

MINUTES  
MURFREESBORO CITY SCHOOL BOARD  
Tuesday, January 28, 2014  
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, Lea Bartch, Dan Boshers, Caresa Brooks, Shavon Davis-Louis, Karen Hawkins, Greg Lyles, Joe Marlin, Beth Prater, and Lisa Trail.

Others: Staff Attorney Kelley Baker, Councilman Doug Young, Principals Maria Johnson and Lee Wilkerson, Assistant Principals Natalie Hopkins and Christa Campbell, MEA President Ty Batts, and others.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wade called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

OPENING CEREMONY

*Vice Mayor Ron Washington – Proclamation in Recognition  
of Murfreesboro City School Board  
January 19-25, 2014—School Board Appreciation Week in Tennessee*

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Mrs. Phillips and second by Mr. Campbell, the agenda was approved as presented by acclamation.

III. COMMUNICATIONS

- Kory Wells, Read to Succeed's One Book Selection—*The Last Policeman* by Ben H. Winters. Book passed to Board member Nancy Rainier.
- Congratulations to the School Nutrition Department and our schools for recognition by the Department of Human Services External Program Review of the Summer Food Services Program that revealed no deficiencies in recordkeeping.
- Congratulations to the following Discovery School students who were winners in the Col. Hardy Murfree Chapter DAR Essay Contest: 1st Place—Emma Kate Jones, 2<sup>nd</sup>—Place Brooke Smithson, 3rd Place—Cameron Bennett (tied with Blackman Elementary).
- Mitchell-Neilson Schools would like to thank Mike Defere with USBank for his generous donation to the school.

- The MCS Outreach Dept. would like to express appreciation to Diane Turnham and the Conference USA 2013 Volleyball Championship participants for donating snack packs to supplement our Backpack Food Program, and the MTSU Human Science Dept., Dr. Beth Emery, Mrs. Stephanie Bush, student leader Alexandra Malone, and other students in Family Centered Community Building II for also donating to our Backpack Food Program.
- Mr. Lyles would like to thank the following for their support of the “Season of Sharing 2013”: General Mills, Jim and Judy Smythe, Unity Free Will, Band of Brothers North Boulevard, Kingwood Church of Christ, Sunnette Peay/Bob Parks Realty, Riverdale ROTC Cadets, Bethel United Methodist Church, St. Marks United Methodist Church, Barnabas Vision, Murfreesboro Police Dept. (Shop with a Cop), Harvest Church, Club YES, Believers’ Chapel, Community Care, St. Rose Church, Toys for Tots, Salvation Army, West Main Mission, Fellowship U. M. Church, MTSU Psychology Dept. Student Organization, and MCS teachers across the district.
- Mrs. Trail thanked MTSU Golf Coach Whitt Turnbow who had recognized the need for coats for our students, and following a Tweet from him, garnered support from the community through donations of coats and funds to purchase coats for students in Rutherford and Bedford counties. Community members can also donate money or coats at the MTSU ball game Thursday evening.
- Introduction of Newly-Appointed Administrators: Maria Johnson—Principal, Scales Elementary; Natalie Hopkins—Assistant Principal, Scales Elementary; Christa Campbell—Assistant Principal, Cason Lane Academy.
- Congratulations to Northfield Elementary’s Lauren Beard who has been named the Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year. This award, presented by the Tennessee Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (TAHPERD), recognizes one outstanding elementary physical education teacher in Tennessee each year.
- Congratulations to Hobgood fifth grade teacher Chick Knitter who was named Tennessee Titan’s Teacher of the Year for the 2013 season by the Titans Radio, American Paper & Twine and Georgia Pacific. Mr. Knitter was recognized during the December 29<sup>th</sup> game receiving four tickets and pre-game sideline access and approximately \$800 in school supplies.

#### IV. CONSENT ITEMS (Tab 1)

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

A. Minutes of the November 19, 2013 Board Meeting

B. School Fees

V. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of A Resolution of the MCS Board in Opposition to a Statewide or Alternate Charter School Authorization or Oversight (Tab 2)

Dr. Gilbert read proposed resolutions in opposition to statewide or alternative charter school authorization or oversight and in opposition to a voucher program in Tennessee. (See resolutions.)

Mrs. Rainier moved to approve both resolutions (Action Items A and B) as presented and read aloud by Dr. Gilbert; Mr. Barrett seconded the motion. The motion carried by acclamation.

B. Approval of A Resolution of the MCS Board in Opposition to a Voucher Program in Tennessee (Tab 3)

VI. REPORTS/INFORMATION

A. Audit Report

Mr. Dell Crosslin of Crosslin & Associates presented the booklet titled “Communication with School Board” to Board members. He reviewed letters to the Board detailing the parameters and extent of the audit. He pointed out that there were no exceptions, no significant findings or material deficiencies found, and this was a clear opinion. There were no fraud or illegal acts. The district was in compliance with governmental rules and regulations. On page 63, there was an isolated error in that money was requested prior to being spent. This was low risk and considered a simple error that was caught and corrected very quickly. Management is working on a procedure that will prevent the incident from happening again. This was not a material exception.

Mr. Campbell asked where the budget’s expenditures exceeding revenue came from. Mr. Anderson replied from fund balance. Expenditures were in part due to the purchase of buses. This is the last year that the district has funding available through Race to the Top, which does fund approximately 2.5 positions through RTTT; however, the district will be looking at the budget for next year due to RTTT going away. The district contracts out the cleaning of the district buildings to GCA at a cost of \$900,000, and he also explained that ESP was not in the red as what the audit shows is the projected budget to actual. The existing General Purpose fund balance is \$6 million. Timing is an issue as one cannot predict actual property and sales tax revenue. The district will not be receiving growth money this year. The district has contracted with Crosslin & Associates for at least the past seven years.

Mr. Anderson thanked Interim Finance Director Beth Prater, and his staff--Marisa Loomis, Rachel Blum, Becky Sally, Dena Thomas, Jo Lasater, and Finance Secretary Pam Holden—for their hard work during the audit process.

### B. Technology Update

Mr. Boshers stated that the rollout of the new technology has begun by providing teachers with their computers first. He referred to the document provided to the Board titled "MCS Technology Upgrade" for a more detailed report of the process that is taking place. Laptop carts have been installed with the combined efforts from the maintenance department and the technology staff. Fifth grade laptops are first to be distributed so they will have time to work with them before the writing assessment in February. Dr. Gilbert stated that this year's writing assessment will be administered online but will not affect the district's accountability. Students are now receiving the laptops, so they will begin the process of becoming familiar with the keyboarding, etc. By having the exposure this year, the district will be ready next year for this type of assessment. Dr. Gilbert stated that the new technology is allowing the district to immerse students in technology. Teachers will be able to keep their Apple computers through May to help during the transition.

Mrs. Hawkins stated that students have just received laptops so instruction on keyboarding will begin. However, keyboarding has been taking place in the classrooms, so she does not see teachers panicking. This year will be a learning experience. All teachers have their computers, have Windows 8, and access to Microsoft 365. Training will take place during the rest of the year, such as FASTT Math, Type to Learn, etc. The DELL representative applied for and received a \$25,000 grant, which will be used to provide training. Lisa Trail also applied for and received a \$5,000 grant for professional development. One teacher per grade level will be trained during the summer and will be the trailblazer for that grade level. Dr. Brown pointed out that the district is not just exposing students to the technology but is immersing the students in technology.

Mrs. Louis explained that the writing assessment will be administered by giving the students one passage with an hour to complete, then a 30-minute break, and a second passage administered with an hour to complete. This will not affect anyone's status this year. Mrs. Hawkins stated that this is practice for the PARCC assessment.

### C. Report on Excellence in Education Celebration

Foundation Chair Doug Young reported that the Excellence in Education Celebration honoring the Dr. Sydney and Mrs. Liz McPhee was a success. The event netted \$90,000. Last year, the Foundation provided \$35,000 in grants to teachers and \$19,000 in parity funds to the district. He thanked the committee members and trustees who worked so hard to make the event a success, and Lisa Trail, Leslie Eatherly, and Greg Lyles. He also thanked the John Pittard students for their excellent performance and the JPE parents for the decorations.

### D. Construction Update (Tab 4)

Mr. Anderson stated that the district is addressing some HVAC issues at Hobgood. The new west elementary school is moving forward with the roofing to begin. Pictures were

provided to the Board. The estimated completion date is July, 2014. Fencing is complete at the shop, Northfield, Siegel, and MNE. Following discussions with Police Chief Glenn Chrisman, the fencing at The Discovery School is on hold. The central office reroofing is taking place but has been hindered by weather. The architect drawings for the foundation work at the Discovery School are basically done. An update will be provided when the project is ready to bid. The district is rebidding the MNE/P exterior doors project, as the district is trying to see if the installation work can be done in-house. Different surface applications are being evaluated for replacement of the playground rubber surface at Siegel due to temperature restrictions.

E. Budget Review Calendar (Tab 5)

Mr. Anderson provided the Board with the budget development timeline for 2014-2015 that allows the completion of the budget prior to the May 1 deadline to present the budget to the City. The Board was given a document on which they can provide input prior to the process beginning. In response to Mrs. Rainier, Mr. Anderson stated that the current year is the last year to receive Race to the Top funding. Mrs. Phillips asked that the Board be emailed information regarding the positions funded through RTTT.

Mr. Anderson stated that as indicated on the document, he suggested the window of April 2-12 for the Board to schedule a budget meeting. In response to Mr. Campbell's question regarding moving Discovery to Bellwood, Mr. Anderson stated that he and staff are working daily on the projected costs and process of making the moves that will take place between now and the beginning of the next school year.

Mrs. Phillips suggested that the Board might wish to meet more than once to work on the budget.

F. Personnel Update (Tab 6)

G. Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Report (Tab 7)

Mr. Anderson reported that the Board has completed 50% of the fiscal year. The district is in the red by \$2.7 million this year compared to \$3.3 million last year. Revenue collections are at 43% compared to 38.2% last year. Expenditures are at 46.2% compared to 44% last year. The district is in good shape.

H. Attendance Report (Tab 8)

The attendance percentage is at 95% compared to 97% last month; however, there is no report of any epidemic illnesses in the district. Pupil teacher ratios are: K-3, 19.11; Grade 4-6, 20.02. Attendance increased by ten students over last month.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Smith thanked teachers and staff who are outside in this cold weather helping with drop-off and dismissals at schools.

Mrs. Phillips stated that Donald Whitmore did an excellent job reciting Martin Luther King's speech on the latest Murph show and encouraged everyone to watch the segment.

Board members thanked the schools for the very nice gifts, posters, letters, books, etc., they received from faculty and students in recognition of Board Appreciation Week.

#### VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Wade adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:40 p.m.

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Director of Schools

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