

MINUTES  
Murfreesboro City School Board  
6 p.m., Tuesday, February 23, 2016  
Council Chambers

ATTENDANCE

Chair Butch Campbell, Jared Barrett, Andy Brown, Phil King, Nancy Phillips, Nancy Rainier, and Collier Smith.

Staff: Dr. Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Sheri Arnette, Caresa Dodson, Tammy Garrett, Greg Lyles, Don Barch, Lea Barch, Gene Loyd, Kim Frank, Misty Dobbs, Stacey Burt, Pam Holden, Joe Marlin, Mary Beth Baker, Alison Payne, and Ralph Ringstaff.

Staff Attorney Kelley Baker and Council Liaison Ron Washington.

Johnson & Bailey: Lyle Lynch

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Overall Creek third grader Branson Huffmire and Northfield third graders Colby Ward, AJ Gaines, Reagan Warren, and Fiona Mallory. A moment of silence immediately followed.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Campbell requested discussion of Director Evaluation be moved before communications on the agenda. Dr. Brown moved to approve the agenda with the suggested change. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. All approved by saying aye.

III. WELCOME RUTHERFORD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR WAYNE BLAIR

Chair Campbell welcomed Rutherford County School Board Chair Wayne Blair to the meeting. Mr. Blair said he is reciprocating Chair Campbell's attendance at the Rutherford County School Board Meeting, and he appreciates the collaboration between the city and county school boards noting that all of the children are Rutherford County's children. Mr. Blair said he believes Murfreesboro City and Rutherford County have two of the very best directors in the state. Dr. Brown commended Mr. Blair on his work in the legislature. Mr. Washington said board members and residents need to be aware of things taking place in the legislature that may be detrimental to the schools and our City noting that Murfreesboro City has now hired a lobbyist.

III.A. REPORT ON DIRECTOR'S EVALUATION

Chair Campbell presented the results of the 2014-2015 Director's Evaluation as compiled and submitted by TSBA. The first section, Appendix A, contained questions regarding the Administrators' Perceptions of Director's Performance Objectives. The total mean score for Appendix A is 4.31 out of a possible 5. Appendix B is the Board's Assessment with a total mean score of 4.25. Annual Objectives fell under Appendix C with a total mean score of 3.52. The Overall Evaluation Score was 4.02.

Ms. Smith asked Dr. Gilbert for her thoughts on the evaluation. Dr. Gilbert said she always looks at the questions of whether she is fair and accessible as well as the relationships with administrators. She said she is very much appreciative of the relationship she has with school principals and central office administrators. Dr. Gilbert said she is overall very pleased and she values the relationship with the Board and appreciates their honesty. Ms. Rainier said that on a five-point scale three is at expectation, and that all of Dr. Gilbert's scores are above that. She said the part that is lower pertains to the test scores. Ms. Phillips said Dr. Gilbert has tremendous grace to be publicly evaluated. She said she does hope the Board will sit down and discuss vision some more. Mr. Barrett said he really appreciates the partnerships Dr. Gilbert has created with MTSU and the community. He said she has an ability to reach out and get partnerships as well as advocate at the local and state levels. Mr. King congratulated Dr. Gilbert on the high marks from the principals adding that they are the front line with children and parents in the community. Dr. Brown and Chair Campbell commended Dr. Gilbert for her evaluation scores as well.

#### IV. COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Gilbert read the following communications:

- ✚ Congratulations to Channel 2 Educator of the Week Kari Tisma. Ms. Tisma is a fourth grade teacher at Overall Creek Elementary School.
- ✚ MCS would like to thank Mulligan Ministries and Whit & Lori Turnbow for their donation of coats for students in need as well as \$2,000 to the Indigent Children's Fund.
- ✚ Congratulations to Academic Coach Sonya Cox who was selected out of 450 applicants for the position of Regional Content Coach for Early Literacy Grades 3-4 by The Tennessee Department of Education. The Regional Content Coach will train thousands of teachers this summer at the State's Regional Educator Summits.
- ✚ Congratulations to Academic Coaches Sonya Cox and Sarah Easterly who have been selected by The Tennessee Department of Education to represent Murfreesboro City Schools as participants in the Tennessee Grade 3 ELA Range Finding Committee.
- ✚ Mitchell-Neilson School and Bradley Academy are proud to announce that their math coach, Rebecca Few, has been invited to be part of the Tennessee Teacher Leadership Collaborative (TTLC), a design team that will develop a coordinated vision of teacher leadership across Tennessee.
- ✚ Congratulations again to Math Coach Rebecca Few for being selected by The Tennessee Department of Education to serve on the 3-5 Mathematics Bias and Sensitivity Review Committee.
- ✚ Congratulations also to Meredith Davis who teaches third grade at Scales Elementary for being selected by The Tennessee Department of Education to serve on the State's Bias and Sensitivity Review Committee.
- ✚ Congratulations to Rebekah Tate, of John Pittard, who has been selected to be a member of the Tennessee Education Association's Teacher Leader Network.

- ✚ Mitchell-Neilson art teacher Sayward Ratliff received a grant from Cheekwood Botanical Gardens and Museum of Art. On March 24, three professional artists will be visiting MNS to demonstrate their crafts for students and share about their careers.
- ✚ Murfreesboro City Schools has been notified that the district will be the recipient of a Math Science Partnership Grant in the amount of \$394,000. This is a partnership with MTSU that will provide 90 teachers with professional development for math.
- ✚ Murfreesboro City Schools has been notified by teacher.org that it is fifth among all state school districts on the list of Tennessee Top School Districts Supporting Teachers.

V. CONSENT ITEMS

Minutes: January 26, 2016 Meeting  
Approval of School Fees (Field Trips)

Ms. Rainier moved to approve the consent items. Mr. Barrett seconded the motion. All approved by saying aye.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

Mr. Anderson presented the Board with information about the Johnson and Bailey contracts before them for Black Fox Elementary School and Bradley Academy.

Approval of Johnson & Bailey Contract – Black Fox

Mr. Anderson advised the Board that this is just the architectural design part of the contract. He said this design splits ten classrooms into two locations putting six on the Kensington side and four towards the Publix store. He told the Board Mr. Lynch of Johnson and Bailey Architects is here to answer questions. Ms. Phillips asked if restrooms need to be added since classrooms are being added. Mr. Lynch said the answer is generally no because the school was already designed to accommodate 1,000 students, and this would put the building back to its original capacity. Ms. Smith inquired about the new space meeting the demands of special needs students. Mr. Marlin said he feels Black Fox students' needs are being met. They both discussed confirming there is flexibility in classroom spaces in future school structures. Ms. Smith asked how Mr. Thompson was included. Mr. Lynch said the floor plan was taken to Mr. Thompson and overall he was good with the plan, but that he was concerned with a recessed area and asked that a wall be built to address that. Mr. Lynch said that minor change is being made. Mr. Lynch said about 30 new parking spaces are being added along Rutherford Boulevard because about 15 spaces on the kitchen side are being eliminated. Dr. Brown asked if Ms. Baker did a legal review of the contract, and Ms. Baker said yes.

Mr. Barrett moved to approve the plans. Dr. Brown seconded the motion. After further discussion regarding flexibility of classrooms with a motion and second on the floor, Chair Campbell requested a roll call vote.

Jared Barrett	<u>Yes</u>	Andy Brown	<u>Yes</u>	Phil King	<u>Yes</u>
Nancy Phillips	<u>Yes</u>	Collier Smith	<u>Yes</u>	Butch Campbell	<u>Yes</u>

The motion passed with six affirmatives. Ms. Rainier, having left the meeting early, was absent for the vote.

Approval of Johnson & Bailey Contract – Bradley Academy

Mr. Anderson said the work on Bradley will be done this summer and completed before school starts again in the fall. He advised the Board this contract is before them to approve the architectural piece in order to move forward with getting bids. After discussion about the plan to eliminate a teacher restroom to create an intervention area, Mr. Lynch said he recommends approval of an architectural contract so that plans can be sent to bidders, and that when the Board meets again, they can let him know of changes and those can be facilitated.

Mr. King Moved to approve the contract for Bradley Academy. Dr. Brown seconded the motion. Chair Campbell requested a roll call vote.

Andy Brown	<u>Yes</u>	Phil King	<u>Yes</u>	Nancy Phillips	<u>Yes</u>
Collier Smith	<u>Yes</u>	Jared Barrett	<u>Yes</u>	Butch Campbell	<u>Yes</u>

The motion passed with six affirmatives, one being absent for the vote.

## VII. REPORTS/INFORMATION

### Update on TN Ready

Dr. Gilbert gave the Board the most recent information about TN Ready testing as per this afternoon. She said she is thrilled that the governor and commissioner have realized this normative test is anything but normative and have released teachers from accountability – but that is only a small piece. She said she believes the scores should not be released publicly and doesn't think TN Ready should be used in any way to impact, students, teachers, administrators, schools, or districts.

She said there are three basic tests: TN Ready given in two parts; WIDA test for ELL (first time online), and MSAA which is for most severely cognitively disabled students. TN Ready is replacing the old TCAP test. Two windows for that, one is February 22 – March 18; the other is April 25-May 6. Murfreesboro is testing the week of March 7 and the week of April 25. Scores will be combined. WIDA is a test for our K-6 ELL students. This is the first time the test will be given online. However, the kindergarten test has to be given one-on-one and we have 109 kindergarteners.

With all of these tests, we are looking at 10 days of instruction that is free from testing for students and teachers. And there are many changes from the past years of testing and many unanswered questions. For example, for the WIDA test, we do not have a lockdown browser yet so we don't know exactly what that online platform will look like. For MSAA, the old portfolio ALT which affects one percent of students, it is the first year the math and ELA assessments will be online. Also for the social studies and science part of MSAA, we do not have directions on how to upload screen shots for those onto MIST.

Dr. Gilbert said students are as ready as possible for TN Ready. Moving the tests back to paper/pencil will cause the ELL and SPED rotation to be shut down for that morning where we would have had that time if online. Proctors are an issue; they are optional and we have a couple of schools opt out of proctors but proctors add protection for teachers, so most want them. Tests will not come pre-slugged with all of the demographic information about each student. Everything has to be filled in presenting a greater chance for mistakes adding the concern about erasures. After testing, she said we have three days to check for discrepancies in student demographics and send it back to the state. Dr. Gilbert said there are a lot of accommodations questions from parents. She said the first portion is administered almost three months earlier and has pushed 80 percent of content back to have it taught by the test date. There are new accountability system with new rubric levels, yet cut scores won't come out until about October. Dr. Gilbert said she will be having a conversation with fellow

superintendents this week, and there are too many questions about the validity of this test. Chair Campbell asked why they would not want monitors (proctors). Dr. Gilbert said she left it up to principals. Chair Campbell asked about the hold harmless resolution. Dr. Gilbert said she wants to speak to superintendents and get information about federal accountability. Chair Campbell said we have sent the message that we are very strongly in favor of our teachers. Dr. Gilbert said she finds it a politically effective to make phone calls and send emails and this Board was very active in that.

Ms. Smith said that one of the schools' sixth grade took the test, and wanted to know what happens with that test. Dr. Gilbert said originally all students would have to take part I, but now state is saying they would not have to take test if they completed and submitted the test, and the state has given a list of students who will not have to re-take the test. Ms. Smith said it seems like all we really need to do right now is support our students and teachers, and let them know that we have got their backs. They should not be judged with what happens in this test and our little people should not be judged. Dr. Gilbert would prefer not to have any labeling, any ranking, or anything this year. Ms. Smith said Dr. Gilbert named so many tests is there a way we can get rid of some of them. She said she would like to see teachers get to creatively teach without having to worry about bubbling in something. Dr. Gilbert said all of the tests she named are state-required. She said the purpose of assessment is supposed to be to improve student learning and this is not what that is, adding that we need to be teaching children how to learn and not just how to take a test.

Dr. Brown asked if the district buys ibuprofen in bulk. Dr. Gilbert said if people did not care about children, they would not be here. Dr. Brown said he cannot imagine a more complicated situation than has developed, and does not see how public schools can succeed in doing what they are being asked to do. He said he understands the personal contact, but would like this Board to consider going ahead tonight and approving some kind of written communication that expresses the Board's frustration with how this is being handled. Dr. Gilbert said she would be happy to prepare that resolution again. Mr. Barrett asked if it would be ready in time, and Dr. Gilbert said it would. Ms. Phillips said she has no idea how this circus developed, but she commends MCS staff for juggling this debacle. Chair Campbell said he would hope that people at the state level would take this off of administrators, schools, students, or anyone else involved in testing. Dr. Gilbert said she appreciates the commissioner's communication, but this year's tests has too many problems to be valid.

#### School Psychologists Report Presented by Mary Beth Baker and Alison Payne

Mr. Marlin introduced Ms. Baker and Ms. Payne who gave an 11-slide PowerPoint presentation to the School Board on the mission, and roles and responsibilities of the school psychologists. School psychologists are uniquely qualified with specialized training and a distinctive skill set. Dr. Gilbert noted the state provides for only three psychologists, but our district has a total of eight.

#### Revenue and Expenditure Report

Mr. Anderson gave an overview of this month's Revenue and Expenditure Report. He said this is the month we finally go into the black and get out of the negative noting that sales tax is up significantly as well as property taxes, although property taxes are not due until February 28<sup>th</sup>. He said the district has been notified by the state that we will receive growth payments again this year, having grown by 357 students year to date. Mr. Anderson said there is an estimated \$1.2 million in BEP money coming to the district. He said revenue collections are up 57 percent, and we are at the 58.3 percent mark of the school year. On the expenditure side, Mr. Anderson said 51.8 percent of the budget has been spent.

#### Personnel Report

Dr. Gilbert said the Personnel Report was before the Board and if they have any questions Mr. Ringstaff is in attendance. Ms. Smith asked when the job fair is being held. Mr. Ringstaff said March 19 from 9-11. He said all principals will be there interviewing candidates. He said we are taking applications and interviewing right now. He said the district will be hiring between 80 and 100 teachers this year.

#### Enrollment (PTR) Report

Mr. Anderson reviewed the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) Report as of January 29, 2016, noting 8,420 total district students with a 19.85 PTR, and average attendance at 98 percent.

### VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Phillips expressed appreciation to Ms. Spencer and staff for allowing her to talk about legislative issues, and thanked Mr. Washington for going along with her. Chair Campbell announced a memorial service is being held Saturday at 10 a.m. for longtime educator Dr. Mary Tom Berry.

### IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Barrett moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Brown seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:11 p.m.

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Director of Schools