

## MINUTES

MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL CALLED BUDGET STUDY SESSION  
APRIL 21, 2009  
4:00 p.m.--Central Administration Building

### ATTENDANCE

Board: Chair Mary Wade, Susan Andrews, Ray Butrum, Butch Campbell, Nancy Duggin, David Hopper, and Nancy Phillips.

Staff: Director Marilyn Mathis, Gary Anderson, Cheryl Harris, Michelle Hummel, Danielle Kaminsky, Crystal Roshon, Priscilla Van Tries, and Lee Wilkerson.

Others: City Staff Attorney Kelley Baker and *Daily News Journal* reporter Scott Broden.

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

#### I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Mary Wade called the budget study session to order at approximately 4:05 p.m.

#### II. REVIEW OF FY'10 GENERAL PURPOSE, FEDERAL, AND ESP BUDGETS

Mrs. Mathis pointed out that some replacement sheets have been provided to the Board for their budget notebook, but the only monetary change was in Title I funds, an increase from \$747,000 to \$828,000. A bus replacement schedule has also been provided.

Mrs. Mathis asked that the board's packet for April 28 be delivered on Friday rather than Wednesday to allow additional time to prepare information for the packet.

Mrs. Mathis briefly reviewed that the budget is status quo reflecting no enrollment increase; therefore, no increase in licensed staff. The budget reflects an approximate \$800,000 increase related to human resources such as steps and degree changes, etc., and \$625,000 increase for the purchase of land. Approximately \$1.7 million has been budgeted from reserves to balance the budget. The system has been advised to spend the ARRA money quickly and wisely. Input from meetings held with principals and staff indicate their desire to spend this money on human resources to help close the achievement gap. Those people hired for this two-year period might possibly be placed in the positions of retirees in the following years. A lot of work must be done to determine how to apply the \$2.7 million in stimulus funds, although, only \$1,056,000 would have flexibility in how it is spent. Title I money must follow strict rules. She appreciates the input from the Board, and they will be kept informed as the plans on how to apply this funding progresses.

Mrs. Duggin asked if the report on the salary comparison of assistant principals with other districts is ready. Mr. Wilkerson provided the Board with the results of the survey of principals and assistant principals as to their duties/responsibilities and also a document titled "Elementary Assistant Principal Salary Comparison." He noted that compensation for assistant principals varies from system to system. In MCS, APs work ten months and receive a \$3,000 supplement. Maryville City schools have an average enrollment of 550 students in their schools and pay, on a

ten-month salary, 5% of the teachers' base (BS/0), or \$1,737.50 with an option to work under extended contract if needed during the summer. Lenoir City has a pay scale for assistant principals of \$5,862 to \$8,207 based on degree and experience for an eleven-month contract. Tullahoma City does not employ assistant principals at the elementary level as they have an average enrollment range of 340-419 students. The Lebanon Special School district pays a supplement of \$8,160 on a ten-month contract. Twelve school districts have not responded to his request, but he did today talk with Rutherford County and they pay a 1.11 factor on where that teacher is in degree and experience on a 220-day contract. There is a wide variety of how APs are compensated. Most systems used the old SACS standard of one AP to 600 students.

In response to Dr. Butrum's question, Mr. Wilkerson stated that he is not aware of any salaries paid to assistant principals from IDEA. Dr. Butrum asked if 30% of the APs salaries could be paid from IDEA to allow the system to hire the other two APs? Mrs. Mathis responded that half the APs' salaries have been transferred from the regular principals' page to special ed in the general purpose budget, but his request would be to transfer it into federal. Dr. Andrews asked if there is extra money in the federal budget. Mrs. Mathis responded that there is extra money right now in the federal budget, the extra stimulus money, but she has not heard principals make that request. She stated that to look at the whole picture, the Board needs to decide what the standard will be. Our smallest school has 340 students; if they are provided an assistant principal, then following that standard, schools with nearly 1,000 students would be entitled to an additional assistant principal or twelve additional positions systemwide. Mrs. Mathis stated that no principal has pleaded to her for an additional assistant principal. Mr. Hopper asked if we are having trouble hiring assistant principals or have we had any complaints from them about their workload. Mr. Wilkerson stated we have had minimal turnover with a number of applicants for those openings. He has not received complaints that the APs are not able to complete their assignments during the school day. Mr. Hopper stated that with an enrollment of 7,200 students and a ratio of 1:340, the system would have to employ 21 assistant principals. Mr. Wilkerson referred to the different staffing standards scenarios handed out to the Board and reviewed these noting that the .5 per school per 170 students would generate 17 assistant principal positions.

Mrs. Duggin stated that the system cannot afford 21 assistant principals nor did she think that is the direction in which the system should go. However, she suggested that perhaps the system could develop a rubric by which to set a standard as she does not think basing it on the number of students in a school is the way to do it. The workload of IEPs should be looked into and the rubric be developed with the help of special ed staff. Also, as Mrs. Mathis said, look at the services provided students (behavior mod, CDC, etc.). Mr. Wilkerson stated that Scales and Northfield house CDC classrooms, and those administrators did respond on the survey that this does require significant responsibilities. Enrollment, special ed, CDC, behavior mod, and IEPs could be considered for a rubric. Dr. Butrum suggested adding the other demographics the system has used in the past when giving extra assistance/aid to schools and look at individual needs. He stated that this has been discussed for the past ten years. Dr. Andrews stated that in the past the Board has used formulas but has also paid attention to the needs of the buildings. Each budget cycle, she has asked what deficiencies or problems do we have that the administration has determined. The Board has discussed this for years, but has not conclusively determined that there is a problem so it has not been addressed. Mrs. Mathis stated that this topic did not come up when discussing stimulus money with the principals at yesterday's principals' staff meeting as principals were more interested in additional classroom teachers. She then asked principals if additional classroom space was a problem would they be interested in having additional licensed teachers to assist other teachers by taking small groups and working with

them to close the achievement gap. However, she stated that if she specifically asked principals if they wanted an additional assistant principal, they would likely say yes. The responses from them that have been included are those made without prompting. Mr. Hopper stated that changing this standard might mean you would have to look at other standards for media specialists, guidance, etc. If we are able to fill and keep personnel in these positions and principals are not complaining, he is not sure this is a significant problem. Mrs. Wade stated that this concern started out as an item that was included on a “wish list.”

Mrs. Phillips asked if the Board would have to approve how the stimulus money will be spent. Mrs. Mathis responded no that it would be spent as other federal funds are spent--the system spends the money and then applies for reimbursement. Mrs. Phillips and Dr. Andrews asked to be kept apprised of the ways the stimulus money would be spent. Dr. Butrum stated that this would set a precedence; that Mrs. Phillips and Dr. Andrews have stated that the Board should not be involved in certain areas and now they want to get involved in something they have never been involved in so if we are going to do it for this then we need to consider doing it for other issues, too. That is not our role to determine how federal money grants are spent. Dr. Andrews stated he has a good point. Mr. Campbell stated that he is concerned about using numbers to obtain assistant principals. Sharing an assistant principal between two buildings is difficult in terms of IEPs, etc. like Discovery School and Bellwood. He would like to see consideration of criteria such as the makeup and student body of the building in determining the administrative help that is needed. Dr. Butrum stated that he thought general purpose funds should be used for additional assistant principal positions, not stimulus money.

Mrs. Duggin stated that she has had four assistant principals share with her their concerns about their growing workload and the impact it will have on their ability to do their jobs as they should be done. She also asked if when principals suggested hiring additional licensed personnel to support classroom teachers, would they be used for both ends of the spectrum--at-risk and gifted children. Mrs. Mathis stated that the money was given to actually help the low-achieving child to close the achievement gap but that is not to say they wouldn't help the other children. Mrs. Duggin stated that some of the gifted children might not be performing at the level they are capable of. She asked if there had been any thought to hiring retired teachers for the 100-day contracts which would allow the system to hire more teachers. Mrs. Mathis stated that this had not been discussed but is something they could certainly consider.

Mrs. Phillips stated that for the record she doesn't agree with how Dr. Butrum categorized her earlier opinions. She also stated that she would like for the Board to be kept in the loop as to the plans on how the new stimulus will be spent. Mrs. Mathis stated that she would and also the system will be required to place how it is spent on the web. Mr. Anderson stated that separate codes will be established, and the system has to submit its consolidated plan. Mrs. Mathis pointed out that some plans are included in the budget such as on page 82. They are trying to include as many people as possible who would be affected by the stimulus money. Mr. Campbell agreed with Mrs. Duggin about hiring retired teachers but also noted that there are many licensed people who might be willing to work as an EA or mid-day assistant. Mrs. Mathis stated that that is a good idea, and that she would like for all EAs and MDAs to be highly qualified. All stimulus funds that will be received are reflected in the budget, but the system has two years to spend it. It would be in the better interest of the system to spread it out over two years.

Dr. Andrews stated that in terms of the assistant principal positions, she in her personal opinion, would like to see the administration working on other things rather than coming up with formulas and gathering additional information. She asked if a motion should be made to give the Board more direction.

Mrs. Phillips asked that how the stimulus money is spent not only be shared but that the initiatives be evaluated so that at the end of the two years, the administration would know what initiatives have been successful so should be continued. Mr. Hopper asked Mrs. Duggin if the assistant principals who spoke with her had shared their concerns with their principal. Mrs. Duggin responded that she believed two of them have. He emphasized that rather than responding by taking actions based on these comments, he would like to have input from supervisors. If assistant principals are placed because of a need one year but that need changes the next year, would that assistant principal be moved around therefore losing continuity. As an employer, he wants to know is there a need and are we keeping the assistant principals we currently have. Mrs. Phillips asked if certain times of the year are more demanding than others for assistant principals so that assistance could be offered at those peak times. Mrs. Mathis stated that the guidance counselors are very good at assisting the administration. Mrs. Van Tries stated that by law, every child has to have an IEP meeting once a year. Some have many more, but they are done annually. We don't have the bulk of IEP meetings at one time of the year; they continue all year long. Mrs. Wade asked if the load has increased at any one location. Mrs. Van Tries responded that Scales and Northfield house CDC classes and resource so there are additional meetings there, and John Pittard has the Behavior Modification class. But she emphasized that this is really unpredictable. She shared that this school year, the most hours of IEPs has been with one family at a particular school. It is unpredictable. Dr. Butrum stated that since it is unpredictable, the special ed workload would vary between APs and involvement of the principal. Could some of the stimulus money might be used to hire four people to handle the IEP meetings, but noted that this resulted in the loss of personal contact with the family to which Mrs. Van Tries agreed. He stated that other support people would know those children and their families. But Mrs. Van Tries stated that it is important to remember that the assistant principal is not the only person in the school that can be the LEA. The principal can do that as can the guidance counselor. A lot depends on the school community as to how people evolve and are involved.

Mrs. Duggin asked how many schools would be moving to school-wide Title; there would be six. Cason Lane is being added but will come on in the beginning as school-wide.

Mr. Hopper suggested that when the budget document is prepared, the amounts in a category where the project will be bid on should not be included in the budget document as this gives the bidders an insight on what the Board is willing to spend (i.e., reroofing, purchase of land). With his concern regarding how property and sales tax revenue will come in, he suggested that the purchase of land be removed from capital outlay and that amount remain in reserves. Mrs. Mathis stated that this was done for planning purposes but would not be a problem to adjust the budget. Mr. Anderson stated that he has applied for \$5 million in energy-saving grants for lighting, HVAC, and better control of these expenses. He did state that the total cost of the geothermal system was recovered in nineteen months. The school system will realize a quarter of a million dollars each year in energy savings. In response to Dr. Andrews, Mr. Anderson stated that there is no full retrofit package without having to completely close down the schools and gut the systems already in place. He added that some of the existing systems are actually more efficient than those requiring airflow from the outside causing running hot and cold to

balance humidity. Geothermal seems to be the best one, but retrofitting would not be economically feasible.

Mr. Hopper stated that under capital outlay requests, the administration and staff have done a great job of maintaining the buildings, and he encourages the administration to continue to provide equal facilities for all children. If the \$250,000 in the budget is not enough, he would like to see more made available. Dr. Andrews added that she, too, is concerned about the economy and realizes the need to keep funds in reserves in the event they are needed and knows this is and should be a conservative budget.

Mrs. Wade thanked the Board, administration, and staff for their efforts in providing the budget.

### III. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Mary Wade adjourned the budget study session at approximately 5:08 p.m.

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Director of Schools

### ***MISSION STATEMENT***

***To assure academic and personal success  
for each child.***