

MINUTES

MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 29, 2011

6:30 p.m.—Council Chambers

ATTENDANCE

Board: Chair Mary Wade, Butch Campbell, Nancy Duggin, Nancy Phillips, and Dennis Rainier, and Council Liaison Ron Washington. Absent: Susan Andrews and Ray Butrum.

Staff: Director Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Caresa Brooks, Karen Hawkins, Michelle Hummel, Crystal Farris, Cheryl Harris, Ralph Ringstaff, and Priscilla Van Tries.

Others: City Staff Attorney Kelley Baker, *Daily News Journal* Reporter Mealand Ragland-Hudgins, and others.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Mary Wade called the Board meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Mrs. Duggin and second by Mrs. Phillips, the agenda was approved as presented by acclamation.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

- Announcement of School and System Teachers of the Year (Program sponsored by the Council of Chief State Officers)—Dr. Gilbert noted that the Teachers of the Year were recognized and received plaques at a reception prior to the Board meeting.
- Update on Foundation's Education Celebration—Cheryl Harris reported that the Celebration honoring former Congressman Bart Gordon and featuring Northfield Elementary was a success. Proceeds from the event totaled approximately \$50,000+ which will be used to provide parity among the schools and support science and math initiatives in the system.
- First Budget Study Session: April 5, 6:30 p.m.; Second Session: April 12, 6:30 p.m. (in conjunction with policy review)

- Congratulations to Hobgood Teacher Chick Knitter who has received funding from NASA to take two students to Cocoa Beach for NASA Explorer Schools (NES) Student Symposium. The two students attending, Deanna Stem and Shatoriah Simmons, will present on the effect an object's (sand and water) albedo has on its temperature. Neither student has flown or seen the ocean before.
- Congratulations to Discovery School teacher, Mrs. Elizabeth McPhee, who was selected as this year's "Best Mannered Teacher" by the Rutherford County National League of Junior Cotillion.
- Thanks to Ms. Luann Fox, an MDA at MNP, who came to the rescue of a child who was choking during lunch. Ms. Fox's knowledge of the Heimlich maneuver is just one of the valuable resources she has brought to MNP as she serves MCS students.
- Thanks to MTSU Wes Houpp, Director of the Margaret H. Ordoubadian Writing Center, and Matt Rush, Assistant Director and faculty members Caty Chapman and Jenny Rowan, and others who participated in the collection and donation of 1,000 books to the Bellwood-Bowdoin Preschool Parenting Center.
- Special recognition to Scales Principal Catherine Stephens and teacher Pam East who will be presenting at the Title I West Tennessee Director's Conference on the topic: *Closing the Achievement Gap by Using Data to Drive Instruction*.
- Congratulations to Hobgood Principal Barbara Sales who has been selected by the State Department of Education to participate in the "Highly Effective Educators Study." Principals are chosen to participate in this study who have been identified as highly effective principals based on school gains across subject-areas and grade levels according to SAS TVAAS three-year gains.
- Congratulations to Mitchell-Neilson Primary for their recognition as Read to Succeed's "City School of the Year."

IV. CONSENT ITEMS (Tab 1)

On motion by Mrs. Phillips and second by Mr. Campbell, the following consent agenda items were approved by acclamation:

- A. Minutes of the February 22, 2011 Board Meeting and March 8, 2011 Special Called Board Meeting—Policy Work Session

B. Recommendation of Math Textbook Adoption Committee: Grades K-5—MacMillan/McGraw-Hill, Everyday Mathematics; Grade 6—Holt McDougal

C. School Fees

D. Board Policies

BO 15—Responsibility, Authority and Rights of Negotiating Team
(Second Reading)

BO 25—Public Relations Program

BO 32—Solicitations (Charitable, Cultural, Civic)

BO 35—Employment of Director of Schools

BO 42—Policy Development

V. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of Director of Schools Evaluation Instrument (Tab 2)

Dr. Tammy Grissom, Executive Director of TSBA, stated that she had input from the Board and the Director in developing the proposed evaluation instrument. She stated that the evaluation instrument is not only an evaluation of the performance of the Director but also informs the community about how the system is performing and meeting the educational needs of children. The process is actually a positive, not a negative.

Dr. Grissom explained that Appendix A would be completed by administrators at the central office and school principals as they work most closely with the Director. Although the recommendation had been made that all employees be surveyed, Dr. Grissom noted that a “job satisfaction” survey could be conducted in the future keeping in mind what the Board wished to do with this information or the objective of it; but in fairness to the Director with the current climate and unrest among educators due to impending changes in law, etc., she felt this should be conducted at a later date and not be a part of the Director’s evaluation. The Board did not recommend revisions to Appendix A. Appendix B would be completed by the Board and contains sections titled: *Board Relationship, Community Relationships, Staff and Personnel Relationships, Facilities and Finance, Vision, and Student Achievement*. She noted that a sixth item had been added to the sections titled “Board Relationship” and “Staff and Personnel Relationships.” The Board did not recommend revisions to Appendix B. The proposed rating scale is 4—Exceeds Expectations, 3—Consistently Meets Expectations, 2—Usually Meets Expectations, and 1—Never Meets Expectations.

Dr. Grissom noted that Appendix C is based on annual specific objectives. With future evaluations of principals and teachers being based in part on student performance, it would be fair to also evaluate the Director in this area. She noted that Objectives 1-11 are based on the Report Card, Objective 11 refers to the need to update the Master Plan, and Objective 13 refers to the job satisfaction survey that she referenced earlier. Dr. Gilbert pointed out that: Objectives 14-17 are based on Goal One of the Master Plan regarding preschool up to kindergarten; Objectives 18-26 are based on Goal Two regarding Primary and Intermediate grades; Objectives 27-33 are based on Goal Three regarding school educators, parents, and personnel throughout the school system will be well prepared and responsible for improved student performance implementing a comprehensive curriculum focused on academics, arts, and total wellness. Under Objective 28, those two need to be one and read “Increase in the effectiveness of schools as measured by local performance goals”; and, Objectives 34-36 on Goal Four regarding State of the Art Technology will be integrated to improve student learning.

Mr. Campbell suggested that the scale be revised to include 5—Not Applicable or Do Not Know in the event that a Board member does not feel comfortable or knowledgeable in the content to rate the Director on a particular objective. Dr. Grissom explained that this would not provide the best evaluation in that new Board members or others might have many they do not wish to respond to. She stated that it is the Board member’s responsibility to review the document and find out what they need to know in order to be able to rate the Director’s performance. She suggested that Dr. Gilbert provide the Board with a report that responds to each objective providing information on where the system is in reaching the goals of each objective. Mr. Rainier stated he would be satisfied with the existing scale with the report from the Director as a resource. Dr. Grissom stated she would send the Director’s report to the Board with the evaluation document which will contain the recommended revisions. Mrs. Duggin agreed that the Director’s report to the Board would provide needed information and address the concerns voiced by Mr. Campbell and Mr. Rainier. She also noted that the Federal government had changed NCLB back to the original acronym ESEA so the document should reflect that.

Mrs. Phillips asked if, in fairness to the Director, the Master Plan should be updated before the evaluation. Dr. Gilbert stated that she is comfortable being evaluated on the current Master Plan, as she has been moving the system forward in respect to the existing plan. She feels the plan needs to be updated but would prefer to address this after the budget is completed by spending an appropriate amount of time, possibly the next six months, to do this correctly. Looking at what has been accomplished this past year to develop a foundation, it was better to wait to revise the Master Plan.

Dr. Grissom explained that the administrators can complete Appendix A and the Board Appendix B now. However, Appendix C referring to test scores/student performance

cannot be completed until summer or when test scores have been provided to the system. The Director's contract states that the evaluation be conducted in the Spring of 2011, and completing these two sections would accomplish that. The final overall rating would not be computed until Appendix C has been completed.

Dr. Gilbert stated that she is okay with the Board evaluating her on Objectives 18-36 now. Dr. Grissom suggested removing Objective 12 allowing the Director and Board to update the Master Plan following budget approval and to remove Objective 13 regarding the job satisfaction survey. She also pointed out that the Board needs to decide how they want each section of the evaluation weighted (percentage) and what is a satisfactory score.

Mrs. Wade emphasized that Dr. Gilbert is available to the Board, and Board members should contact her with any questions they have in order to gain a full understanding of the objective they will be grading her on. After discussion, Dr. Gilbert stated she would have the requested report to Dr. Grissom on April 8. Dr. Grissom will send Dr. Gilbert's report and the revised evaluation document to the Board on April 8.

Mr. Campbell asked if the Board could delay the completion of the evaluation by the Board until the next month, May. Dr. Grissom responded that this would be the Board's decision. After discussion, Mr. Campbell moved that Dr. Grissom present the results of the Director's evaluation on May 24; Mr. Rainier seconded the motion. Dr. Gilbert stated that she would like the Board to go ahead and evaluate her on the Objectives 14+ dealing with the Master Plan. After further discussion, Mr. Campbell amended his motion to the date of May 10; Mr. Rainier as second agreed. For clarification, the Board will evaluate the Director on Appendix A, Appendix B, and on Objectives 14-36. On roll call: Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Phillips—yes; Rainier—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried. The retreat scheduled for April 30 is therefore cancelled.

Mrs. Duggin moved to remove Objective 12—Update School System Five Year Plan and Objective 13—Administer a job satisfaction survey to all employees from the evaluation document, adding that administration of the job satisfaction survey (for information) be left to the discretion of the Director to be conducted at a time when she determines that the climate is conducive to doing this. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Mrs. Phillips asked that the questions be worded carefully to provide clear and accurate information. Dr. Grissom stated that the job satisfaction survey could be reviewed and approved by the Board with the Board keeping in mind what the purpose of the survey would be. On roll call: Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Phillips—yes; Rainier—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

Mrs. Duggin asked that Dr. Grissom send to the Board in writing her recommendation on weighting the sections prior to the Board's next work session, April 12. Dr. Grissom stated that she will include Dr. Gilbert's input in that recommendation to the Board.

B. Approval of Textbook Adoption Committee—Reading (Tab 3)

Dr. Caresa Brooks explained that the current reading textbook is a 2001 edition and is not aligned to state standards. Complete sets of reading materials are not available to teachers. The more current editions support differentiated instruction and are aligned with state standards. Mrs. Karen Hawkins stated that the challenge is to have the guaranteed curriculum for each classroom, which cannot be done with current available materials. The state will not adopt a reading textbook for two more years, but our system cannot wait. The system has received permission from the state to go ahead and adopt a new reading textbook. At the state level, Tennessee has adopted the core standards along with a national group. We are about 90% aligned with the core standards in reading. The system can piggyback with the adoption that North Carolina is currently reviewing. The request is for the Board to approve a committee to review three series that North Carolina has recommended: Scott Foresman, *The Reading Streets*, McGraw Hill, *Treasures*; and, Houghton Mifflin, *Journeys*. The administration would come back to the Board with a budget resolution for the actual purchase of the textbooks after the selection process. In response to Mrs. Phillips' question, Mrs. Hawkins explained that rather than the usual six-year period for the adoption, the system would hold onto this adoption for eight years. In making this decision, the district must look at the curricular needs and the resources the system has available. Mr. Anderson stated that the cost for the adoption would be approximately \$680,000.

Mr. Rainier moved to approve the textbook adoption committee as presented; Mrs. Duggin seconded the motion. On roll call: Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Phillips—yes; Rainier—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

Dr. Gilbert complimented the principals on the work they have done and the progress made in the system on the PLC initiative.

VI. REPORTS/INFORMATION

Dr. Gilbert noted the information provided behind Tab 4.

A. Personnel Update (Tab 4)

1. Leaves of Absence
2. Interim Teachers Hired
3. Classified Personnel Hired

B. Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Report (Tab 5)

Mr. Anderson reported that the Board will receive the first draft of the FY'12 budget on Friday. The system is in the positive with \$1,404,499. The system has completed 66.7% of the fiscal year, and revenue is at 67.0%, which is very good. Sales tax is on target with about \$350,000 more than budgeted, and the system is on target with property taxes. Business tax collections are up \$60,000. Expenditures are at 64.3%, which is also good. In response to Mr. Rainier's question, Mr. Anderson explained that line item 72810— Other Support in the amount of \$803,215 is for technology equipment; the funds have to be put into a line item before they can be spent.

C. Attendance Report (Tab 6)

Mr. Anderson reported that the pupil:teacher ratio for K-3 is 1:18.39 and for 4-6 is 1:19.6. The system is 43 students below the projected enrollment of 6,890. However, principals are reporting that they are enrolling new students. Special education student enrollment has increased. Our membership was 94.4% due to illnesses in the system, about a percent lower than usual.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Wade reminded the Board that the April 30 retreat is cancelled.

Mr. Rainier thanked Mr. Anderson for the Fund Balance Summary sheet.

Mrs. Duggin asked that the administration compose a letter for the Board to send to legislatures restating that the Board supports appointed superintendents/directors of schools. Mr. Campbell stated that everyone in the audience can contact legislatures individually on the website to voice their opinions.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wade adjourned the Board's meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Director of Schools

