The Board of School Trustees of the Monroe County Community School Corporation met in a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23, 2010, in the Large Group Room at Bloomington High School South, 1965 S. 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:
- John 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
- Andy Graham Reporter, The Herald-Times

In addition to the above, 31 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 7:00 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 Terri Whiteman who was honored for her services as a Title I teacher at Arlington Heights Elementary School. She was nominated by her principal Shelley Vitols in conjunction with the Human Resources Department. Bev Smith, Director of School and Community Services, said starting with MCCSC in 1987 Terri has been an asset to the school corporation, Title I and the Arlington community. She said she had a chance to witness Terri in action during Read for the Record Day at Arlington and noted that she has an enchanting way of making words come to life for children. Explaining some of the ways that Terri interacted with guest readers, Ms. Smith said she knew in an instant that she cared for students and wanted them to have the best literacy experiences possible. She noted she has come to learn that this is just an example of how she interacts with students every day. Ms. Vitols said Terri is an outstanding educator who goes above and beyond her duties as a teacher to support students, teachers and families. She said she offers personal time and extra resources to struggling students and their families. Deb Prenkert, Grant Coordinator who works with Title I teachers, said she is proud that Arlington respects Ms. Whiteman’s hard work and complimented her for her leadership in the Title I lab at Arlington. She said she has seen Terri work endlessly on school improvement plans and we are truly fortunate to have such a wonderful teacher. Board members commended and thanked Ms. Whiteman for the joy and energy that she brings to her profession as a literacy teacher and for her commitment to our students.
3. **PUBLIC DIALOGUE**

Duane Busick shared information about a “Support Our Schools” citizen group that advocates placing a referendum on the November ballot to increase funding for schools. Acknowledging that the Board is not responsible for the current funding crisis, Mr. Busick said the Board is not alone in solving this problem because citizens can and will assist in the effort to adequately fund schools. He said the citizen group realizes that the 2010 budget cuts will be followed by more cuts in 2011 and then even more in 2012. He believes a referendum would make funds available in 2011 thereby avoiding some additional cuts the next year. Mr. Busick invited Board members and the public to a rally on Saturday, April 10 on the steps of City Hall following the end of the Farmers’ Market. He said the rally will be a time to celebrate breaking of the end of the funding crisis and there will be activities for children of all ages, including a family parade down the B-Line Trail. He said working together we can have schools this community expects.

Randy Tackett, BHS South custodian and President of AFSCME Local 3995, said he is a 17-year employee of MCCSC and wanted to talk about the possible outsourcing of custodians. He explained that in addition to cleaning, custodians do many chores at the schools such as plowing snow; salting sidewalks; watching out for children to make sure they are safe; picking up trash; mowing grass; helping with lunchroom duty; and working with administrators, teachers and everybody to make sure buildings are kept clean and other things are addressed. He said all of our custodians are concerned about what the future will bring. He said please help us look into this situation; they want to negotiate a contract but everything is on hold for now. Mr. Tackett said this corporation means a lot to him and he loves his school.

Janet Franks said she has been a school bus driver for 23.5 years, currently driving a bus for special needs students. She relayed concerns about outsourcing custodians shared with her by a friend who works at Child Protection Services. She said the custodians have a good relationship with students and both she and her friend have fears about bringing in new people. She said she also feels the same way about the good relationships that students have with cooks, administrators and teachers. She suggested that we all work together to keep MCCSC from ‘going down the hill.’ Ms. Franks said she loves her job and added a personal note about how the custodian encouraged her when she was an elementary student. She said everybody means a lot to our children and she believes that outsourcing is not the answer.

Gina Arthur, head cook at Grandview and MCCSC employee for 13 years, suggested that we will suffer a loss if we privatize the schools. She said our children will be subject to employees who are underpaid and overworked and who may not have the best background checks now required. She also voiced concern for the lack of teamwork that may result from outsourcing.

Kelsey Walsh, BHS North graduate, spoke on behalf of libraries in the schools. She said people are really disappointed about the loss of trained librarians. She said parent volunteers can help but it is not the same. She asked the Board to keep as many librarians as possible, noting that they inspire student creativity.

Jerry Jochim, recently retired from the MCCSC maintenance department, said he is opposed to the move to contract custodial services. He believes they will clean the buildings but noted that our custodians clean and care for the buildings. He mentioned a custodian who was going to retire but when told she would not be replaced she chose to continue working. He also suspects that contracted custodians would only clean within the building and he wondered who will help when there are extra events in the evening when everybody relies heavily on our custodial help. He asked who will clean sidewalks and clean up outside the buildings. Mr. Jochim said he realizes there is a maintenance department but said they cannot do all of it. He said if custodial services are contracted and in a year we realize it was a mistake we will
not be able to go back. He mentioned that he also worries about bankrupting the Capital Projects Fund by putting such a large expense in it.

Ross Grimes, University PTO president, said he does not think that anybody wanted to make cuts and suggested we need to get the school system more money. He mentioned that school auditoriums were filled with people for two meetings held a few weeks ago and said we need to keep them active. He said a lot of people in this community do not want their taxes raised and they need to be educated as to why it is important for schools to receive additional funding. He said it is also important not to approve property tax caps; otherwise, we will limit the amount of money schools will have. He said PTO’s in Monroe County will contact others in the state to work on stopping that program. He said school systems have been dealt a horrible hand and we need to stay involved.

Darrell Bosell said he retired from a custodial position at BHS North last June and he loves the school system dearly. He said he worked for a contractor at one time and he agrees with statements others made regarding outsourcing in that he believes they will do only what is in their contract. He said he read that they will keep their current rate of pay but he and others could not make it on the pay the contractor he worked for offered so they were always understaffed. He said we have the best custodians in the state.

Joanna Hahn, parent, said she works in the library every day and when the media specialists leave they will take information with them. She asked what is the plan for training people to take over and how soon will people be hired to take their place. Dr. Coopman said any response would be premature at this time because we are looking at opportunities to restore funding. Ms. Hahn suggested that a couple of librarians be retained to supervise the libraries; she was concerned that people hired in July will not be trained.

Norma Owens, custodian at Unionville for 23 years and AFSCME officer, said they would like to be included when meetings are held with companies that want to contract this service. Dr. Butler indicated that the Board would hold a work session on April 13 [NOTE: this meeting was later changed to April 14] to discuss this issue. She explained that the public may attend work sessions but there is not a time included for public comments. Dr. Butler added that there is some misconception in that the Board is not talking about replacing people; they are talking about replacing the manner in which they are employed.

4. **SCHOOL SHOWCASE: Bloomington High School North**

Principal Jeff Henderson noted that a few months ago BHS North shared with the Board about restructuring efforts at North. He said one outcome of that effort is the establishment of the STAR (Students Taking Academic Responsibility) program. He said incoming freshmen students are identified as being at risk for academic failure and they are included in this program. STAR teacher Angie Cannon shared a glimpse of benefits students receive from this program, including more personal attention and smaller class sizes. She said the STAR teachers work together and they are in constant communication with parents, students, counselors and the principal. Additionally, honor students tutor these students and serve as mentors. Ms. Cannon said STAR teachers have office hours and offer their services during prep periods. She reviewed the academic successes that some of the STAR students are experiencing and said she believes all of her students will graduate from high school because of this program. Mr. Henderson explained that many components of the STAR program are based on the professional learning communities’ model. He said they have come to realize that high school students do not fail because they cannot do the work but because they do not have the skills to get the job done. This program helps develop needed skills for student success.

5. **FOR INFORMATION: Art in Our Schools**

In honor of Youth Art Month (March), MCCSC art teachers Sara McQueen and Jan Barnes shared with
the Board examples of student art and talked about the importance of art education. Ms. McQueen said we have to have people who can challenge common thinking and art classes are about higher order thinking skills. She added that we all need creative stimulation. Ms. Barnes said art levels the learning field and enhances basic reading instruction. Student art is currently on display at the John Waldron Arts Center and at Indiana University. Art teachers will have an exhibit in May.

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent J.T. Coopman thanked people for their comments and noted that everybody present is looking out for the best interest of the school system. He added that things are happening in public schools across Indiana and the nation and it is a sad state of affairs for children. He reviewed statistics for the state budget, explaining that we are trying to plan long-term solutions. He said that he and Board members take their charge and responsibility very seriously and they are trying to plan for an even greater funding crisis. He said we must get it (referendum) right because the future of public education is at stake; it takes time and a carefully crafted plan.

Dr. Coopman said this Board is committed to rally this community with the help of those present around the fact that we need to support public education. He said they would like to have a group of people assembled to identify priorities, with the realization that MCCC can afford to do some things within and outside those priorities – possibly a seven-year plan. He explained that a referendum stands for seven years and then you have to do it again. He said the public will also have an opportunity to say what they want but cannot afford and the referendum would include ‘x’ dollars for that reason. He said most school corporations have not had to do an operational referendum but it is important if we expect to survive. He said this Board is making plans for a well-crafted plan with steps to restore funding.

Dr. Coopman announced that on April 5 an expert in the field of referendums will meet with the Superintendent’s Cabinet and leadership team in the morning, then with community representatives and finally with the Board in a work session scheduled for 3:00 p.m. that afternoon. He said there will be community involvement including the Indiana University community. He reiterated that we will go about this in a systematic way; it is a scientific process and a political process.

Noting that in November people will be voting for or against property tax caps, Dr. Coopman questioned the advisability of including on the same ballot a vote for implementing a referendum. He said the Legislature will have a long session next spring and we do not know what they may do in relation to referendums; we may be forced into having a referendum on the November ballot. He re-emphasized that we have to come up with a long-term solution and said through the direction of this Board we will go about this in a very careful manner.

Dr. Coopman confirmed that information was disseminated in relation to the idea of outsourcing some services. He said our intent is that all employees will retain their jobs and they will not lose the level of benefits but may gain benefits in relation to health service. He said it is true that contracted employees cannot pay into PERF (Public Employees Retirement Fund) but that plan stays in place for those already in the plan and they will have another retirement account. He said for whatever reason there is a lot of misinformation but the expectation is that current people will continue to be employed and there is no change in the expectation or level of performance or level of work.

Explaining that this is not business as usual, Dr. Coopman suggested that this is a war and we are trying to keep people employed. He said the premise is not to decrease the level of expectation but to move General Fund dollars. He did not disagree with the comment about over-taxing the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) because we cannot pay the entire contract out of CPF. He said anything can be on the table because 2011 will be bad and 2012 will be a nightmare in school funding. He stressed that we want to have the
right things for our kids.

Dr. Coopman referred to some conversation that 77 teaching positions were cut and as a result of class size ratios that number became 89, really 87, so there are ten positions that may be restored. He said the Governor announced there will be another cut so we have to think in terms of another cut in November and there is the potential for another insurance increase. He said the job of our UniServ Director and MCEA President is to look out for teachers and he respects that they want teacher positions restored, but we have to have a balanced budget. He said we have a bumpy road ahead but we plan to restore positions and programs insofar as we can.

In conjunction with Dr. Sabo-Skelton’s comment and in response to her request, Dr. Coopman said if we do not balance our budget we are in violation of state statute and then the state comes in and determines what they will do to balance the budget; the budget completely leaves the control of the local area.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Butler called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda: (a) donations; (b) ECA expenditures; (c) field trip requests; and (d) Allowance of Claims. Ms. Merriam so moved. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff and Wanzer. Motion carried.

8. CONTRACTS

Mr. Thrasher recommended approval of contracts: (a) City of Bloomington and BHS North for Off Duty Police Officers; (b) Herff Jones and Highland Park for pictures; (c) IU Evaluator for Alcohol Prevention Grant; (d) Monroe Bank—Corporate Authorization; (e) RE Sutton & Associates—Business Associate Agreement; (f) Roberson Consulting Services; (g) Star of America; and (h) Townplace Suites by Marriott. Dr. Sabo-Skelton so moved. Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff and Wanzer. Motion carried.
9. **TABLED CONTRACT: Under Armour, Inc.**

Mr. Muehling moved that the Board reconsider the Under Armour, Inc. contract, which was tabled at the March 9 meeting. Dr. Sabo-Skelton seconded the motion. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff and Wanzer. Motion carried.

Ms. Wanzer moved approval of the contract between BHS South and Under Armour, Inc. Mr. Muehling seconded the motion.

Mr. Muehling noted that although offered to colleges, it is unusual for a company to offer sportswear to a high school team. He noted that there is a logo included on all uniforms and to have them given to us is a plus. He congratulated Coach J.R. Holmes and the BHS South boys’ basketball team for another great year. Mr. Holmes said they do not get any money for wearing the Under Armour uniforms and shoes but it helps the students. He confirmed that every team suits have a logo but this is a wonderful opportunity for kids to get them free. He said in the past they have received shoes from Nike and Adidas but Under Armour is just starting and since no money is involved they thought it was a good offer.

Mr. Klein said his initial concern was that the contract should come to through the administration and Superintendent Coopman made it clear that Mr. Holmes did go to him.

Ms. Merriam said her major concern was Under Armour’s obligation, noting that the agreement specifies all other levels of the high school boys’ basketball program shall purchase Under Armour products. Mr. Holmes said that means junior varsity and varsity. He said he used basketball funds to purchase uniforms for junior varsity – team members did not have to buy them. Ms. Merriam asked what about shoes if they do not fit the athlete. She recalled that happened before with Nike. She said she would like to see some disclaimer that if the product does not fit, the athlete can wear another product. Mr. Holmes said that could be included in the agreement.

Ms. Wazner said her concern was how the contract was executed and that had been cleared up. She said this contract is saving the students and basketball program a lot of money. She said when in a financial crises it is important that we look for ways to finance programs. She said she totally supports this contract, noting that it probably benefits a lot of people.

Dr. Butler said she still has some philosophical concerns in that she believes the company is making a profit by exploiting our students. She added that she thinks our students are honored that Under Armour wants to showcase them but she is also concerned that the company may use team photos for their advertising. Mr. Holmes responded that anyone (news media or others) may take photos at games. Dr. Butler reiterated that she believes we are using BHS South to promote Under Armour. She added that the BHS South team is to be congratulated and we feel proud of their accomplishments, but for philosophical reasons she cannot support this contract.

In response to Dr. Sabo-Skelton’s question, Mr. Holmes said they have not run into negative experiences and the money they save can be used in other ways. He said if the program had to pay for all uniforms and shoes they would not have the money to pay for them. He restated that no money is received but team members received uniforms, shoes and athletic bags. He said in 20+ years he has not had a student who could not wear a particular shoe style but that could be taken care of with a slight change in the agreement. When asked about the value of the gift, Mr. Holmes said it depends on whether the retail cost is calculated. He said for junior varsity uniforms and shoes, he paid about $1,400 for products valued at $5,000. He estimated that every item received would actually cost about $25,000.

Ms. Merriam moved to amend the contract as follows: “3. **Under Armour’s Obligations** - Each Contract
Year, Under Armour shall provide .... In addition, all other levels of the High School’s boy’s basketball program shall purchase Under Armour Products from Under Armour, or an authorized dealer selected by Under Armour, unless said product is not compatible with athlete’s needs. Under Armour shall have sole discretion with respect to the styles and designs of the Under Armour Products provided to the Team.” [Addition in bold type.] Ms. Wanzer seconded the motion. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

One parent responded to an offer for public comment. She said she is the parent of an athlete and said she is in favor of anything you can get that parents do not have to purchase.


On another matter, Mr. Klein said he sees high school t-shirts in stores and a label says the school receives some benefit. He asked if that is true. Mr. Holmes said they received two checks over the last two years from Kroger but had received nothing from Marsh. Jeff Henderson, BHS North principal, said they have received no money. He said he asked our attorney to investigate the situation because the school is not receiving any funds from sale of those products. He agreed this should be pursued with regard to use of logo and sale of products. Ms. Streiff noted that it is one problem if the stores are violating the copyright and another if they are lying to people insofar as indicating a portion of the sale goes to the school and it is not. She would like for this to be pursued with our attorney. Mr. Thrasher said he will follow-up.

10. PERSONNEL REPORT

Mr. Klein moved approval of the Personnel Report as submitted. Ms. Merriam seconded the motion.

Ms. Chambers noted that this report included voluntary reduction-in-force (RIF) leave requests received from six teachers and three resignations. She said these, along with the number of retirees will reduce the number of teachers on the RIF list this year. She noted the retirement of LaDonna Henderson who began her tenure with MCCSC as a custodian at BHS North in 1989. Eighteen months later she transferred to Childs Elementary School and retires from Childs on March 31st with 19 years of service.

Mr. Muehling mentioned that the early retirement incentive we are offering matches the largest amount offered in the state and is more flexible for the retiree and much more beneficial in that they have the ability to use the money for other than health care. Ms. Chambers said that information did come out in discussions with MCEA. She said our package was very attractive to teachers and several retirement notices came in just this afternoon. Although she did not have a completely accurate account, she said 37 to 39 have submitted resignations and our goal was 25.

In response to Ms. Merriam’s question, Ms. Chambers said individuals on voluntary RIF leave are entitled to return; they do maintain their seniority and although there is nothing specific that they will return to the same position that is what we try to do.

There was no further discussion. Aye: Butler, Klein, Merriam, Muehling, Sabo-Skelton, Streiff, Wanzer. Motion carried.

11. FOR INFORMATION: Kindergarten Entrance Requirements – Guidelines 5112(A)

Dr. Coopman reviewed changes in Guidelines 5112(A), Kindergarten Entrance Requirements. He said these changes were made following conversations with principals. He said it was also reviewed by a
kindergarten committee, led by Cameron Rains that studied enrollment and assessment. He said we are trying to put some things in place so that teachers have a good idea about how to modify curriculum based on assessments. Dr. Butler suggested a change in item 3 to conform to other changes. Ms. Tupper will take care of that revision.

12. INFORMATION, PROPOSALS OR COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Sandy Steele, UniServ Director, thanked Tim Thrasher for the comments he made in the newspaper concerning teachers and their dedication. She said this has been a tough few months and it is amazing how a few kind words make a difference. She said many Board members have also expressed appreciation and they are grateful.

Ms. Steele said several weeks ago the Board asked teachers to go to Indianapolis and to write e-mails and letters and they have done that. In addition the ISTA lobbyist has been busy and legislation has been changed. Therefore, they expect this Board and Dr. Coopman to take advantage and to use CPF to transfer funds to use to restore positions. She said the original number of teacher positions to be eliminated was 67 instead of 87. She said she heard Dr. Coopman’s comments about those positions but they are concerned that that could be stated every year.

Ms. Steele said they would like to acknowledge the hundreds of years of experience this school corporation will be losing by the number of teachers retiring. She said they appreciate the offer (early retirement offer) but they realize this will be a tremendous loss while it makes it possible to reduce the number of teachers to be terminated. She noted that Dr. Coopman stated that he wants to preserve custodian positions and that is what they also expect from this Board. She said regarding the referendum needing to be a well-crafted plan, she said they (teachers) must be a part of the process for the referendum from the beginning. She said the community expects that as well.

13. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND PROPOSALS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Muehling said in this difficult time for him personally the point of delivery is the teacher and the kid – everything else is on the table. He said the more we can preserve that and for as long as possible is critical and all else is secondary. He noted that other school systems are closing schools and eliminating transportation. He agreed that other areas are critical, such as maintenance and other areas but the fewer kids we can have in each class the more our students will be successful. He said we have the smallest pupil-teacher ratio of many others and that is great and it is important.

Noting that he worked three years without a pay increase, Mr. Muehling said in addition 10% of people in his building are gone and some had been on the job 25-30 years and it is not easy. He said a referendum will work if all of us work together – it is not a problem that will go away. He said there are going to be greater cuts and we are just trying to have more flexibility. He reiterated that the critical people are our teachers and that classroom ratios should be kept as small as possible.

Ms. Streiff agreed with Mr. Muehling’s comments. She said research shows the way you reach kids is having one adult making a connection; the more adults that have an opportunity to make critical connections with kids the greater opportunity to have successful adults. Her goal is the lowest number of kids in every classroom; noting that everything we do in our schools is important and has value; she wants our goal to be the best school district in Indiana. She said she attended the art show at the Waldron Center and was very impressed with the work of our middle and high school students. She said it is wonderful that we have people who chose to retire or take voluntary RIF leave so that others can be recalled.

Noting she had asked the Superintendent to comment earlier regarding what will happen if we do not have
a balanced budget Dr. Sabo-Skelton said she wanted people to realize what will happen to the school system if we do not balance the budget. She said we have seen that everyone wants to work together and we have an incredible group of people ready to help with a referendum and to volunteer but what happens when they cut us again. She said we are doing this 24/7 because we want to solve this. She said she will not surrender this school system to the state and people need to realize that it can happen and is getting close. She explained that we will have to cut some things until we find some balance; we will have to stay true to each other – we must work together.

Ms. Wanzer noted the idiocy of the referendum process in this state in that it is okay with the state government to have individual referendums and the cost of administrative elections. She said if we did use it at the state level it might make sense. She further noted that it is okay for individual school systems to raise money but not by the state. She said some communities will not have a successful referendum and where is the fairness in that. She is concerned about the message that sends. She assured the teachers association and others present that teachers are the most important component. She thanked Mr. Busick for leading efforts to move forward with a referendum and said the question is when we will have it. Ms. Wanzer commented that many groups were present for this meeting and we have to come together; she acknowledged that we will have some disagreements but stressed that we must be willing to compromise.

Ms. Merriam voiced appreciation for the comments and extended a plea to stay together. She shared some positive reports of student achievement at the State Science Olympiad competition where BHS South came in first and BHS North placed second and both will go to Nationals. She mentioned that two of our middle schools – Tri-North and Jackson Creek – also did well. For the record, she read the names of participants from each school and said both high schools will be accepting donations for the trip to national competition. Ms. Merriam pointed out a wonder picture and article about Highland Park’s 4th grade class in a recent edition of The Herald-Times. She said the connections they are getting are incredible – one is collaboration with the YMCA.

Ms. Merriam mentioned the recent awards ceremony with the Foundation and noted there were quite a few teachers who received grants who will not be here next year. She said we are losing some very creative teachers because of their seniority status in the school system.

On other matters, Ms. Merriam said she read on BHS North’s website that Indiana University will be offering free Swahili language this summer. She said a speaker at the National School Boards Association who helped write No Child Left Behind documents indicated that art and music are being cut and he made a case for keeping them. She agreed and said she will fight for art and music because it works to make the student his/her entire person.

Dr. Butler offered support for comments attributed to Mr. Thrasher in a recent news article and agreed that teachers work hard and they never give up. She said whether with larger class sizes or other cuts, they will do what they have to do to make education for students the best it can be.

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Butler declared the meeting to be adjourned at 9:50 p.m.