

MINUTES

MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING--
POLICY WORK SESSION
Tuesday, May 8, 2012
6:30 p.m.—Central Administration Building

ATTENDANCE

Board: Chair Mary Wade, Jared Barrett, Andy Brown, Butch Campbell, Nancy Phillips, Nancy Rainier, Collier Smith, and Council Liaison Ron Washington.

Staff: Director Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Tammy Grizzard, Ralph Ringstaff, Lisa Trail, and Priscilla Van Tries.

Others: Staff Attorney Kelley Baker.

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wade called the board meeting to order at approximately 6:33 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL FEES

Mr. Anderson explained that some school field trip requests had been submitted after the last Board meeting; therefore, the Board is asked for approval of the fees for field trips as listed on the attachment. Mrs. Rainier pointed out that some fees seemed a little high and asked teachers/administrators to keep in mind the burden this might place on parents. Dr. Gilbert noted that the schools do receive donations from various sources to cover the costs for such activities when parents can't pay. In response to Mrs. Phillips' request, Mr. Anderson stated that he will provide the Board with the document regarding the cost of transportation. Mrs. Rainier moved to approve the School Fees as presented; Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried by acclamation.

III. BOARD POLICY REVIEW

For Further Discussion: (Passed on First Reading)

PER 39—Suspension/Dismissal of Tenured Teachers (*Revision*)

Mrs. Baker stated that PER 39 had been approved on first reading by the Board; however, she pointed out that when the policy is brought back for approval on second reading, it will reflect an additional revision on line 3: *The Director of Schools or designee may suspend with or without pay depending on the situation a tenured teacher at any ...*”.

In response to Mr. Campbell's question, Mr. Ringstaff stated that if an employee is accused of abuse or neglect, that employee would be placed on leave. He is required to report the allegation/conviction to the State Department of Education, Department of Teacher Licensing.

STU 5—Assignment of Students to Schools and Classes (*Revision*)

The Board made no recommendations for revisions to STU 5 as presented; Mrs. Baker stated that STU 5 will be brought to the Board for approval on second reading.

For Discussion:

PER 22—Personnel Records (*Revision*)

Mr. Ringstaff explained the time frame for newly hired employees to turn in documents. Mrs. Smith pointed out that November 1 seems to be a long period before documentation is received for prior experience. Dr. Brown asked if the copy of the teacher's license could be received before the teacher reports to work, and how does the system receive the primary source of the teacher's experience. Mr. Ringstaff responded that documentation for prior teaching experience is sent directly to his office from the teacher's previous school system. Principals are required to contact previous employers and document the reference on a form that is placed in the teacher's file prior to employment being approved by the Director. Dr. Gilbert stated that she requires the principal, not a designee, to make the reference contacts, and will not sign an employment letter unless those references are in the candidate's file. Mr. Ringstaff added that he is now able to access the candidate's test scores. A TBI/FBI check is also conducted.

Mrs. Rainier stated that the Board should be cautious about closing the date on when a teacher's license or teaching experience must be received as the candidate is at the mercy of their prior school system or state department to provide documentation. Responses to these requests can take some time. Mr. Ringstaff added that the State Department of Education's staff has also decreased, and also it sometimes takes longer to get documentation from another state. He stated that the system has not encountered a situation where a teacher deliberately misrepresents this information, although a situation may have occurred where a candidate is found to have been lacking a Praxis test.

In response to Mr. Campbell's question, Mrs. Baker stated that a person can request to look at the personnel files of our employees; however, the Human Resource Department is required to redact from that file the employee's information as listed on lines 71-82.

Mrs. Baker stated that PER 22 will be brought back to the Board for approval on first reading.

STU 18—Child Abuse and/or Neglect (*Complete Rewrite*)

Mrs. Baker stated that she will bring this policy back to the Board for approval on first reading, but the policy will then contain revisions based on statutory requirements relative to reporting general abuse or neglect and sexual abuse. The policy will also contain language regarding a person's immunity if they report suspected abuse/neglect and their liability for failure to report suspected abuse/neglect. Dr. Gilbert stated that teachers/employees will receive training in the fall to make them aware of this policy and to help them understand how to address abuse/neglect. Mrs. Baker stated that she will email to the Board the final draft of the policy prior to the Board's meeting at which they will be asked for approval on first reading.

STU 22—Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline (*Revision*)

Mrs. Baker explained that Board Policies STU 22 and STU 23 establish the system's code of behavior/conduct and how we respond under state law. She explained that these policies are contained in the parent handbook. In order to have them ready at the beginning of the next school year, she is asking that the Board review the policies at this meeting and allow her to bring the policies to the May 22 board meeting for final approval. This is permissible under board policy. Mrs. Baker reviewed the revisions to STU 22. Dr. Brown asked that line 39 be revised to read "for all adults *and students* on school premises". The policy will be brought to the Board for final approval on May 22.

STU 23—Discipline Procedures (*Revision*)

Mrs. Baker pointed out that a new version of this policy with a couple of additional revisions has been placed on the Board's desk. Dr. Gilbert stated that she was not sure what the terms "social probation" and "modified probation" actually mean. Mrs. Smith stated that she would not like to see children restricted from exercising. In response to Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Baker explained that hazing is contained in Level III and Level IV, but addresses the severity of hazing, and would also take into consideration the age/grade level of students involved. The principal can look at the situation and determine at what level the misbehavior would be addressed. Dr. Gilbert stated that she would like to discuss with principals how they interpret social and modified probation. Mr. Campbell stated that discipline should not carry over from one class to another, as that would require someone other than the classroom teacher to enforce the discipline; i.e., a classroom teacher tells a student he cannot participate in gym. He added that P.E. is a

part of the curriculum. Mrs. Phillips clarified that her earlier comments regarding social probation pertained to recess, not P.E.

Mrs. Baker stated that she had added the following to the policy: *Any of the above listed behaviors committed on a school bus **or at a school bus stop**.* She wanted input from the Board regarding the school being responsible for children at a school bus stop where the system does not have staff present to monitor the children's behavior. She noted that traditionally the school system has only assumed responsibility for the children's behavior once the child sets foot on the school bus and is then under the supervision of the bus driver. Mr. Campbell stated that the county takes responsibility when the child leaves the house. Mrs. Rainier stated that the City School System has always maintained that its responsibility begins when the child boards the bus and did not feel the system should accept responsibility beyond the point where we have supervision by an employee. She also added that she does not want the policy to "tie the hands" of teachers when disciplining a student; they need flexibility to deal with misbehaviors on a case-by-case basis. Mrs. Baker will remove the references "or at a school bus stop" from the policy. She will also send this policy to the Board early for review. She encouraged Board members who then have questions regarding STU 22 and STU 23 to call her prior to the May 22 meeting so those policies can be passed on final reading.

STU 43—Use of Personal Communication Devices in School (*Complete Rewrite*)

Mrs. Baker stated that STU 43 has been rewritten to include the definition of personal communication devices and personal electronic devices. She reviewed the definition of a "personal communication device" (PCD) and a "personal electronic device" (PED). She pointed out that the devices can be stored as noted on lines 26-30. The devices cannot be used during the academic day without the approval of the principal or principal's designee or during ESP without the approval of the site director or site director's designee. Lines 39-40 include a reference on the use of these devices to bully.

Mrs. Smith stated that there is inconsistency on how this issue is being handled in schools. She noted that Nooks and Kindles are expensive, and asked what will happen if they are broken. Mrs. Baker pointed out that the school system does not accept responsibility as noted on lines 63-65. Dr. Gilbert stated that she would like to get input from principals as she believes they will want some consistency systemwide. She noted that in past discussions, principals have stated that parents of walkers want their student to carry a cell phone for safety. In response to Mr. Campbell's questions, Mrs. Baker pointed out that these devices cannot be used on a school bus; if devices are taken from the student, they will only be released back to the parent.

Dr. Brown asked that to be consistent personal electronic device be changed to PED. He also asked that on line 50, "A person" be changed to read "Any school personnel." Mrs. Baker stated that on line 63, "assume no responsibility" be changed to "assume any responsibility." She will also add the "bullying" reference to the policy. The policy will be placed in the parent handbook. The policy will be brought back to the Board for approval on first reading.

IV. REVIEW OF May 22, 2012 DRAFT AGENDA

Dr. Gilbert stated that a request has been made for the Board to provide a Resolution to be presented to retiring principal Barbara Sales at her May 20 retirement celebration. Board signatures were obtained, and a copy of the resolution will be emailed to the Board. She stated that "Tentative Assignment Lists" "under Personnel will be removed.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

In response to Mrs. Smith's question regarding "Choice School" offered last year, Dr. Gilbert stated that MNE/P and Bradley are no longer required to offer this. Students who left MNE/P and Bradley as a result of "Choice School" can remain at the school to which they transferred as long as parents can provide transportation.

Mrs. Wade stated that she had been asked to enter into discussion regarding meeting every other month for policy review rather than monthly. Mrs. Baker pointed out that most sections of the policy notebook have been completed, except for the Student section. Mrs. Wade stated that this would provide Mrs. Baker additional time to review and revise policies relative to state statutes. Mrs. Baker stated that the administration would also have additional time for their input. The policies have been under extensive review as many had not been revised for some time; however, with the extensive review of policies taking place, future additional revisions would likely be due to statutory changes. Mrs. Rainier asked if the meetings should be kept for discussions regarding goals and the vision of MCS. Mrs. Phillips suggested those topics be discussed at a retreat. Mr. Washington suggested Board members think about this rather than making a decision at this meeting.

After discussion, it was decided that Alan Bozeman be contacted to determine if the regularly scheduled board meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month could meet at 6:00 p.m. instead of 6:30 p.m. Mrs. Ridley will contact Mr. Bozeman.

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VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Wade adjourned the board meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m.

Director of Schools

MISSION STATEMENT

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