

MINUTES

MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 26, 2013

6:00 p.m.—Council Chambers

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, Sheri Arnette, Caresa Brooks, Patty Kennedy, Greg Lyles, Kristina Maddux, Ralph Ringstaff, and Lisa Trail.

Others: Staff Attorney Kelley Baker, Principal Don Bartch, Councilwoman Madeline Harris, and others.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wade called the meeting to order at approximately 6:05 p.m. followed by a moment of silence in memory of City Schools employee Ms. Tammy Csefalvay and the recent passing of Mrs. Wade's sister, Elsie Easter. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Black Fox sixth grade student Dylan Ryan, the Best of Show winner in the MCS Student Art Show Competition.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Dr. Brown moved to approve the agenda as presented; Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. Mrs. Phillips asked that PER 46—Employee Use of Social Electronic Media (*New Policy*) be removed from the Consent Agenda and be placed as an action item. Mrs. Wade stated that PER 46 would be moved under Action Items. The motion carried by acclamation.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

- Congratulations to the Murfreesboro City Schools Student Art Competition Winners (List provided.) Dr. Gilbert thanked parents for their support and everyone who attended the reception held to recognize winners in the art competition. Mrs. Phillips recognized former Board member Lon Nuell for his contribution to the MCS art programs.
- Congratulations to Greg Lyles who has been appointed by the Governor to serve on the Volunteer Tennessee Board.
- Dr. Gilbert congratulated Vice Mayor Ron Washington, Greg Lyles and Elma McKnight, kindergarten teacher at Erma Siegel, who have been

selected by F.A.I.T.H. for recognition as African-Americans who have contributed to the community.

- Congratulations to Nancy Phillips and “Murph” who have been invited for the second year to the Governor’s Mansion to participate in the March 28 “Egg Roll.”

IV. CONSENT ITEMS (Tab 1)

On motion by Mr. Campbell and second by Mr. Barrett, the following consent agenda items were approved as presented by acclamation.

A. Minutes of the February 26, 2013 Board Meeting and March 12, 2013 Special Called Board Meeting—Policy Work Session

B. School Fees

C. Board Policies (*Second Reading*)

PER 18—Professional Learning (*Complete Rewrite*)

PER 3—Teacher Effect Data (TVAAS) (*Complete Rewrite*)

STU 41—Inspection and/or Challenge of Instructional Material (*Complete Rewrite*)

V. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of Board Policies (*Second Reading*) (Tab 2)

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

Mrs. Baker stated that PER 46 addressed the employee’s use of social electronic media and is designed to help employees when they use social media at work and off work to assure they remember that the professional standards regarding their conduct whether using electronic media or in the public would be held to the same standards under state law and board policies. Mrs. Baker reviewed the policy as provided in the packet, noting the following paragraph:

*Murfreesboro City Schools is comprised of Pre – K through sixth (6th) grade students. The need for an employee to use electronic media to communicate with elementary students instead of parents **requires approval is remote.** Therefore, employees are highly discouraged to communicate with current MCS students through electronic media. ~~In situations where there is a need to communicate with a current MCS student(s) through e-mail electronic media, written permission from the Director of Schools/designee is required or in emergency situations the school principal must be included in the communication.~~ **With written permission from the Director of Schools or designee and parent/guardian, a faculty member may communicate via electronic media with students. The school principal or designee must be included in the communication.** An employee is not subject to these provisions to the extent the employee has a social or family relationship with a student’s parents.*

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Mrs. Phillips stated that the Board has worked well together in an attempt to provide the best possible policy for students. She stated that she does not have a problem with the policy except where the reference begins on the second page regarding electronic communication between employees and students. She voiced a concern that the policy could put employees and students at risk, requires the district to purchase additional data storage and to determine how long to store the data, puts student and employee confidentiality at risk, and would prove very difficult to monitor by parents and administrators if all do not follow the policy's stipulations and/or mandates using various means of electronic communication. She pointed out that as the policy is written, it includes the use of Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, texting, etc. Cases of misuse have been made public through the media. She did not think it wise to open this door.

Mrs. Smith stated that these are valid points, but would it make a difference to minimize the term used in line 49-52 "electronic media" by changing it to "electronic mail (email)" to eliminate the other listed forms of electronic communication, Twitter, Facebook, etc. Mrs. Phillips stated that would be a step in the right direction. Mrs. Rainier stated that when visiting eight schools, she found that only two, either principals or teachers, reported they used email with students. Since then she visited the rest of the schools and none of the others reported they use this medium. She still has valid concerns, does not want the district to fall behind on the technology aspect, but is still not in favor although she will go with the majority. Mr. Barrett stated that he agreed with a lot of what has been said, but feels there could be a compromise eliminating Facebook, Twitter, etc. In response to Mr. Campbell's question, Mrs. Phillips stated that she does not have a problem with communications with parents but does not believe the staff needs to communicate directly with students although she does like Mrs. Smith's suggested compromise of just email as it would be easier to store and monitor. Mr. Campbell agreed that he is in favor of allowing employees to only communicate through email but also only with parents.

Mrs. Smith asked if this could be each building principal's decision, but Dr. Gilbert noted that the principals have voiced their desire that in general there be consistency throughout the district, and with students and/or employees transferring within the district, the consistency would be necessary. Mr. Campbell agreed that it should be consistent throughout the district. Dr. Gilbert stated that she has asked that principals be copied due to situations that have happened in other districts.

Dr. Brown stated that this policy has been discussed for some time, and he believes that you cannot prevent teachers from contacting students by email through guidelines, etc. but the Board can have a policy to control by which guidelines this takes place. He moved that the policy be approved with the revision that "electronic media" be changed to "email." Mrs. Smith seconded the motion. Mr. Campbell asked Dr. Brown for clarification that his motion means teachers are allowed to contact students via email only; Dr. Brown responded yes with the stipulations that are there. Mrs. Phillips stated

that policy is important and employees should be held to the expectations set forth by the policy.

On roll call: Barrett—yes; Brown—yes; Campbell—yes; Phillips—yes; Rainier—yes; Smith—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

STU 4—Entrance Age

Mrs. Baker explained that STU 4 was approved on first reading at the last policy session due to the fact that the policy needs to be implemented prior to kindergarten registration. The policy was revised to reflect changes in state law regarding the entry age for kindergarten:

Children entering kindergarten for the 2013-2014 school year shall be five (5) years of age on or before August 31. Students shall be five (5) years of age on or before August 15 for all school years thereafter. Students that attended a state approved preschool during 2012-2013 school year and are five (5) years of age on or before September 30 are also eligible to attend.

In response to Mrs. Smith's question, Mrs. Baker stated that state approved preschools meet the requirements set forth by the state. Dr. Gilbert stated that there is actually a bill that has passed the House and Senate that stipulates what a state approved preschool is so this policy will cover that language. On motion by Mrs. Rainier and second by Dr. Brown, STU 4 was approved as presented on second reading by acclamation.

VI. REPORTS/INFORMATION

A. Construction Update (Tab 3)

Mr. Anderson provided the Board the document titled "District-Wide Construction, Renovation and Major Maintenance Projects Update." He noted that Hobgood's new administration and food service areas are progressing and although behind now should be finished on time. The Bradley elevator contract has been awarded with work to begin April 3rd with a completion date of July 18. The Mitchell-Neilson Elementary gym roof project will begin on May 28th with a projected completion date of July 28. Parking lot resurfacing (filling in potholes and putting down a layer of asphalt) at MNE, MNP, Discovery School, and Bellwood will occur over the summer. The front door security locks and audio/video systems have been installed at eight schools with the others to be completed with the anticipation to go online after spring break.

Mr. Anderson reported that due diligence is occurring on the new school site with surveys being conducted including geotechnical, boundary, topographic, and geothermal conductivity. A seismic test has also been added at a cost of \$2,000 but by doing the study, there was a \$40,000 savings in construction costs. He received the geotechnical report which indicated that there were no findings to indicate that this was an area of

sinkhole activity so indicating that the site can be developed and the degree of risk of sinkhole activity is no greater than at any other site in the geologic setting. The geothermal testing will begin later as will the boundary study and topographic lay of the land.

B. Personnel Update (Tab 4)

C. Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Report (Tab 5)

Mr. Anderson reported that the system is in the black. Sales tax revenue is up \$256,000 over this time last year. Property tax revenue will level off. The district has completed 66.7% of the fiscal year, with revenue at 64.6% and expenditures at 59.7%. In response to Mrs. Rainier, Mr. Anderson stated that the money is like cash flow, and it is important to have the revenue in hand to cover expenses such as payroll, etc. Growth money comes in under a revenue line. The district has one more year of Race to the Top funding which is listed under other state funds. Dr. Gilbert explained that in terms of the four-year Race to the Top funding, the district front-loaded expenditures to provide needed professional development, extra tutors for the ELL students, etc. Now, there are two salaries left for this year and next year.

D. Attendance Report (Tab 6)

Mr. Anderson reported that district enrollment is 7,084 students which is 73 students over projected enrollment, 263 over the first day of the previous year, and 224 over the 9th month enrollment last school year. Pupil:teacher ratios are: K-3, 19.00; Grades 4-6, 20.74; and district totals of 19.62 (percentages based on direct classroom regular ed instruction). Mrs. Rainier stated that although these are grade level averages, there are schools with classrooms that have higher pupil:teacher ratios. In one school, classroom pupil:teacher ratios are high, and the grade level below has more classrooms. Mr. Anderson stated that each school stands alone, but grade levels are established by state law: K-3 – 20.49:1 but allows for one class to be 25:1 and at grades 4-6 allows a 25:1 ratio but allows for one classroom to be 30:1. Dr. Gilbert stated that there are different factors that affect this, such as principal choice to not move students, teachers, etc. But then in other situations, moving students may make the average too low.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Barrett stated that he had participated in the inaugural Murfreesboro Citizens Academy and had learned a great deal about the city and government and encourages the citizens in the community to participate.

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VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Wade adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:48 p.m.

Director of Schools

MISSION STATEMENT
To assure academic and personal success
for each child.