

**MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION**  
**BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES**  
**Special Meeting, February 19, 2010**

**MINUTES**

The Board of School Trustees of the Monroe County Community School Corporation met in a special meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, February 19, 2009, in the Auditorium at Bloomington High School North, 3901 North Kinser Pike, 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:

John T. Coopman	Superintendent
Tim Thrasher	Comptroller
Peggy Chambers	Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources & Personnel
Janet Tupper	Administrative Assistant
Andy Graham	Reporter, <i>The Herald-Times</i>

In addition to the above, 351 citizens 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 6:00 p.m.

2. **EXPENDITURE REDUCTIONS**

Dr. Butler explained that the only item on the agenda for this special meeting was to take action on expenditure reductions. She called for a motion on expenditure reductions as proposed (a copy of the proposal, proposal by category and summary is attached to and made a part of the minutes of this meeting). Mr. Muehling so moved. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion.

Dr. Coopman noted that statute requires that the school system budget is balanced by the end of December 2010. Therefore, expenditures must be reduced appropriately to balance the budget. He referred to a detailed description of expenditures proposed for reduction to comply with Legislative mandate. (A copy of the complete proposal is attached to and made a part of the record for this meeting.) Dr. Coopman read a summary of the recommendations:

		<b>General</b>	<b>General</b>
<b>Area - Expenditures</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS	-663,518	-212,128	-663,518
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION	-436,730	-349,378	-436,730
ECA STIPENDS	-50,000	-15,385	-50,000
ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS (INCLUDING MEDIA SPECIALISTS)	-2,027,000	-513,789	-1,715,460
MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS (INCLUDING MEDIA SPECIALISTS)	-1,055,080	-324,639	-1,055,080

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS	-1,212,980	-377,263	-1,190,920
SYSTEM-WIDE, ALL LEVELS	-142,400	-137,400	-142,400
MAINTENANCE	-417,700	-395,060	-417,700
SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS--NET OF REIMBURSEMENT	-128,450	-128,450	-128,450
TECHNOLOGY REDUCTIONS AND SHIFTS	-90,000	-88,300	-90,000
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION	928,450	533,910	371,140
UTILITIES	-483,000	-293,337	-483,000
TOTALS	-5,778,408	-2,301,219	-6,002,118
<b>Note:</b> Savings resulting from the retirement incentive program are not shown because we do not know if a sufficient number of retirement notification letters will be received to justify proceeding with the program.			

Dr. Butler explained the procedure for the meeting. She said the Board had received more than 500 e-mail messages and apologized that she had not had time to respond to all but said she had read them and had read comments submitted on the website. She requested that those who spoke at the February 16 meeting and/or sent e-mails allow others to talk at this meeting. Hearing no comments from Board Members, Dr. Butler said as per Board Bylaws, this would not be a question and answer period but a time for the Board to receive comments from the public. She opened the meeting for comments from the public. [\* = name of speaker was not understood]

- Keith Chaffin said he worked in the teaching profession for 35 years and is an assistant professor at Indiana University. He said he travels around the state supervising teachers and he sees a lot of action at schools and the government mandates are doing things contrary to good education. He shared some examples, such as reducing elementary PE because it is good for academics but talking about childhood obesity and schools are concerned about test scores but now will increase class size which will compromise test scores. He said he does not believe this Board in conjunction with the community has made a concerted effort to look at all the possibilities. He said you need to re-think or not vote for this proposal.
- Chuck Holloway, Aurora principal, said since the February 16 meeting they now have information with dollar figures that he could share with the Board, noting that copies were at each Board member's place. He said the proposal includes an alternative school funding that may help the Board decide to take Aurora off the list.
- Dr. Butler said if there is funding that allows the Board to balance the budget in 2010 and look at programs, anything can be brought back. She explained that the Board is under the gun because of notification of staff but if the state should say it made a mistake, the Board can come back and determine where to use money to benefit students. She reiterated that the Board is required to make cuts at this time but extra money will allow the Board to reconsider.
- Judith Chadwick, Fairview librarian, said she has over 30 years in education, most of it as a teacher. She said she teaches in her classroom, which happens to be the library. She noted that they moved here three years ago; however, she will not go back to the classroom but will put her passion into helping children in another way.
- Laura Harding, parent of daughter at Aurora, said her daughter does not fit in at the typical school whereas Aurora is an open arms school that accepts all students. She said the goal is for no child to be left behind and that includes Aurora students.
- Kayla Hawkins, student in the strings program, said she began strings in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and it means

the world to her. She said her parents could not afford private lessons and in this program she was able to learn to play a wonderful instrument. She said if the elementary strings program is taken away we will not have the amazing high school program.

- Connie Harden said her daughter is a student at BHS North and she started strings in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She believes that her daughter would not have started in high school. She asked the Board to not take away the pride these students have in their program; they are a family from all schools. She said if they do not start young, they will be at a disadvantage. She said that she could not have afforded to give her daughter private lessons.
- \* - A BHS North student said if the elementary strings program is taken away it will hurt the entire program.
- Ashley, an Aurora 9<sup>th</sup> grader, said she spoke on Tuesday but shared flyers with Board members.
- \* - A student said when she moved to Bloomington she found a family with the strings program that changed her life. She said many people need a support system they can rely on and you cannot start an instrument in high school.
- Melissa Weaver has a daughter at Aurora and said she spoke on Tuesday but just wants to ask what about students who will not graduate because Aurora is closed.
- \* - A parent's son started playing the viola in 5<sup>th</sup> grade; starting two years later in middle school or high school would have been too late.
- \* - An Aurora student said she may not have graduated without Aurora; she shared a petition with over 1,000 signatures in favor of keeping Aurora open.
- Jessica Baxter said she is a teacher in the strings program and there is no substitute for the elementary strings experience; students may participate regardless of money. She said it gives them confidence and something to be proud of and we cannot put a dollar amount on it.
- \* - A parent volunteer in an elementary library said the librarian knows immediately the books that students would like to read. She said a friend in education recalls something similar done in the 1980s and it took a long time to get back to where we are. She asked that cuts be reconsidered.
- Laura Hall, Templeton library specialist said she was glad to hear these programs will be reduced and not eliminated. She noted that librarians with more experience will 'bump' less experienced classroom teachers so the savings will not be as much. She asked that the program not be eliminated.
- Robert Killion said he graduated from Aurora in 2003, went to the Army and has served in Iraq and Afghanistan to protect this community. He understood the goal is that no student is left behind but said these students will be left behind because a GED will not work for a career, even in the Army. He said you are abandoning these students; going to BHS North or BHS South will not work. He noted that these students volunteer their time for community service. He said Aurora started with four students in a house and now there are 80 students in their own building.
- Ross Grimes thanked Dr. Coopman for spending two hours today meeting with PTO presidents. He said it was a great meeting and they will continue doing that as a means of communication.

He said it was noted by Dr. Butler that nothing will be set in stone and if other funding sources become available programs will be returned. He said he would like to have a commitment to put money from other funding sources back in the budget and not in the cash reserve. He asked what we can do so that we do not cut programs and suggested the answer is to get involved with the state government. He said people are concerned about construction and there is legislation that will allow shifting funds to the General Fund.

- Duane Smith said taxes are going up and services are going down. He said his daughter attends Aurora and he is in shock. He said he called a friend and learned there are some 290 supervisors over school systems in Indiana at about \$250,000 each and there are other places to look for money than cutting curriculum. He said we need to go to Indianapolis instead of making cuts.
- Leslie Collins said she appreciates the Board's position and realizes there are things that have to be cut. She said the strings program is the only program she stayed with during her high school career. She said for children to learn a foreign language or a string instrument is actually making their brain work on both sides. She said they are learning to read and learning coordination by playing an instrument. She said in this number brain society they need to know this is something they can take with them the rest of their lives. She watched three children learn a foreign language in about three months and it took her five years and they are also schooled in the universal language of music.
- Dawn Storm said her daughter graduated from Aurora and she has a child at BHS North now. She noted that we have many learning styles and it is important to be creative in what we do. She said to her this is a lack of imagination instead of a lack of funding. She said as a community we deserve to do the best we can for our children.
- \* - A student said he has been playing the violin for six years and he spends about two hours every day on it. He said music means a lot to him and to others; it can help people feel better – it is another language. He said when he is older he does not plan to be a music major but he plans to play for the rest of his life. He said he has been studying ways to use frequencies to help people and he plans to be a doctor. He further explained the connection between music and his career choice and said if you cut elementary strings we will lose our family and no one wants that.
- \* - An 8<sup>th</sup> grader said she does not want the elementary strings program eliminated.
- \* - Another student said she started playing the violin in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and would not have had money for private lessons. She said she spent four months in the hospital and music saved her life.
- Carlene Quinn said she did not realize that cutting the strings program would save only \$20,000, noting that there are 170 kids in the elementary strings program. She asked what other sport or activity served that many children for the same amount of money. She said she would like for cuts to be in every area. She suggested that the first cuts be in travel, administration and athletics.
- \* - An MCCSC alumna said because of her experiences in schools she became an educator. She said children love going to libraries; it is a sanctuary just like Aurora is a sanctuary and the elementary strings program is a sanctuary, and music has a wonderful impact on students and gets their brains working and thinking. She said she has friends who are moving out of Bloomington and/or choosing private schools and if these cuts are made you will not be able to get them back.

- \* - A parent of children who graduated from BHS North and were in the strings program recalled very special concerts that filled the gym. She said the grads play and the young students decide to participate in the high school strings program. She also expressed a desire to keep librarians.
- \* - A BHS North student said she loves her school and she is concerned about teachers being cut. She said she feels at home here and they are in pain because teachers and everyone here cares about students.
- Ellen McGlocklin, parent of daughter who was at BHS North, said something went wrong and she transferred to Aurora and she is about to graduate from college now. She said her daughter's long term goal is to establish an Aurora High School in the hills of Tennessee where she now teaches. She said another of her daughters has ADD and she ended up in the strings program in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and her love of music carried her and she is now a strings specialist in Kansas. She said she could not say enough about these special programs for at-risk children. She asked without these programs where would our kids be today and tomorrow.
- MCCSC student Autumn McMullin said she remembers hearing strings students playing and never thought she would have a chance to learn an instrument. She said it allows students to meet others; she explained the progression of student progress and travel opportunities, including to France. She said in France many did not understand English but they understood their music. She said to eliminate the elementary program would eliminate many in the high school program.
- Joann Parker, parent of child at Fairview, related how her child who is dyslexic was told at a young age she would never go to regular school but they moved and she was soon put into the program for gifted-talented students. She said it is so important to keep schools like Aurora; she was present to support Aurora and special programs.
- Linda Scott, Jackson Creek Middle School, asked the Board to consider putting together a referendum. She said she knows the Board does not want to do it quickly and to do it wrong but thinks it is important to do it while emotions are high.
- \* - An Indiana University School of Education student and future teacher said one thing she is learning is that education is not a 'one size fits all' and the goal is to empower students and find another way. She said Aurora is another way to reach these goals and asked that the Board please keep these options available.
- \* - A student originally from Louisiana said he thought when he came here it would be better schools but now he is not too sure because of these cuts.
- \* - An individual who teaches at the School of Education and works with Aurora students every Wednesday said she thinks it is obvious that Aurora is working really well. She said students are valued and if the school is folded into another school the students will face the very reason they are not in those schools.
- Anne Kibbler voiced support for the elementary strings program and read a paragraph from a document on the MCCSC website which had also been published in *The Herald-Times*. She noted that citizens have instructed the Board to be their voices. She asked the Board to not lower our expectations but to let wisdom of sound practices prevail. She asked the Board to please consider what they said in October and think about facts that students deserve the best pathway to success.

- Rebecca, an elementary student, asked the Board to please not cut librarians.
- \* - A young lady said a time in her career she wanted to be a teacher but she realizes she can work one-half a year and make as much as a nurse. She said what she was hearing was dedication of this community to continue the level of education that our children deserve. She said we are not competitive with the European education system and we cannot continue to cut programs. She said there was a lot of dedication in this room and urged that we find a way to raise money.
- \* - A parent of children in the strings program pointed out that music helps with math and other classes and it does make a difference. She said in addition, Ms. (Jane) Gouker teaches discipline. She said she is happy with the New Tech program and she knows it is grant based. She said when funding runs out she suggests that it moves into BHS North or BHS South and move Aurora and the at-risk programs to that facility.
- Melinda Seader said they have a business and with the economic downturn they had to sharpen their pencils. She said she is also a volunteer and it is wonderful that the district wants to conserve energy in our schools. She agreed there is a connection between children learning in school and there is a connection when we are giving away money because the staff makes an effort to conserve energy. She said they offered to volunteer to help this district reach energy conservation.
- Kathy Fox, Jackson Creek teacher and parent of strings student, said she knows Aurora and the strings program are extremely successful. She said cutting elementary strings will affect middle school and high school programs and she knows the Board did not choose this. She said as a community we need to bond together to make change. She asked the Board to use the community. She said she appreciates the media specialist even more as a teacher and their librarian runs a reading program during lunch hours for teachers and for their children. She said you have teachers and librarians ready to help – make us a part of that process.
- \* - A student said she looked up to strings students and could not wait to be a 5<sup>th</sup> grader. She said she appreciates and loves her violin. She said she came from a poor family and would not have an opportunity if she had not started in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She asked the Board to please reconsider cutting this program.
- Kathy Pratt, BHS North Cougars for Better Education, she when she heard about budget cuts she thought it would not affect her last son who is still in North. However, she said all of us have a responsibility to give back to the students in the future. She agreed there had not been a lot of creativity in putting together these cuts. She said we are all upset but the problem is if you vote on these cuts and people are RIF'd they cannot assume that money will suddenly appear and we are possibly going to lose these people. She said the PTO presidents were pleased to meet with the Superintendent and they plan to get information out to parents and get the funding formula changed. She said there is a need to be more creative in coming up with solutions.
- Lisa Hinkle, Summit Elementary, said after the two-hour meeting this morning (with the Superintendent and PTO presidents) she feels strongly that no research was conducted regarding where and when cuts were made. She said she learned from the Assistant Superintendent that the decision could be put off for a week or two; she added that more research is needed.
- Libby Jenson said she had money for her children to have private music lessons but many do not. She said she has always been proud of this school system because we wanted to have Aurora and the elementary strings program. She said if the Board wants a referendum, the vote on this budget

should be delayed and make cuts across the board, including football and other sports. She thinks that more will vote for a referendum because they care about sports.

- Duane Busick said he talked to (former Superintendent) Harmon Baldwin today and he said if we did not start with administrative cuts it would be bombarded. He said he knows this has been a stressful week but wanted to point out that elementary librarians are the equalizers for kids who do not have technology at home. He said affluent families can assure private lessons but cutting the elementary strings program is hurting poor kids. He asked the Board to vote no and to get the community involved and behind the effort. He said Mayor Kruzan said there would be a better opportunity to pass a referendum in May; he asked that everybody is a part of the decision.
- \* - A parent and 2001 BHS North grad said she had wonderful teachers who were caring. She said her husband was laid off this year and it was difficult for them to stay in Bloomington but they wanted their child to have education opportunities that she had. She said she is disheartened to find programs that will be gone and what will be cut next year. She said she knows Board member positions are tough but asked them to please look at this again.
- \* - A parent of two children in MCCSC who works at Indiana University noted that several people said Board members need to get the community behind them. He said if at all possible to delay the vote he encouraged the Board to do so and explore other options. He voiced support for Aurora and the strings program and said he would endorse a referendum. He said he would also like to see media specialists retained. He said there will be cuts but he hopes everyone will turn their passion in with them instead of against them as they make their decisions.
- \* - An Aurora parent said at one time her daughter would not graduate. She asked the Board to consider another option.
- Evan said he attended the Youth Outreach program and got to know teachers really well. He said he would like to see other kids go to this program and get better grades.
- \* - A citizen said the strings program gives children a bridge to the next school. She said it is really important during this age that children attain positive identity and the strings program helps with other developments.
- Michelle Martin Colman said she recruits volunteer tutors over the age of 55 and currently 65 are volunteering in the school system and help with reading. She voiced dismay at the likelihood of losing teachers and larger classes with no small school available. She said one likelihood is that more students will seek to self-medicate and physical and emotional abuse. She said the Healthy Schools Coordinator has consistently written grants and participated in efforts to affect health and well being of children. She asked that the Board not eliminate that position.
- Austin Williams said to move Aurora students to BHS North or BHS South will defeat the goals of that school. He asked for more time to obtain funds to keep Aurora open.
- The Librarian at Marlin said she was present to plead for their students. She said it is amazing that the Board would consider eliminating school librarians and enumerated the various roles that Librarians fill in the schools. She asked that the cuts be spread out over all areas of the budget.
- \* - A parent and member of the Cougars for Better Education said she hoped the Board would vote no and wait longer to do more research before making cuts. She asked that academics be made a priority. She said teachers who are relatively new to MCCSC are teachers we want to

nurture and they are energetic and passionate people. She said she would write to the Governor and Legislators and tell them they have overdone property tax cuts and that funding for schools is important. She learned that a referendum will be tax neutral; we would not be asking people for more money but would be asking for more money in the General Fund and less in other funds. She believes that a referendum would have a better chance of passing if people understood that.

- John Jeffries, BHS South teacher, said he had two step-sons graduate from Aurora and they are accomplished young men. He found that music teaches more cognitively in that they have to use the whole brain. He said he knows the Board is doing the best it can but the perception is that it is easy to go after people disenfranchised and not go after the high school schedules. He said he does not think that is true but he wanted to share that perception with the Board.
- \* - A parent of elementary-age children and I.U. faculty member wants to share with colleagues how to support schools. He appreciates what the Board is doing and said we can act at the local level to resist state level decisions.
- Amy Gertsman, Monroe County Auditor, encouraged those present to contact Legislators to let them know that the funding formula is a terrible mistake.
- \* - A social worker, citizen and intern in the Department of Child Services said Aurora and the strings programs provide a feeling of families and she is worried that is being taken away.
- Kris McGlaun, Jackson Creek media specialist, read her projection of what her school will be like in September 2010 without the media specialist.
- \* - A parent said she is still working to save these programs but she understands that to vote yes means the Board will be meeting requirements for balancing the budget. She said she wants to save programs through the channels suggested – with Legislators via letters – supporting the transfer of money from the Capital Projects Fund to the General Fund. She thanked Ms. Merriam, Dr. Coopman and Ms. Chambers for explaining the way it works. She said she is working with PTO presidents to educate our public.
- Laurel Adams, Binford/Rogers PTO, said the Board will have to make a decision but she does not think the Board has to make all the cuts at the elementary and middle school levels. She said a ‘no’ vote does not mean there will be no cuts but that there would be a review of where cuts are being made. She thinks cuts should be made across the board.
- \* - A parent said discipline must be taught when children are young and music is discipline. She asked the Board to please pay attention to those who want to save the strings program.
- Lindsay Smith, Aurora student, said she did not want to go to Aurora but went because her parents insisted. She said the first day she was amazed at the change; these people saw something in her and that meant so much to her. She said she is supposed to come back next year to finish her credits; she was scared to think about her future but now she has plans to go to college. She said Aurora taught her important life skills, including never give up.
- \* - A BHS North student said we are united in cause and that makes a difference. He said in times of crisis MCCSC must endure problems together. He said people suggested delay voting but what will be solved except to have additional meetings. He said united we stand and divided we fall and together we bring this meeting to an end.

- \* - An Aurora parent agreed that we need to come together as one with creative solutions. She said Aurora is the only place some kids fit in and asked where they will go if the school is closed.
- Cheryl Maxwell, art teacher at Grandview, said she wished we would have an opportunity to help with energy savings.
- \* - A student agreed that we are in this together and all MCCSC is a family. He said we need to find a way together to find out what we can do to help each other. He said he did not know about Aurora but sees that it is extremely important to the students and the orchestra means much to those students. He said we need to work together to find a way to help everyone here.
- \* - A parent said he spoke on Tuesday and suggested that we all recognize there is a problem. He said the Board encouraged taking the fight to Indianapolis but said we have an opportunity to solve the problem in Monroe County. He encouraged the Board to get the referendum on the May ballot in order to use the energy already here. He acknowledged there may be good reasons for waiting but hoped the Board would use this forum to explain. He said he hopes the Board will consider an alternative proposal; simply saying don't make cuts will not solve the problem. He suggested across-the-board cuts rather than targeting certain programs.
- Donyel Byrd, social worker for Aurora, said she knows the Board cares about kids but the theme is that proposed cuts affect the most at-risk students, those who have the least ability to get their needs met in other ways. She encouraged the Board to look at cuts and the unintended consequences it will cause.
- Jenny Stevens said our school system is awesome and if the Board must vote at this meeting she asked if a task force could be formed to try to raise money right away. She believes it is critical to put the referendum on the ballot but if it fails we cannot ask for it for another year and one-half. She said we need to put it before the community and we need to make sure the (teachers) union is in agreement. She said we also need the support of the Chamber and businesses and we need the politicians behind us. She said we need to give positive statements to our community about what we are going to do. She reiterated that we need a task force set up to bring in more money to the school system.
- \* - A parent mentioned that some things worked in Philadelphia when they faced similar problems, including businesses paying \$10.00 per person employed. He said that might be more palatable than a direct tax increase. He said he had a job as a teen lifeguard in middle school during the summer on Friday nights and that brought in some money; he thought that might help with the cost of the Batchelor swimming pool.
- \* - A student urged the Board to do whatever needed to raise money and encouraged Board members to do what they can to keep programs going.

There were no additional comments from the public.

Dr. Coopman expressed appreciation for those who attended and those who shared comments. He said he appreciated the passion he heard for programs they support. He assured that none of this has been entered into lightly but a great deal of thought was given in the short period of time that a number of decisions had to be made to balance the budget. He said Dr. Butler mentioned that if a revenue source can be identified to restore programs, we will most heartedly do so as soon as we can. He said it is our intention to be involved with a blue ribbon task force with broad based community and school support. He said the intention is to explore with the community what they value and their priorities in relation to providing

curriculum and ECA opportunities. Dr. Coopman explained that this is not only a problem in the MCCSC but across the state and nation. He said the task force will establish a road map of where to go next. He said it is not over yet – he expects the same situation in 2011 and 2012 with a different audience. He said you need to continue to make your voices heard; it is the only way to turn it around. He said in the meantime school boards have statutory obligations and that is unfortunate. He reiterated that he is not happy about any of it and will do as much as we can.

Dr. Coopman said we are going to try to have a program in place for Aurora but in a different place. He said there appears to be a misconception of moving these students back to the high schools but he expects to have a program they will call their own. He said they plan to work with Chuck Holloway to create a program we can afford. He said the same is true with relationship to other programs; although we may have to use volunteers, peer tutors, etc. we do want to make a way to continue programs. Regarding the referendum, Dr. Coopman said this problem has come upon us like a freight train and we cannot react in a ‘knee jerk’ manner. He said a successful referendum takes planning and time and to put the referendum on the ballot this May would be a mistake because the constituent base is not here tonight. He said we need to be concerned about the 70% or so that do not have children in school and we want to take time to be successful.

Dr. Sabo-Skelton said in last year’s election voters in Indiana voted for the Governor and a majority of Legislators who have cut aid to public schools. She said she is a product of public schools and that is where she picked up her violin. She said she knows we have to fight this; there are people saying that public schools are done and we cannot let that happen. She thanked citizens for their e-mails and for attending this meeting. She said if they do not have their comments in text, they should write it down and send it to the Governor’s office. She said the Legislature is talking about bills to help schools and we have to make a commitment. She said nothing is set in stone and urged citizens to keep the fight going.

Ms. Wanzer said it is clear to her that we all want the same thing – quality education without cutting anything and that is not possible. She said she is sorry that public education may never be the same and transferring school funding from property tax which is more predictable left us with no choice and we must make cuts. She said people who benefit from the property tax cut are people with the highest value homes. She heard those present say our kids deserve better and she agreed. She said Governor Daniels planned to privatize education. Ms. Wanzer said no cut is good and one cut is too many but we must cut and she feels public education may never be the same. She said this is about how we make cuts that we have been forced to make. She said nine years ago she wanted to be involved to make a difference by developing programs – not cutting. She said she is even more distressed that greater cuts will have to be made next year and the next. She said we need to move forward and work together as she thanked those present for their passion and support of public education.

Ms. Merriam said she was very impressed with students who spoke tonight. She said she hopes a fund will be established for schools. She noted that she said please do not cut art and music; that is our community and she hopes we can raise money to restore strings. She believes we need to write to education communities and find out names of other school boards. She said do not think you cannot change a vote, but it will take a concerted effort. She said she realizes the passion about media specialists and she knows media specialists are important but noted that parents are the first teachers of our children. She explained that the Board must vote on expenditure reductions because we have contractual deadlines regarding the time we have to notify teachers.

Mr. Klein said tonight is the beginning and in his years of experience he has learned there is nothing more out of the news than yesterday’s news. He said some people will think it is over and their passion is gone. He agreed that we must go after a referendum and said we will need your help in keeping the story in the news and that we include other people who have a stake in this. He said the irony is that all have stakes,

including the 70% of people who do not have kids in school. Mr. Klein mentioned that Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile barrier and then many others did the same thing. He said until one did it people thought it could not be done. He said we need you to help us get the word out that it can be done. He noted that a basketball coach does not want people who could win; he wants people who will prepare to win. He said he taught junior-senior high school and now is a department chair at Ivy Tech so he is a long time supporter of education. He said we need for you to make a commitment to make this happen for all constituents and this Board is committed to helping.

Mr. Muehling thanked visitors and participants in the meeting; he thanked Mr. Killion for his service and comments. He apologized for not responding to all e-mails but said he had read them. He said we know how we got here and now need to resolve it and that can only happen if we work together. He said we have a problem and have no choice but to balance the budget in a fund that is 92% personnel. He said if there is a change in income or expense side, then we will review and prioritize cuts. He noted that Matt Pierce said Legislators are followers and they will do what you tell them to do; they will not listen to Boards but they will listen to voters and moms and dads and he encouraged them to write to encourage legislators to allow us to transfer funds.

Ms. Streiff said it is crucial to fix this problem through the Legislature and Governor and she urged citizens to write letters – even if it is handwritten, which is more impressive and takes more work – because letters make a difference. She said the goal was to minimize the number of children in our classrooms and in order to not make it worse we tried to make across-the-board cuts, although that is not how it feels when the program you want is on the chopping block. She said she hopes we will all raise money and write letters.

Dr. Butler agreed with Board member comments and expressed appreciation for those who attended the meetings held this week. She said on Wednesday (at the forum sponsored by the MCCS Foundation) we talked about what we can do in the future. She also thanked those who wrote e-mails and mentioned that she ran out of time answering them. She said tonight we heard a lot of different comments and many people do not want us to cut anything and some want certain things but not others and we do not want to cut anything. She said the public school system that we knew and know now she hopes will come back but for the next few years it will not be the same.

Dr. Butler recalled that in 1992 Governor Daniels made a statement that public schools are failures and we need to do away with them; she said he is trying to do that. She explained that in September we thought we were \$2 million down; in December we were told we would be cut 2.7% and in January we learned that it was 4.55 % and that is the amount we have to cut to balance the budget. She noted that it has been said that a referendum is tax neutral in that you would have less money in other accounts. She said that sounds good now but we need transportation, money for bus replacement, etc. She said if we do a referendum with that plan we will do it at the expense of other needs. Dr. Butler said Matt Pierce encouraged us to write letters and let Legislators know what you want. She said those who made comments about high schools should know that the high schools will lose ten teachers each so there will be cuts across the board.

Noting that this is a very hard working Board, Dr. Butler said we are here because we believe in public schools and we believe our kids deserve a public education. She said public schools must have done something right but you have to fight for them now. She suggested that everyone help by staying active and sending letters and when Dr. Coopman puts together a committee, volunteer and stay active. She said this is not something that any of us are pleased about.

Hearing no additional comments, Board members voted on the motion to approve expenditure reductions as proposed. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

3. **INFORMATION, PROPOSALS OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** – There was no response to Dr. Butler’s invitation for public comments.
4. **COMMITTEE REPORTS AND PROPOSALS FROM BOARD MEMBERS** – There were no reports or proposals from Board members.
5. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Butler declared the meeting to be adjourned at 9:25 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, Assistant Secretary

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Jim Muehling, Member

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Lois Sabo-Skelton, Member

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Susan P. Wanzer, Member