

## MINUTES

**MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING--  
POLICY WORK SESSION  
Tuesday, February 14, 2012  
6:30 p.m.—Central Administration Building**

### ATTENDANCE

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

Staff: Director Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Caresa Brooks, Tammy Grizzard, Karen Hawkins, Greg Lyles, Ralph Ringstaff, Lisa Trail, and Priscilla Van Tries.

Others: Staff Attorney Kelley Baker and others.

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

Chair Wade called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m.

The Oath of Office was administered to newly appointed Board Member Nancy Rainier by Ms. Diana Primm. The Board welcomed Mrs. Rainier to her first official Board meeting.

#### **II. APPROVAL OF ARCHITECT FOR RENOVATIONS AND NEW BUILDING CONSTRUCTION**

Mr. Anderson stated that the Board has previously approved for the administration to move ahead with three projects: Renovation of Hobgood (two phases), installing an elevator at Bradley, and the construction of a new school in the western part of the county. Johnson + Bailey Architects, P.C., have provided the administration with information relative to these projects as indicated in the Board's attachments. Mr. Anderson explained that hiring an architect is considered a professional service. State law does not require bidding out to acquire professional services. Once hired, the architectural firm will take care of the construction/bidding process. He explained that MCS has had a long relationship with Johnson + Bailey, they have first-hand knowledge of the system facilities from past projects, and have waived the 1.25 architectural fee multiplier normally included in renovation work and will offer a reduced fee for construction of the new school, being able to partially re-use the John Pittard Elementary School design. Mrs. Wade agreed that over the years Johnson + Bailey have provided great service to the school system.

Mr. Anderson referred to the proposed construction schedule for Hobgood's renovations, Phase I and Phase II. Mrs. Duggin asked that attention be paid to providing adequate outside lighting. Mr. Anderson explained that outside lighting projects have to be approved by the Board of Zoning and Appeals, due to residences nearby.

Mr. Campbell moved to approve Johnson + Bailey Architects be hired for the renovations and building construction upon Council approval of funding; Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by acclamation.

### III. DISCUSSION OF DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Dr. Gilbert explained that the system is in need of a school management system that will allow accounting, personnel, and instruction to share information. The current program requires data to be entered more than once and reports are done in excel; i.e., accounting software does not communicate with personnel. Skyward is a management system that would link these three departments together, with data being input once rather than multiple times. She and other administrators have visited or spoken with systems who use the Skyward school management system: Oak Ridge, Anderson County, Lenoir City Schools, and Lebanon Special School District. She received very favorable reviews from those who work with Skyward in those school systems.

Mr. Anderson stated that the program could be purchased from the Fund Balance/reserves. The other option would be to put a partial payment down and then fund the rest from next year's operating budget, but he did not recommend this. In response to Mr. Campbell's question, he explained that the annual licensing fee would be \$82,521; however, the system pays \$40,000 annually for the current software program and \$5,000 annually for the online application program. We pay \$18,000 annually for the STAR program, with the State typically reimbursing that amount; however, there is no guarantee of that reimbursement from year to year.

In addition to the Accounting and Human Resource departments being able to share information, Mrs. Hawkins stated that the student management part of the system would allow teachers to do electronic report cards, complete student profiles, allow parents to access their student's information through a parent portal, etc. The Skyward district program would also assure that the same grading scale is being used systemwide.

Mrs. Smith inquired about the central office and Family Resource Center not being listed in the ASP Installation. Dr. Gilbert stated that the central office is as it will be the hub,

but the FRC is not; those students' home schools would be able to keep data on those students. In response to Mr. Campbell's question, Dr. Gilbert stated that this does not mean we would lose positions/employees due to having access to so much data that could then be utilized in many ways.

Mrs. Hawkins explained that our system technology trainers would train teachers beginning with taking attendance but most training would be on the gradebook component. Mr. Ringstaff stated that the program is user friendly. Mrs. Hawkins stated that our system must export grades to the state at the end of this school year, and this may be a difficult process as the existing program is not intuitive.

Dr. Andrews moved to approve the purchase of the Skyward School Management System; Mrs. Duggin seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by acclamation.

#### IV. BOARD POLICY REVIEW

##### ***CONSENT AGENDA: Passed on First Reading***

- IS 1—Professional Development and Growth (*Revised*)
- IS 2—Curriculum Development (*Revised*)
- IS 3—Basic Instructional Program (*Revised*)
- IS 4—Education of Children with Disabilities (*Revised*)
- IS 5—Instructional Resources (*Revised*)
- IS 13—A Statement of Homework Policy (*Revised*)

Mrs. Baker noted that Mr. Campbell had suggested that policies that did not have any recommendations for revisions on first reading be placed under consent agenda at the next policy meeting to allow the Board to move forward in discussions on other policies.

##### ***FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION: Passed on First Reading***

- IS 10—Community Resource Persons (*Delete and Replace with School Volunteers*)
- IS 10—School Volunteers (*Replaces existing Community Resource Persons Policy*)

Mr. Ringstaff explained that the proposed new policy, IS 10—School Volunteers, was developed with City Legal through review of how other school systems address volunteers in schools. In response to Mr. Campbell's question, Dr. Gilbert stated that line 10 was deleted as it is addressed in the paragraph beginning on line 24. Mrs. Smith stated that the policy seemed very restrictive; she volunteers and works with students on papers that they scored low on. Mrs. Baker stated that sharing a student's grades with

Board Meeting Minutes  
Page 4  
February 14, 2012

anyone other than that student's parents is a FERPA violation, and student's grades may not be shared with anyone other than the parent without the parent's consent. In the past, parents have been denied the privilege of volunteering in a school due to the fact that they have gossiped/shared information about students.

Mr. Campbell stated that the policy is appropriate as the principal is ultimately responsible for everything that takes place in his/her school. Mr. Ringstaff distributed information that will become the administrative directive relative to IS 10. He pointed out that there are three tiers of volunteers with Tier 1 not requiring an application, Tier 2 requiring an application, and Tier 3 requiring not only the application but also a background check. He noted, however, that most volunteers likely fall in Tier 1. Mrs. Baker stated that a background check is required if a volunteer works with a child without supervision by a school employee. Dr. Andrews asked that #2 on the application be simplified so that all parents will fully understand its meaning.

Mrs. Duggin emphasized that it is imperative that all employees are aware of and have a full understanding of the system's policies and revisions as the Board approves them. The policies should be shared and discussed with new teachers. She stated that the policy is for the safety of our children and shows that we have done everything we could do to assure that safety.

**IS 14—Promotion and Retention (*Revised*)**

Dr. Gilbert explained that this policy follows the Tennessee State Department of Education promotion and retention guidelines. Lines 9-11 were moved to #9 on the second page with the same verbiage as the state. She noted that the Board raised a concern regarding parent input at the last meeting, but #6 clearly states that a parent will receive notification of the need to schedule a conference nine weeks before the end of school if retention is being considered. The state's requirement is six weeks and, this policy does reflect the Board's desire to have parent involvement. Mrs. Duggin stated that it is a good policy, and asked that #7 be addressed in an administrative directive as it is imperative that if a child is retained, the student receives something different in the year of his retention. Mrs. Hawkins pointed out that students receiving intervention or are below grade level, can be tracked through Aimsweb, etc., providing a system of tracking. Students are addressed every twenty days. Skyward can flag students for interventions, reports can be pulled, so results can be seen. Mr. Campbell agreed with Mrs. Duggin adding that #8 is well stated. Mrs. Hawkins pointed out that as a result of state law, the system is required to address third grade students who do not show "a basic understanding of curriculum and ability to perform the skills required in the subject of reading as demonstrated by the student's grades or standardized test results."

***For Discussion:***  
**IS 9—Field Trips (*Revised—Complete Rewrite*)**

Mrs. Baker reviewed IS 9 in its entirety emphasizing that “school trips authorized by the principal and approved by the Director of Schools or Director’s designee on the standard system school trip form shall be Murfreesboro City School Board sanctioned school trips.” She reviewed the definitions of: A Field Trip, Competitions/Performances, and An Excursion and the requirements that pertain to each. She noted the factors for school trips selections should be:

- (a) value of the activity to the particular class group or class groups;
- (b) relationship of the school trip activity to a particular aspect of classroom instruction;
- (c) suitability of the activity and distance traveled in terms of the age level;,
- (d) mode and availability of MCS Board approved transportation and
- (e) cost.

Mrs. Baker also noted that a field trip that impacts the instructional day must include all students with the school system responsible for any student(s) unable to pay as indicated in the Board Policy SS 12, Student Fees and Fines.

Mrs. Baker explained that field trips taken in Tennessee are covered by the Tennessee Governmental Tort Liability Act. This law caps the system’s liability to \$350,000, which is the maximum. Field trips taken outside of Tennessee are not covered by this law, and there is no cap on the system’s liability if sued. The school system is covered through the City’s Risk Management Self-Insurance fund for Workman’s Compensation and General Liability. She emphasized that school-sponsored trips/excursions which are over-night and/or out-of-state must have prior approval by the Director and Board. If a teacher decides to take children out of state or out of country on a field trip, without the school system’s approval, that teacher could be liable for any lawsuits resulting from the trip and would be solely responsible if sued, even if she indicates it is a school trip using the school name, etc.

Mrs. Duggin stated that some parents who chaperone a field trip, driving to the location in their personal car, ask to take the child home from the field trip instead of the child riding the bus back to school. She would like for this to be addressed, perhaps in an administrative directive, that if the child rides the bus to the field trip location, they must ride the bus back to the school for dismissal. Mr. Campbell agreed. Dr. Grizzard explained that the system, because of the liability, asks parent chaperones to travel in their own cars and siblings must travel in the car with their parent. Mrs. Baker stated that if a parent or sibling of the student rides the system’s bus, the system would be liable.

Board Meeting Minutes

Page 6

February 14, 2012

This policy is designed to simplify the procedure. Dr. Gilbert stated that she would discuss with principals the issue of students traveling back with their parent, but she feels sure they will agree that students ride the bus both to and from a field trip. In response to Mrs. Smith's question, Mrs. Baker stated that out-of-state and out-of-country field trips hold the same liability to the school system—no cap under the Governmental Tort Liability Act if sued. If the City does approve an out-of-state field trip, the school system could be liable for any damages awarded by a court, even if it is in the millions. Mrs. Baker stated that extra insurance coverage should be obtained if they approve a trip out of state.

Mrs. Wade stated that board policies are the primary responsibility of the School Board. It is their charge to develop policies that assure the safety of children, and these policies accomplish this.

**IS 16—Relations with Accrediting Agencies (*Revised*)**

Mrs. Hawkins noted that AdvancEd is now the accrediting institution.

**IS 17—Relations with Education Research and Service Centers (*Revised*)**

Mrs. Hawkins explained that #6 was deleted as it is covered in another section of the policy. She also noted that in #7 “the Institutional Review Board” has been added to assure that the research is meaningful. The policy is designed for the protection of the students.

**IS 18—Student Teaching, Internships, and Practicums (*Revised*)**

Mrs. Hawkins explained that professionals was substituted for “teachers” as other professional staff such as social workers could be involved. She also noted that before implementation of student teaching, internships, and practica, an Agreement of Cooperation/Understanding between MCS and the college/university must be signed by the Director of Schools and a representative of the college or university.

Mrs. Baker stated pursuant to T.C.A §49-5-403(c) that lines 30-32 would be replaced with: *A student teacher shall be accorded the same protection of the laws as a certified teacher and shall comply with all rules and regulations of the Board and observe all duties of teachers as set forth in state statute.* In addition, the following would be added to the policy: *A student teacher may be asked to terminate his or her service upon the mutual consent of the principal, the cooperating teacher and the supervising teacher at any time during the term.*

Board Meeting Minutes

Page 7

February 14, 2012

Mrs. Wade stated that due to the time, the Board would review the draft February 28 board agenda before adjourning.

Mrs. Baker requested the Board's approval that policies on this agenda for which no revisions have been recommended be moved forward, with the Board focusing at the next policy meeting on the revised policies listed on this agenda. There were no objections from the Board.

IS 19—Changes in Instruction (*No Revisions*)  
IS 20—TCAP Security (*Revised—Complete Rewrite*)

PER 5—Equal Opportunity Employment (*Revised*)  
PER 6—Staff Rights and Responsibilities (*Revised*)  
PER 24—Substitute Teachers (*Revised*)  
PER 27—Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System (*Revised*)  
PER 32—Drug-Free Workplace (*Revised*)  
PER 35—Discrimination/Harassment of Employees (*Revised*)  
PER 41—Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Employees (*Revised*)

SS 9—Child Nutrition Management (*Revised*)

***Delete:***

IS 15—State and Federal Education Agency Relations  
PER 37—Non-Renewal of Non-Licensed Employees  
(became obsolete due to revisions made to PER 40—Discipline of Non-Licensed Employees)

***No Recommended Revisions:***

PER 1—Faculty Meetings  
PER 7—Conflict of Interest  
PER 8—Credit for Teaching Experience  
PER 10—Payroll Deductions  
PER 11—Anticipation of Advanced Degree  
PER 15—Job Sharing  
PER 19—Extended Leave  
PER 23—Employee Names and Addresses  
PER 28—Staff Complaints  
PER 33—Seasonal Employees  
PER 42—Nepotism

Board Meeting Minutes

Page 8

February 14, 2012

V. DISCUSSION OF VOUCHERS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

VI. REVIEW OF FEBRUARY 28, 2012 DRAFT AGENDA

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Gilbert provided the Board with copies of Senate Bill 2210 noting that she believes the bill would be revised. She also stated that the State of Tennessee was granted an NCLB waiver. After reviewing the waiver, she compiled her interpretation of the waiver provided to the Board, but asked that all review the waiver.

Mrs. Wade congratulated Board Member Butch Campbell who is being inducted into the TSSAA Hall of Fame and asked that this be added as a communications item on the next board meeting agenda.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mrs. Wade adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.

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Director of Schools

***MISSION STATEMENT***

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