

MINUTES

MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING--
POLICY WORK SESSION
Tuesday, September 13, 2011
6:30 p.m.—Central Administration Building

ATTENDANCE

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

Staff: Director Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Caresa Brooks, Crystal Farris, Tammy Grizzard, Karen Hawkins, Michelle Hummel, Greg Lyles, Priscilla Van Tries, and Ralph Ringstaff.

Others: Staff Attorney Kelley Baker, MEA President Natalie Hopkins, Principal Regina Payne, and others.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Mary Wade called the meeting to order at approximately 6:35 p.m.

II. BOARD POLICY REVIEW

Mrs. Baker stated that she does not have any further revisions to the following policies passed on first reading by the Board and asked the Board if they had any questions or changes. Mrs. Duggin moved to place the policies as presented on the September 27 agenda for approval on second reading; Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried by acclamation.

Passed on First Reading:

SS 13—Service Animals in District Facilities and Vehicles
PER 20—Personal and Professional Leave for Licensed Personnel
PER 21—Assignment/Transfer or Reassignment of Licensed Personnel
PER 25—Sick Leave for Licensed Personnel
PER 26—Sick Leave for Full-Time Classified Personnel
PER 38—FMLA and Tennessee Maternity Act
PER 40—Suspension/Dismissal of Non-Licensed Employees

For Discussion:

PER 16—Tenure and Nontenure (*Revision*)

Mr. Ringstaff explained that as of July 1, 2011, there are two parallel systems of tenure in MCS for certified employees.

Prior to July 1, 2011, tenure was granted to certified employees based on three criteria:

1. Successful completion of a probationary period of three (3) school years.
2. Recommendation by the Director of Schools for granting tenure.
3. A majority vote of the Murfreesboro City School Board for granting tenure.

As of July 1, 2011, the following criteria will be used:

1. A degree from an approved four-year college or any career and technical teacher who has the equivalent amount of training established and licensed by the Tennessee State Board of Education;
2. A valid teacher license, issued by the State Board of Education, based on training covering the subjects or grades taught;
3. Completion of a probationary period of five (5) school years or not less than forty-five (45) months within the last seven year period, the last two (2) years being employed in a regular teaching position rather than an interim teaching position;
4. Evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “above expectations” or “significantly above expectations” during the last two (2) years of the probationary period as provided in the evaluation guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to TCA 49-1-302;
5. Recommendation by the Director of Schools for granting tenure; and
6. A majority vote of Murfreesboro City School Board for granting tenure.

Dr. Gilbert noted that information shared at the Superintendent’s meeting indicated there may be some changes. However, she emphasized that the evaluation process is here to stay. The use of a 1-5 scale for an observation will turn into a 500-point scale with a range of 425-500 to be considered significantly above expectations for the total evaluation. The system will continue to be tweaked, and there may be some flexibility. She shared the document titled “TEAM Annual Observation Cycle” noting the evaluation process for professional and for apprentice teachers. A certified employee that does not meet the evaluation requirements may continue to remain employed in a position requiring a teacher license on a year-to-year contract as a probationary employee.

Mr. Ringstaff pointed out: *A certified employee has no property right in the tenure status and must sustain a specified performance effectiveness level required on evaluations to achieve and maintain tenure status. If a certified employee acquires tenure, the teacher shall remain under that status until such time as the certified employee resigns, retires, is dismissed or the certified employee is returned to probationary status. Any certified employee who, after acquiring tenure status, receives two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “below expectations” or “significantly below expectations,” as provided by the evaluation guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to TCA 49-1-302, shall be returned to probationary status by the Director of Schools until the certified employee has received two (2) consecutive years of evaluations demonstrating an overall performance effectiveness level of “above expectations” or “significantly above expectations.”*

Once a certified employee is eligible for tenure, the Director of Schools shall recommend the certified employee for tenure or non-renewal; provided, however, that the certified employee cannot be continued in employment if tenure is not granted by the Murfreesboro City School Board.

Mrs. Duggin asked that the last sentence, lines 72-73, be revised to also indicate that those persons who have taught five years or more, not being given tenure but will be employed, receive a letter by June 15.

PER 17—Evaluation of Professional Staff (*Revision*)

Mr. Ringstaff reviewed PER 17 regarding the evaluation process. The document titled “TEAM Annual Observation Cycle” provided a schedule of what those observations would look like. Dr. Gilbert stated that there should be consistency across the state and doesn’t believe the rubric will change with TVAAS being the measure to be used pervasively. The state will be looking to see if there is consistency on how teachers are evaluated—matching teacher evaluation scores to student performance. AYP will probably be no more, and they will be looking at student growth. It is imperative to focus on the gap between white students and students of color, LEP and non-LEP students, special ed and non-special ed students, economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students.

Mrs. Duggin voiced a concern over the amount of time that will be required of not only administrators but of teachers in preparation for the evaluations and suggested that it might be more feasible to evaluate every other year. She noted that Scales would have a total of 278 evaluations to complete. Dr. Gilbert added that high schools also have this concern. She stated that the state needs to hear these concerns, and she had spoken to Patrick Smith, Assistant Commissioner, telling him that our system has worked hard to focus on student learning, but the evaluation process takes away from this focus. Mr. Campbell asked that administrators have compassion for teachers who are overwhelmed. Teachers with no TVAAS scores will be evaluated on how well the school performs. Mrs. Phillips stated that she is not comfortable with the rubric as to its subjectivity. Mrs. Duggin suggested that Dr. Gilbert might speak with an administrator in Knoxville where TAP has been used in evaluations for several years. She also asked where the 35% would come from for pre-K teachers. Mrs. Duggin asked that with the TCAP testing dates, etc., the date for completion of annual evaluations be moved from May 1st to May 15th. Mr. Ringstaff stated that this is doable; however, the Board would be required to vote on tenure no later than the May board meeting to allow for letters to be provided by June 15.

PER 46—Employee Use of Social Electronic Media (*New*)

Mr. Ringstaff stated that several policies from other districts had been provided by Mrs. Baker for consideration when developing this policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance to system employees about the expectations of the school system relative to the use of social electronic media. Mrs. Baker pointed out that the policy is

designed to protect teachers. It encourages employees to use common sense to avoid sharing information that is inappropriate; employees should not share any information of a confidential nature (i.e., protected by FERPA, IDEA, 504, IEP's, etc.) or confidential medical information about colleagues or students. Teachers can communicate with a student's parents utilizing social media, but should remember that others read social media. Teachers must use common sense and discretion when using any social media and discussing students. Mrs. Duggin suggested that the system look into a means of assuring that the system logo could not be copied and misused. She also added that we should remind teachers that anything in an email becomes public information and a part of the student's permanent record. She suggested that perhaps an administrative directive regarding emails be developed to assure that this is understood and that teachers are aware of the FERPA, IDEA, ADA, 504, etc., confidentiality issues.

Mr. Campbell asked what action would be taken if a teacher violates the policy and asked if a violation would be insubordination. Mrs. Baker responded yes and such conduct may result in disciplinary action appropriate to the situation ranging from a written reprimand, suspension, or dismissal depending on the severity of the action.

Mrs. Baker explained that the policy does not violate an individual's right of speech as it does not prohibit a teacher from communicating with parents or others, but does set guidelines for how an employee can communicate with MCS students through social media. In response to Mr. Campbell's question regarding lines 49-50, Mr. Ringstaff explained that a teacher who has a social involvement with the student (i.e., is the student's Sunday school teacher, his/her children participate in activities with the student, etc.) could communicate relative to that social involvement or if they are family or friends of the student. Mrs. Duggin reminded the administration that after the second reading and final approval, this policy should be thoroughly discussed with teachers so that all are aware of its implications. Teachers should be notified to review any new or revised policy after Board approval.

Dr. Gilbert indicated that this policy would be provided to the principals for their input prior to bringing the policy back to the Board.

Mr. Campbell moved that PER 16, PER 17, and PER 46 be placed on the Board's September 27 board agenda for approval on first reading with the recommended revisions; Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion. The motion carried by acclamation.

III. REVIEW OF DRAFT SEPTEMBER 27, 2011 BOARD MEETING AGENDA

There were no recommended revisions to the September 27, 2011 agenda.

IV. INSTRUCTIONAL UPDATE

Mrs. Hawkins provided the Board with information regarding student achievement needed by them to complete the evaluation of the Director (copy of evaluation document provided).

The subgroup Limited English Proficient increased in math from 12% Proficient and Advanced in 2010 to 30% in 2011, an increase of **18%**; in Reading/Language Arts/Writing, an increase from 14% Proficient and Advanced in 2010 to 29% in 2011, an increase of **15%**.

The subgroup Students with Disabilities increased in Reading/Language Arts/Writing from 31% Proficient and Advanced in 2010 to 47% in 2011, an increase of **16%**.

Mrs. Hawkins provided the student enrollment numbers relative to these increases. She also provided the NCLB status of each school in the district.

Mrs. Hawkins reviewed the 2011 System Value Added Report with TCAP Math, Reading/Language, Science, and Social Studies data. She pointed out that the state's growth rate would be indicated at .0. To meet or exceed the state's growth, we would have to have a score above .0. The school system did exceed the state's growth as indicated: Math at 8.2; Reading/Language at 3.7; Science at .2; Social Studies at .6. The system exceeded state growth in each of the categories.

Dr. Gilbert noted that some teachers have attended STEM training, and the system provided professional development in afternoon trainings. She feels student performance in science can improve as reading improves. She will be meeting with representatives from TMSTEC, MTeach, Mind 2 Marketplace, etc., to look at a math and science initiative that will set MCS apart.

Nancy Duggin complimented the administration and teachers for their leadership and diligence that resulted in improved student performance.

Dr. Gilbert discussed in detail four big pushes from the state:

1. Collaborative Conferencing
2. Teacher Evaluations
3. Principal Evaluations
4. Strategic Plan

Following the discussion, Mrs. Duggin voiced a concern about the legislative interest in increasing class size, Charter schools and virtual schools, and vouchers. She stressed the importance of developing a PR plan to communicate to our parents and all community members the successes of our school system, the increased number of students who are proficient and advanced, etc. perhaps through fliers.

Dr. Gilbert pointed out that the system's progress rank in grades 3-6 with the 136 school systems is:

- 7th with Grade 3
- 33rd with Grade 4
- 31st with Grade 5
- 11th with Grade 6

She noted that this is impressive.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Options for Director of Schools Contract—Kelley Baker

Mrs. Baker stated that the term of the current contract with Dr. Gilbert is January 4, 2010 through July 3, 2012. Pursuant to state law, a Director's contract cannot exceed four years. The next board member election will be held on April 17, 2012. According to state law, the Board cannot vote on a contract for the Director 45 days prior to the election and 30 days following the election, March 2, 2012 through May 17, 2012. She is providing this information to the Board so that they might schedule discussions regarding the contract. Mrs. Duggin stated that with this information, she does not want to "extend" the current contract, but would prefer to offer the Director a new contract. Mrs. Baker stated that a new contract would go into effect on July 4, 2012 and can extend up to four years. Mrs. Duggin asked if contract discussions could be held during policy/special meetings. Mrs. Baker stated that it could but that the meeting must be advertised at least 15 calendar days before the meeting takes place and the advertisement must clearly state that the Director's Contract will be discussed. The Board has an October 11 retreat date, and Mrs. Wade had previously requested that contract discussions take place at that meeting. Mrs. Ridley will advertise the meeting accordingly.

Mrs. Wade reminded Board members to return the Director's evaluation to Dr. Grissom at TSBA.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Wade adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Director of Schools

MISSION STATEMENT

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

