistant Secretary; Timothy Thrasher, Treasurer; Barbara Buckner, Assistant Treasurer; and Bond for Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer to be established at \$200,000 with the ECA Bond set at \$10,000 for the Treasurer. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Dr. Butler said she thought the Board decided it would be good to continue with the same officers as 2009 because this is an important time in this school system's history – not only the financial situation but a new Superintendent getting to know the Board and a need to continue stability.

Committee Appointments – Dr. Butler proposed the following appointments to committees:

ISBA Legislative Liaison: Lois Sabo-Skelton

ISBA Policy Advisor: Jim Muehling

MCCA Foundation Board – non-voting member: Sue Wanzer

Committee to Study Policies – study committee: Sue Wanzer, Valerie Merriam and Jim Muehling

Special Education Advisory Board – non-voting member: Vicki Streiff

High Ability Task Force–Broad Based Planning Committee – non-voting member: Keith Klein
Comprehensive Health Issues Committee (CHICs)–meets quarterly–non-voting member: Valerie Merriam

Middle School Task Force – non-voting members: Valerie Merriam, Lois Sabo-Skelton
Friends of Fairview Committee – as per Restructuring Plan: one voting member and one non-voting member: Jeannine Butler (voting), Sue Wanzer (non-voting)
MCCSC Insurance Committee (Superintendent’s appointee) – Valerie Merriam

Board members indicated their willingness to serve on these committees. {Note: Following the meeting, Dr. Butler approved Dr. Sabo-Skelton’s request to serve with Mr. Klein on the High Ability Task Force.}

3. **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2010 and JANUARY 2011**

Mr. Muehling moved approval of the calendar of meetings for 2010 and January 2011 as presented. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion, which carried unanimously. Dr. Butler mentioned that given the current status of things happening in the school system and in the state, Board members expect to be meeting on many Tuesdays (work sessions, executive sessions or special meetings in addition to this schedule).

4. **ORGANIZATION OF BOARD OF FINANCE**

Dr. Coopman recommended that the Board establish this portion of the agenda as the organizational meeting of the Board of Finance as called for in IC 5-13-7-6. Ms. Merriam so moved. She further moved that the officers of the Board of School Trustees be declared the officers of the Board of Finance. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. **INVESTING OFFICER’S REPORT**

As required by IC 5-13-7-6, Mr. Thrasher presented and reviewed the Investing Officer’s Report for 2009 [a copy of this report is included in the agenda]. This report was accepted by Board acclamation.

6. **FACES OF EDUCATION**

Dr. Butler explained that at every Board meeting an employee or volunteer is recognized for outstanding accomplishments. She introduced Wendy Schroder was honored for her incredible talent for managing a community-based classroom. She was nominated for this honor by Binford Principal Joe Childers. She started her career with MCCSC as a substitute teacher and classroom aide. Pursuing additional training she secured her licensure to teach special education and held teaching positions at Grandview and Childs before moving to Binford. Mr. Childers said Ms. Schroder’s efforts result in wonderful learning opportunities for her students. He said she is a gifted organizer and planner and she works with the para-educators to develop detailed student schedules that make the most of every available minute during the school day. He said Wendy has the uncanny ability to see and hear everything that is happening in and around her classroom and she excels in anticipating just the right adjustments to ensure that the students stay on track to accomplishing their goals. Mr. Childers said Ms. Schroder has demonstrated true devotion to her calling. He said, *she is a wonderful advocate for her students and she has helped all of us develop a better understanding and respect for the special talents and abilities they possess.* Ms. Schroder thanked Mr. Childers and the Board for this recognition and expressed appreciation for the para-educators who work with her. She introduced Kathy Brandon, Kris Lake and Karra Vey and acknowledged their hard work and talented support. Board members commended Ms. Schroder for her energy, dedication and inspiring work with our students with disabilities.

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

8. **PROGRAM SHOWCASE: English Language Learners (ELL)**

Choonhyun Jeon, ELL Coordinator, shared an informative report about the English Language Learners program. He explained that many students whose second language is English come from other countries but some are born in the U.S. He said the common factor is that a language other than English is their primary language. Currently 400 limited English students are enrolled in MCCSC – about 40 different languages are represented with most students speaking Korean or Spanish. The challenge faced is that each year about 230 students enroll and some 150 enroll in August. The largest group of ELL students is in K-3 classes. Mr. Jeon believes that the success of these students largely depends on the student's prior education experience, parent support and home environment. Children are limited if the parents do not support them and do not speak English at home. He said we try to create an environment so that students have an opportunity to practice language skills. He talked about collaborative efforts with the Broadview Learning Center; the Adult Education Program provides classes for parents and offers a tutoring program for their children while they attend classes. He said many parents take advantage of this opportunity. Coming with various proficiency levels, students are tested when they enroll and services are provided appropriate for their level. Korean and Spanish speaking staff work with teachers, students and parents.

9. **FOR INFORMATION: Foundation of MCCS**

Executive Director Tina Peterson reported that the Foundation's New Year's Eve gala, *Reading, Writing & Rhythm*, was a resounding success. She thanked the sponsors, attendees and volunteers for helping to raise almost \$45,000 through this year's event. This spring the Foundation will host a number of events. The Grant reception will take place on March 11. Jane Hoepfner will speak at the Personal Achievement Banquet on April 27. Finally, a community conversation is in the works for February and it will focus on the school funding crisis. Tina announced that the City has awarded FMCCS a grant to stage a Great Grown Up Spelling Bee at the Buskirk Chumley in September 2010. This event will raise funds for educational programs in MCCSC. New grant programs were announced for Enrichment Grants and Global Grants. Details will be distributed to the MCCSC faculty and available on the Foundation's website. The multi-classroom grant deadline is February 1st. Board members expressed thanks to Ms. Peterson for her hard work for the New Year's Eve event and for arranging for the Grown Up Spelling Bee. They commended her for her outstanding leadership, which accounts for the Foundation's success.

10. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent J.T. Coopman said several regional meetings have been held throughout the state in an effort to answer questions about information disseminated from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) regarding the *Race to the Top* grant that the State of Indiana will be applying for through the federal Department of Education. He said not all questions were answered and many gaps continue to be filled regarding what other states are doing, merit pay, pay for performance, etc. Noting that Indiana feels well positioned to compete for these dollars, he recommended that MCCSC participate. He said if we see something we do not like or cannot perform, we have an opportunity to opt out in April.

Dr. Coopman explained that this is much like stimulus money, i.e. looking for stability but the dollars are not stable. He believes this is another stop gap in education funding and we have to make sure we are not using money to start programs that cannot be continued. He added that 2012 will be a difficult funding year for schools and other tax supported municipalities. Noting that the teachers' association has agreed to sign the document, Dr. Coopman said it is with the understanding that either can withdraw. He said the money allocated for MCCSC is \$1.4 million, assuming the State receives \$250 million and all 292 school districts participate. He has solicited for all 18 school districts in the Indiana Urban Schools Association to collaborate in this effort. The State must submit their application by January 19.

Board members discussed the budget situation – in the state and nationally – and agreed that it is important not to start something with federal money that we cannot continue. Dr. Coopman confirmed that as is the case with stimulus money, *Race to the Top* funding is clearly one-time money and will not help our financial problems with staffing issues, etc. He said originally we had a \$2 million problem and now we have a \$3.8 million problem. By way of quick review, he said losing 277 students was a difficult blow and added to that was an insurance premium increase of about 20% and now a 3.5% budget cut; we have a significant problem that we have statutory and contractual requirements. He added that with the news coming just before the winter holiday, we have about three months to get this done (January-March). He noted that Ms. Chambers has enough on her plate but adding the additional pressures of this is very difficult. Dr. Coopman said many people, including teachers and administrative staff, do not necessarily understand this is a General Fund problem and the state took over the General Fund two years ago. He said when the state says we do not have money then they tell school systems it is their problem. He pointed out that we also cannot take money from other funds and transfer to the General Fund and that also needs to be understood. Since 91% of the General Fund is made up of staff salaries and benefits the primary impact will be on staffing and program considerations. He said the leadership team will meet on Friday, January 8, and will be asked to help identify areas in respective schools to look at as options to solve the problem.

Realizing that *Race to the Top* is currently one-time money and will not help our financial problems and in anticipation of a \$3.8 million budget shortfall in the 2010 General Fund, Board members supported Dr. Coopman's proposal for soliciting input regarding budget cuts. He announced that effective January 6th a link will be prominently placed on the home page of our website for submitting comments and suggestions. He and Board members urge widespread participation by linking from "Budget Shortfall Comments and Suggestion" at www.mccsc.edu.

Regarding professional development funds, Dr. Coopman said typically the Department of Education allocates money in the fall and in the spring and they are saying that the spring allocation will not come this year. He said we will not have to cancel any contracts already signed for professional development.

Dr. Butler mentioned an executive session scheduled for January 12 (changed to January 13 before publishing the date) and suggested that if Dr. Coopman is ready to discuss some ideas for budget cuts this could be another topic for that meeting. Noting the state has indicated that cuts can be made without decreasing teacher positions, Dr. Butler said she also talked with Dr. Coopman about comparing our administrative structure to other school corporations of comparable size. She said she knows we are not 'top heavy' and our administrators are doing a yeoman's job.

11. CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Coopman reviewed donations and recommended approval of the Consent Agenda: (a) minutes of previous meetings on December 1 and December 15, 2009; (b) donations, field trips and Conflict of Interest statements; (c) Financial Report; (d) Appropriation Balance Report and (e) Allowance of Claims. Mr. Muehling so moved. Ms. Merriam seconded the motion. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

12. CONTRACTS

Mr. Thrasher recommended approval of contracts as proposed, including: (a) Indiana Department of Education – *Race to the Top* Partnership Agreement; (b) Spencer-Owen Community Schools – Operating Agreement for Hoosier Hills Career Center; (c) Change Orders; (d) Pepsi-Cola General Bottlers of Indiana, Inc. – BHS North School Beverage Agreement; (e) Pepsi-Cola General Bottlers of Indiana, Inc. –

BHS South School Beverage Agreement; and (f) Cola-Cola Enterprises, Inc. – Jackson Creek MS School Beverage Agreement. Ms. Wanzer so moved. Ms. Streiff seconded the motion. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

In response to Ms. Merriam's questions, Mr. Thrasher said we have a General Fund operating balance at the end of 2009 which was about \$2.9 million, a decline of about \$230,000 since 2008. He said we were able to use stimulus money for special education and that helped. He said we need to reduce operating expenses by \$1.6 million to keep from losing our entire operating balance for 2010.

Mr. Klein asked if it is possible to move money from one fund to another. Mr. Thrasher said that must happen legislatively and he has contacted Senator Vi Simpson and suggested that be explored.

13. **PERSONNEL REPORT**

Ms. Chambers pointed out the proposed to change Eric Gilpin's appointment from interim principal to principal of Batchelor Middle School. She also reviewed the service record for Barbara Ticen, teacher at Highland Park, and Deb Woodward, senior applications technician, who had submitted their notice of retirement at the end of this school year. She recommended approval of personnel matters as presented. Ms. Streiff so moved. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion. Following a time for discussion, Board members voted on the motion to approve personnel matters as proposed. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

14. **DEVELOP SPECIFICATIONS AND ADVERTISE FOR BIDS FOR SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT AND 2010 CPF PROJECTS**

Mr. Thrasher recommended that the Board authorize the Assistant Comptroller, working with appropriate administrative staff, to develop specifications and advertise for bids for instructional supplies and equipment, janitorial and paper supplies, furniture, buses, maintenance vehicles and equipment, fuel oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, and all major maintenance projects included in the 2010 Capital Projects Fund Plan as proposed. Ms. Streiff so moved. Ms. Merriam seconded the motion. Following a time for discussion, Board members voted on the motion. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

15. **FOR DISCUSSION: First Reading: Proposed Policy 9505 – Charter Schools**

Dr. Coopman said Charter School legislation was proposed in 2000 and school systems had an opportunity to adopt policy regarding how they would relate to Charter School proposals in their district. He discovered that we did not have such a policy and thought it would be a good idea for the Board to be able to control the review of Charter School applications and approve or not approve them within the boundaries of the school system. Following a time for Board discussion, Dr. Butler said this policy will come back to the Board for action at the next meeting (January 19).d

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

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

Dr. Sabo-Skelton thanked Ms. Peterson for her work with the Foundation and commented on the success of the New Year's Eve gala. She said it gave her a chance to visit with people from the community and they understand our budget dilemma. She said she is pleased that Dr. Coopman will put out the word on our website and that *The Herald-Times* will advertise because want people to be involved. She said her

worry is for other school corporations throughout the state and children who will be suffering in a community that is not so supportive.

Ms. Wanzer said she thinks education occurs and could be regained but she is concerned what might be lost for a year or two throughout the state and cannot be regained. She said there is no use to complain in that the state chose a path but she hopes that in the future new and innovative ways will be found for cost-cutting. She said we have a good school corporation and wonderful community so perhaps we can be leaders in finding new ways to cut.

Ms. Merriam said she lives in the northwest corner of Monroe County and Senator Bray represents that area. She received an annual survey regarding support for property tax cap to which she responded, 'no – you are killing public education.' She said she cringes when she thinks about what will happen to pupil-teacher ratios. Responding to some 'rumors' that she has heard in the community, she said the Project School never attempted to collaborate with MCCSC. She said teachers need to know the truth.

Mr. Muehling said he has gained about the cost of a large coffee because of property tax cuts. He voiced concern that this (property tax caps) could become a part of the constitution for future generations to address.

Ms. Streiff said many people have told her that they did not see much difference at all in their property tax. She said we are suffering the consequences for so little change in property tax. She thinks about the year or two of students beginning to read and beginning concepts of numbers and learning English and what they will lose in large classes. She hopes we have the possibility of the Legislature allowing us to spend other money. She asked where the Governor thinks people will come from to run nursing homes, etc. in the future – they will be coming from public schools.

Dr. Butler said there are lots of states that have 'count days' twice a year; she hopes our Legislature will consider two count days during the year to make funding more equitable.

18. ADJOURNMENT

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

Jeannine Butler, President

Valerie Merriam, Vice President

Victoria I. Streiff, Secretary

Keith Klein, Assistant Secretary

Jim Muehling, Member

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

Susan P. Wanzer, Member