

MINUTES

MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING--
DISCUSSION OF ZONING
Monday, November 11, 2013
7:00 p.m.—Bradley Academy
511 Mercury Boulevard

ATTENDANCE

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

Staff: Director Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Joe Marlin, and Lisa Trail.

Others: Staff Attorney Kelley Baker, Principal Kim Fowler, Assistant Principal Jenny Ortiz, and *Daily News Journal* Reporter Amanda Haggard.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wade called the meeting to order at approximately 7 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION OF ZONING

Mr. Anderson explained that two things had changed since the last zoning meeting. The students residing on either side of Northfield Boulevard from Memorial to Battleground are zoned to Northfield. The district would like to add Mitchell-Neilson as a controlled choice school with a leadership emphasis.

In response to Mrs. Smith's and Mrs. Rainier's question, Mr. Anderson stated that students residing in the district but attending a school out of their zones on zone waivers would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. There are only a few out-of-county students enrolled in the City Schools as the tuition is over \$3,000 per year. When Scales opened, county students were allowed to attend as space was available. However, it was necessary to tweak the zone four years after it opened. The district had to tweak John Pittard's zone two years after it opened. The goal with the current zoning plan is that it will take care of enrollment for five years, but it is difficult to assure this with the current growth in Rutherford County, annexations, etc. Dr. Brown asked if a student attending Mitchell-Neilson based on the controlled choice status would be allowed to remain at that

school if the population increases. Mr. Anderson responded that he does not anticipate there being enough students in that zone to fill the school up.

Mrs. Phillips voiced a concern that the current zoning plan changes the free and reduced percentages at Black Fox from 60% to 86% and at Mitchell-Neilson from 70% to 86%.

Mr. Anderson stated that demographics were not considered in developing the zoning plan. The zoning plan was based on a community school concept, neighbors going to school with neighbors, contiguous zone lines, etc. However, making Mitchell-Neilson a controlled choice school with the leadership emphasis should help to negate some of that issue. It was pointed out that the projection of increased job opportunities on the southwest side of town would positively impact Black Fox. He also reiterated that the current plan is based on all students who are rezoned moving to their newly zoned school, and does not include the grandfathering of rising fifth and sixth grade students who will be allowed to remain at their current school, as well as any school-age siblings. This could be up to 30% of students impacted by the zoning plan. In addition, the total impact would occur over a three-year period. Mrs. Phillips asked that the impact on free/reduced percentages for each school be provided the Board.

Dr. Brown stated that he has some of the same concerns as Mrs. Phillips. He emphasized that the Board and the Director value each child at every school, and would like to see all schools be excellent without major differences. He stated that he would like to know what the district would do to accomplish this. Dr. Gilbert responded that what the district is currently doing has been successful in increasing student achievement. The district has worked to hire good teachers, offer professional development, and with the PLC work that has occurred, look at each child's individual needs.

In response to Mrs. Phillips, Mr. Anderson stated that the current plan was designed to move the smallest number of children, achieve contiguous zone lines without pockets in various zones. Dr. Gilbert added that if there is an identified need, the district will work to address it. Mrs. Phillips stated that she does like the leadership emphasis proposed for Mitchell-Neilson.

Mrs. Phillips stated that she still has a concern regarding special education. Dr. Gilbert explained that the state is looking at blurring the lines between special education and regular education, looking at accommodations, impacting the 1% Portfolio/MAAS test, etc. The proposed plan will move approximately 30 students, adding a fourth school, Reeves-Rogers, that houses CDC classes. Mr. Marlin added that every child that will be moved has been identified, parents will be contacted to discuss their child's move, their concerns, etc. Social stories will be used as well as school visits/tours, etc. Teachers will work to provide similarities in the new school environment to alleviate stress.

Mrs. Smith asked that parents/students be allowed to tour their new school, and that this be on a consistent basis at schools impacted by the rezoning plan. Dr. Gilbert stated that she would look into how to do this and not disrupt instruction that is taking place. Mr. Campbell suggested a spring open house at the various schools, perhaps on a weekend. He also asked that the Board be provided the information regarding the impact rezoning will have on the free and reduced lunch percentages, although he is aware that there is a limit to what can be done to achieve balance with the diversity of the community.

Mrs. Rainier asked if a county parent attending a city school could request to be assigned to the new Overall Creek Elementary. Mr. Anderson stated that this would have to be reviewed. We have four schools that have been closed due to capacity issues. In addition, Bellwood serves city students only, and Discovery has criteria for entry. Thus the district has a total of six schools that are closed.

Mrs. Phillips asked that the district continue dialog with Discovery School parents regarding the move of that student body. Mrs. Wade stated that Board members should send any questions or suggestions to both Dr. Gilbert and Mr. Anderson, as the Board will be voting on a final plan at the November 19 board meeting.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Mary Wade adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:52 p.m.

Director of Schools

MISSION STATEMENT

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