

MINUTES  
MURFREESBORO CITY SCHOOL BOARD  
Tuesday, November 25, 2008  
6:30 p.m.—Central Administration Building

ATTENDANCE

Board: Chair Mary Wade, Susan Andrews, Ray Butrum, Butch Campbell, Nancy Duggin, David Hopper, Nancy Phillips, and Council Liaison Ron Washington.

Staff: Director Marilyn Mathis, Gary Anderson, Danielle Kaminsky, Crystal Roshon, Michelle Hummel, and Lee Wilkerson.

Others: City Staff Attorney Kelley Baker, MEA President Debbie Hickerson, *Daily News Journal Reporter Chasity Gunn*, principals, and others.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Wade called the Murfreesboro City School Board meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. Principal Robin Newell led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

- Chair Wade presented Mr. Hopper with a token of appreciation in recognition of his years of service as Board Chair.
- Congratulations to Board member Dr. Susan Andrews who won Second Place in the Read to Succeed Spelling Bee.
- Retired MCS teacher Judy Turner presented \$1,200 to the Hobgood Library in memory of former teacher Mrs. Margaret Rucker who passed away June 28, 2008. The donations were made by friends and former colleagues of Mrs. Rucker. Mrs. Rucker's daughter, Tricia, was presented with a booklet containing memories of Mrs. Rucker.
- Congratulations to Scales Elementary sixth-grade student Erin McKee whose artwork was chosen to be part of the Holiday Project 2008 benefiting Vanderbilt Children's Hospital. Her holiday card "Snow Girl" can be viewed at [vanderbiltchildrens.org/holidayproject/category.php?cat\\_id=2](http://vanderbiltchildrens.org/holidayproject/category.php?cat_id=2)
- Congratulations to Discovery School Assistant Principal Patsy Davis, sixth grade teachers Stacey Burt and Kristy Mall, and technology support teacher Shavon Louis who have been selected to present at the Tennessee Educational Technology Conference to be held in Nashville this December.
- Congratulations to The Discovery School sixth graders who competed in the Robotics and BEST competition against students in grades 6-12. The Discovery

School team placed seventh in the robotics competition and won the best original T-shirt award.

- Snow Report--Inclement Weather Communication; ESP has designated snow sites: Northfield, Scales, Bradley, and Bellwood-Bowdoin Preschool. Local City Cable 3, WGNS radio station, and major television stations (2, 4, 5, and 6) are called to announce a change in school hours.
- The Board will not have a regularly scheduled December board meeting; however, the Board will meet in a special session on December 2, 2-7 p.m., at the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce Building, 501 Memorial Boulevard.
- Due to additional state requirements, the audit report is delayed until the January 27 board meeting.
- As in past years, the School Board has provided each school with \$10 per school-based full-time and part-time employee for a food-based holiday celebration.
- Mrs. Mathis shared that the basketball game played by teachers on November 24 was a great success. The goal was to raise food for the system's Family Resource Centers. Senator Jim Tracy and Mayor Tommy Bragg coached the two teams.
- Mrs. Wade welcomed members of Youth Leadership to the board meeting.

### III. CONSENT ITEMS (Tab 1)

On motion by Mrs. Phillips and second by Dr. Andrews, the following consent agenda item was approved:

- A. Minutes of the October 28, 2008 regularly scheduled board meeting.

### IV. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Renaming, Revision and Affirmation of Board Policy BO 38—School Board Accountability Standards (Tab 2)

Mrs. Mathis explained that this policy has to be renamed because the state has enacted a law that every school board must adopt an ethics policy. What the state is mandating and what the board has had as an ethics policy are different. The state's policy requires disclosure on gifts received and conflicts of interest that will be discussed later in this meeting. The changes in the Board's current ethics policy would be to rename the policy and change "ethics" in paragraph one to "standards." The body of the policy remains the same.

Mr. Campbell moved to approve BO 38 as presented behind Tab 2; Dr. Andrews seconded the motion. On roll call: Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes; Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Hopper—yes; Phillips—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried. Mrs. Wade asked Board members to sign the revised policy.

B. Approval of the 2008-09 Board/MEA Contract (Tab 3)

Mrs. Mathis stated that she is pleased that they have reached a tentative agreement with MEA. She thanked Mr. Wilkerson for his work as the Board's chief negotiator and Mr. Anderson for working with him during this process. Mr. Wilkerson explained that the revisions from the prior year are found in Article VI under Salaries. The salary increase for teachers ranged from 6.4% to 7% on the local portion of the teachers' salary depending on the pay lane for each level of experience and education. This equates to 1.2% on the total salary for teachers. Another change is listed under differentiated pay; we are keeping the language the same but added the following definition for a hard to fill position or shortage: *A shortage of qualified teachers exists when there are no qualified and properly endorsed applicants for an open position.*

This is the last year of a three-year contract period. June 30, 2009 will begin negotiations for the full contract. Dr. Andrews thanked everyone for their participation. Mr. Wilkerson clarified that there were no additional dollars from the state.

Dr. Andrews: This does reflect the economy as it is today, and I wish the Board could do more.

Dr. Butrum: I would like to thank Mr. Wilkerson and Mr. Anderson for representing the Board. I would like to request that we have a report in January from MEA, and let them share with us how they thought the process went. I have talked to several teachers that felt like this should have been done long before November. Looking back over the past seven or eight years, we have always gone past the beginning of school and in two or three cases, we have gone to mediation. I did attend one of those meetings, and of course I did not participate, and watched and just felt like there was a lot of tension between the teams. And of course when you represent us, we really don't know all of the specifics of what is being said and what is going on, so I would like to get some feedback from MEA and get a report of how they felt like the negotiations went, maybe what they would like for next year, when they would like to start negotiations, and maybe involve them in the budget process, too. Because once we vote on the budget, there is very little we can do as a system as far as getting more money, so maybe we should involve them a little earlier. But I would like to have them come report to the Board and give their feelings of how the process went because I don't think we got all of their reactions, and I would like to get that.

Dr. Butrum moved that the Board approve the 2008-09 Board/MEA Contract; Mr. Hopper seconded the motion. On roll call: Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes;

Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Hopper—yes; Phillips—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

Mr. Hopper: I read the *Daily News Journal* article and was a little confused about some of the things in that. What was the average increase we offered to the teachers from the city?

Mr. Wilkerson: It is hard to get an average because we negotiated on the dollar amount. They ranged from 6.4% in some pay lanes to as high as 7% on the local portion in those particular pay lanes.

Mr. Hopper: What was the average Rutherford County teacher pay raise?

Mr. Wilkerson: To my understanding, it was 5% on the local portion of salaries with no state money.

Mr. Hopper: In addition to the percentage raise, most teachers get a step raise too?

Mr. Wilkerson: That is correct.

Mr. Hopper: But MEA does not count step increases as a raise even though they make more money than they did last year.

Dr. Butrum: Weren't those step increases negotiated one time a long time ago. So we really can't bring the step increases up if we are giving a percentage raise on either the local portion, the state portion. I understand what Mr. Hopper is saying, but if you say one teacher made more money because they have ten years experience and a master's degree, that is because they went back and got a master's degree. Those steps are already negotiated. So when we say we are giving them a 5% raise just because somebody is making more money than somebody that will equate to a little higher rate because they are making more money in steps that were negotiated years ago.

Mr. Wilkerson: Step raises would be part of negotiations, but it would be a very difficult process for the Board's rep and MEA to go in and open up new negotiations on each of the steps. Most negotiations avoid that as you said they were negotiated some years ago. It is a difficult process.

Mrs. Phillips: But I think it is important to remember that while they were not negotiated this year, that increase of money does come from our school system. It is extra money we are paying, so I think it is important to at least acknowledge that.

Dr. Butrum: I don't know if it is extra; it is money that we know about when we set our budget.

Mrs. Phillips: It is extra, additional money even if it is in our budget.

Dr. Butrum: But not part of the negotiation raises.

Mrs. Phillips: No.

Mr. Hopper: What I am getting at is that an employee made "x" amount of dollars last year, they got a step raise which is automatic, and then they got a percentage increase on top of that. So what I am looking for is how much more money they are making this year than they made last year. We talk about getting a 1% raise, but then it doesn't include steps and it is so confusing. I think the taxpayers and the teachers need to understand that. I have got several more questions, and if I would not be interrupted I would appreciate it. Does the state salary schedule have steps in it?

Mr. Wilkerson: Yes.

Mr. Hopper: So the state did in effect increase the teacher's pay.

Mr. Wilkerson: Yes. The state's step increases are smaller than the system's, but there are steps in the state salary schedule.

Mr. Hopper: I'm just trying to understand. What is the source of funds for the local percentage raise?

Mr. Wilkerson: All local funds from Murfreesboro City taxpayers.

Mr. Hopper: What is the source of the step raises?

Mr. Wilkerson: Local funds (from Murfreesboro City taxpayers).

Mr. Hopper: In addition to the percentage raise, did most teachers get the step increase also?

Mr. Wilkerson: Yes. Through fifteen years, each teacher gets a step raise, and at twenty we pay longevity of \$750, and at twenty-five they get an additional longevity increase of \$900.

Mr. Hopper: Out of the Murfreesboro City teachers' salary schedule, how do they compare to the lifetime earnings of other state schoolteachers?

Mr. Wilkerson: The most recent TEA publication on scheduled salaries has MCS ranked tenth in the state for thirty-year earnings potential; \$1.5 million is the dollar amount.

Mr. Hopper: How do their lifetime earnings compare to the average lifetime earnings statewide?

Mr. Wilkerson: It is about \$200,000 more than the statewide average.

Mr. Hopper: So our teachers would make \$200,000 more over the lifetime of their employment in their employment with the city?

Mr. Wilkerson: Yes, over a thirty-year career.

Dr. Butrum: Is that...

Mr. Hopper: Excuse me, Dr. Butrum, let me finish my question. How did the Murfreesboro teachers' average salary compare to the Rutherford County's average salary?

Mr. Wilkerson: Currently, at a Bachelor's degree, Murfreesboro City teachers make on the average \$1,650 more, and at the Master's level \$1,808; Master's Degree +30 compared to Rutherford County's +45, the difference is \$2,675; Ed.S. is \$2,852; Doctorate \$4,262.

Mr. Hopper: So our system pays substantially more than the county?

Mr. Wilkerson: Rutherford County ranks 14<sup>th</sup> in the state in the 30-year earnings category. The difference between 14<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> on the lifetime career earnings is approximately \$100,000.

Mr. Hopper: Do administrators get step raises in addition to percent increases? Central office staff?

Mr. Wilkerson: No, sir.

Mr. Hopper: Does MEA understand that?

Mr. Wilkerson: Yes, I think they do.

Mr. Hopper: In the last southeastern average salaries study, we found that Murfreesboro City teachers' salaries were competitive with salaries paid to teachers in the southeastern average, but the administrators salaries paid were below the southeastern average. Do we have any information indicating if we have caught the administrators up, any inflation factor?

Mr. Wilkerson: I am not familiar with that study but would like to look at that study.

Dr. Butrum: On that study, is that based on the beginning teacher's salary with no experience?

Mr. Wilkerson: According to the document that I have, it is calculated as follows. They look at a B.A. with 1-5 years, a Master's with 6-12 years, and a Master's +30 from 13-30 years. They track it assuming that a teacher would have a bachelor's for the first five years, and in the sixth year through twelfth would have a master's degree, and a master's +30 for the duration of their career. It looks at dollar amounts as though continuing education is a part of that formula.

Mr. Campbell: If I look at the salary sheet, I can determine the amount of money that the state is giving on a teacher's salary by looking at zero experience and then looking at one year's experience and the difference there of \$445, that's what the state has put in.

Mr. Wilkerson: That would be a typical state step.

Mr. Campbell: And then if I go to the local column, the difference between the \$4,859 and the \$5,225 is what we as a local system is putting in locally.

Mr. Wilkerson: That is correct; but what I would like to point out in that regard is that steps vary; they are not standard across the board.

Mr. Campbell: Do administrators get the step increase?

Mrs. Mathis: No. They are on a separate schedule because they are part of the management team and their salaries are not negotiated through MEA.

Mr. Campbell: They don't get even as a teacher?

Mrs. Mathis: No.

Mr. Campbell: I understand MEA negotiates for teachers; what happens to the cafeteria workers, secretaries, E.A.s? Do they get an increase?

Mr. Wilkerson: Yes. Historically, there is an attempt by Murfreesboro City to give the same percentage raise for classified personnel that licensed personnel receive. When there is money available, there has been every effort to provide classified personnel the same raise.

Mr. Campbell: Do we have money available for that this year?

Mr. Wilkerson: Yes sir.

Mrs. Mathis: But their increase will be 1.2% on their total salary whereas the teachers are getting approximately 6% on the local portion because the custodians and so on: Their salaries are not broken down by state and local.

Mr. Campbell: Those people are all paid by local funds.

Mrs. Mathis: We do get state funds, but it is not broken down on the local level.

Dr. Andrews: The teachers are getting anywhere from a 1.2% increase up to close to 5% just depending where they are.

Mrs. Mathis: Including their step.

Dr. Andrews: Right.

Mr. Hopper: I was looking at the salary schedule, and I get aggravated when press releases are made that we are giving 1% raises when, for example, a teacher with a bachelor's degree and ten years' experience with the percentage raise, state and local, will be making 3.5% more this year than he/she made last year. Is that correct?

Mr. Wilkerson: That is correct.

On roll call: Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes; Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Hopper—yes; Phillips—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

Dr. Butrum: I would like to make a motion that we ask MEA to give us a report at the January board meeting on their perspective of the negotiation process and some requests for next year to the Board.

Mr. Campbell: Second.

Mrs. Duggin: Do I understand that the purpose of this meeting would be to give the Board a better insight into what MEA is thinking since we will be opening up the entire contract for next year?

Dr. Butrum: Yes, I think it would be beneficial for the Board to know or be on the same playing field going into not just the negotiations but the budget process and be nice to hear from MEA their wishes before we really get into it in March or April.

Mr. Hopper: What are you referring to with wishes? Like salary amount or items to negotiate, or what?

Dr. Butrum: When they start negotiating, how negotiations take place, if everything was taking place to their satisfaction. I would just like to get their input. We hear nothing from them. When I attended one of their sessions, it seemed like there was a lot of tension between the two groups, and if we are being represented, I don't want that tension to be there for me or for this Board.

Dr. Andrews: One of the things that TSBA points out when they talk about negotiations and give us information about that, they strongly recommend that we do not attend negotiations, that we try to maintain our nonpartisan position, and that one of the benefits of having a negotiating team is that negotiations are by nature somewhat stressful. They can be more antagonistic than working together, and we have talked about changing that. But I don't know that having MEA come and speak here directly, I don't see how that would be beneficial to the negotiations process or to our Board. From the reading that I have done advising school boards on how we are to behave in negotiations and how we are to proceed, that would be antithetical to what they recommended. I am always happy to have a teacher talk to me, receive letters or phone calls. I do get comments from people, but I don't think a board meeting is the proper forum for that. I think that we need to be very, very careful as board members to act in a very nonpartisan fashion with MEA. We need to be representing our students, our teachers, and our community and not get involved in a partisan way.

Mr. Washington: I am not a Board member, but I will make this comment. In the business world, that request, Dr. Butrum, does not happen. That does not happen. It works exactly the way Dr. Andrews said.

Dr. Butrum: Well, again I made the request because I feel we as a Board are not always given all the information of things that are going on, and I just think it would be beneficial to how we could improve our negotiations process from MEA. I mean we don't have to get it in a board report but maybe something in writing from them if they would be willing to send us some survey results of how

the process went. We are not involved, but we are being asked to approve these things that are being discussed in these meetings. And, I know if you go and visit one, you don't have to be a part of it, but observe and see what is happening.

Mr. Washington: All I am saying is that in the business world that is not happening.

Dr. Andrews: That is right.

Dr. Butrum: We are not a business.

Mr. Washington: Oh yes you are.

Dr. Andrews: We had better be. We are a business, and we had better act professionally.

Dr. Butrum: But we don't function as a business with business rules. I know we are in the business of children, and yes I understand that.

Mr. Hopper: I agree with Dr. Andrews that that recommendation is totally contrary to all Tennessee School Board Association training we have ever been to. The thing that puzzles me is the comment about dragging on for months. The Rutherford County Schools' board settled with their teachers' union two or three months ago for less money, and we pay higher salaries, and MEA kept dragging out negotiations. So I don't know if it's all one side on this thing.

Mrs. Phillips: I have the greatest and deepest respect for MEA and if there is something to be communicated, I think there is a better venue than a board meeting. I want to be careful that we do not undermine the authority or the respect of our negotiating team. I think it is important to maintain clearly delineated roles in the process of the negotiation and not be partisan as Dr. Andrews had suggested.

Mr. Campbell: I seconded Dr. Butrum's motion, and I have got to give Mr. Wilkerson some credit. I attended one of the sessions, and it was the last one. I sat in the floor and listened, but I found that on that particular meeting, maybe not always, but I found that both sides were pretty congenial with each other. In fact, as soon as everybody agreed to the salary and the language they began talking about when can we begin talking about next year. Both sides said yes let's take a couple of months off before we begin the process. I don't, and this may be contrary to Tennessee School Board I'm not that familiar with it, but just because the MEA gives us some ideas on what they might like to have negotiated next year that doesn't mean that we are obligated to do so. I don't think it would hurt

for us to listen. We are all concerned about making things public and having everything televised and all and it's just another ear to listen to.

Dr. Butrum: I withdraw my motion.

Mr. Campbell: I withdraw my second, but I would still like to hear from some other folks because I think hearing from all sides sometimes helps to understand what is going on.

Mr. Hopper: That sounds real good, but you are dealing with a union. You have just got to understand that.

Mr. Campbell: I would have to disagree a little bit, Mr. Hopper, because for years I was part of that union and I don't consider it as a union. I consider it as a group of professionals. We don't look at doctors and lawyers as a union. My background is education. I've been there and done that, and I want to hear what everybody has to say and then make up your mind. I withdraw the second to the motion.

Mrs. Wade: Okay.

Mrs. Duggin: I just want to say that I think that something can be worked out so that both sides feel there is clear communication and that everyone's voice is being heard. It is an association of some very hard-working people, and I know we have talked about changing the style of the negotiations that we do in this system. I think if we are going to move to that point, there has got to be not just talking but true collaboration. So in the future, I would like to see us pursue some conversation that would allow for greater means for there being that kind of communication but still allow us to maintain our stance as a Board and their stance as an association, so there isn't a conflict of interest, but that our teachers truly feel that their voice is heard and that they know where we stand, individually and collectively as a Board. Because when we speak, we speak as one voice.

Dr. Andrews: I think we had talked about that when negotiations were over, changing the style of our negotiations—interest-based bargaining.

Mr. Wilkerson: The process would have to begin now. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation service offers a free training for interest-based bargaining. There are certain criteria that if MCS really puts forth in terms of what it takes to be successful. They make it clear that it is a very difficult process that calls for a tremendous amount of trust between the two groups. The difference between adversarial bargaining and interest-based bargaining is vast in terms of what it takes. So the first step would be to attend a training session with the FCA to see

if we are ready to begin the process. One of the cautions that I have heard from that organization is that you have to go into it one hundred percent. Because if you try it and it doesn't work, it's worse than it was before with higher levels of mistrust. There would have to be a consensus both among the Board and MEA that they want to pursue this as a means to reach an agreement.

Mrs. Phillips: I have long been a proponent of interest-based bargaining, and we talked about this at the last Board retreat. You gave us a brief update on the process of negotiations. I am very supportive of this process.

Mr. Wilkerson: There was some discussion early in the negotiation process about would we begin this process. Initially, we had hoped to have a quick settlement. That was one of the ideas. Usually some of the sticking points are salary issues. With no state money and the economic downturn, it really made things difficult for all parties involved. I don't think MEA has abandoned the idea. They haven't talked about it much. It is worth looking into, but it is a process that will require certain criteria to be met on both sides to be successful.

Mrs. Duggin: I would like to suggest that we contact some school systems that do use interest-based bargaining and do it quite well: that you and the chief negotiator for MEA have some conversations with those people for us to avoid pitfalls because like you said it takes bargaining to a higher level and there has to be great trust on both sides to be effective.

Mrs. Wade: Mr. Wilkerson, thank you for the conversation we have had concerning this.

## V. REPORTS/INFORMATION

### A. School Reports: Hobgood Elementary, Principal Barbara Sales Northfield Elementary, Principal Gene Loyd

Mrs. Sales thanked the Board for the opportunity to share the wonderful things going on at Hobgood and Micky Brooks for providing them assistance in developing the presentation. Teacher Amy Brooks stressed that offering students healthy choices at a young age increases their chances of a healthy lifestyle as an adult. Hobgood places this emphasis on improving student health through exposure to healthy foods, a walking for fitness program, mobile cooking cart, and the wii exercise program, etc. Ms. Jana McClain shared that Hobgood has a diverse ESL student population—36% white; 35% black; 26% Hispanic; 3% other. Approximately 92% of the student population participates in the free and reduced lunch program. She stated that she feels blessed to be in a place that honors diversity and with teachers who work to integrate an appreciation of that

diversity in lessons through projects, literature, read-alouds, etc. Celebrations include Hispanic Heritage Month activities involving collaboration with the entire community as well as parent involvement. Presentations were broadcast, students served as ambassadors for their country, and a flag competition was held. Teachers collaborate through teamwork to honor this diversity through instruction by discussing students one-by-one to assure their needs are being met. Quinena Bell explained that individualized instruction for each student is a focus at Hobgood. Student test data is reviewed by grade level teachers, and then teachers review their individual students' test scores. They also use other resources such as Response to Intervention, Running Records, predictive assessments, etc. Assistant Principal Michelle McVicker explained that Hobgood has expanded their intervention model to include inclusion to minimize the amount of time that students are out of their regular classroom environment. ELL services push in to the classrooms with the ELL teacher and regular educational assistants providing intervention. All certified special area teachers also do 1-4 rounds of intervention in specific classrooms. Every single classroom receives inclusion-type services from special educators, from ELL resources, from E.A.s as well as from other certified staff. Classroom teachers receive multiple sources of individual tutoring services within the classes.

Chick Knitter addressed the Board to discuss the NASA partnership designed to assist selected schools to promote the science, technology, and mathematics curriculum in classroom grades four through nine across the U.S. The program targets schools with high percentages of underserved populations. A key component is increased family involvement. Over 300 people participated in Hobgood's NASA Family Night. Funding for the implementation of the NASA program has expired, but many opportunities are still available for students such as NASA video conferences such as the one with aquanauts in training, professional development using such resources as MTSU, travel to regional and national meetings, etc. The first Math Night will take place this year on December 15. The true benefits of the program are the opportunities offered to impact the children, and they have had numerous opportunities. They will continue seek out sources of funding to continue to offer and expand these opportunities and partnerships with businesses and individuals. Mr. Mel Prater reported that the greenhouse at Hobgood has become very active through the efforts of the sixth graders and MTSU. The plant sale held by the students raised \$1,000 that will be used to continue to support the program. Being a NASA school, the Global Friendship Through Space Education Program contacted Hobgood to invite them to be a part of their school science program. Students were paired with two schools in Turkey and were able to communicate via email. In addition to the science experiences, students shared information about their cultures. As an optional part of the program, Mr. Prater and three students attended Space Camp in Turkey. Carrie Anderson and Sam Meyers reported on

their trip to Turkey. Librarian Sara Roediger explained that every year she gathers information from teachers and students and analyzes test score data to see how the library can best support curricular needs. As math was identified as a need, Mrs. Roediger submitted a grant to the City Schools Foundation and was awarded a grant with which she was able to purchase 89 books dealing with math literacy. Mrs. Sales added that Hobgood has a team that works together to support the need of each child, celebrating successes, accomplishments, and nurturing student growth. The school maintains a culture of high expectations; unquestionable ethics and dedication creates a successful learning community. They are proud of Hobgood, its students, and parents. Dr. Andrews, Mrs. Phillips and Mr. Hopper stated that they are very proud of Hobgood School. There are expectations, and the students do live up to those expectations.

Dr. Gene Loyd stated that at Northfield kids come first. A brochure with information about Northfield including report card information is provided to visitors and others in the community. He reported that Northfield has been celebrating their success in bringing their value added in math from a C to a B. Students and teachers have been rewarded through various activities. He thanked Micky Brooks for his assistance in putting together the presentation. He noted that resources are focused on curriculum, supporting the literacy program responsive classroom, math, and technology. An after-school tutoring program for at-risk kids, offered through ESP and extended contracts and including transportation, currently assists about fifty-five students. They are proud of their literacy program. At the end of the school year, about 90% of the faculty and staff will be trained in the first part of the literacy program. The responsive classroom has a management technique to it. The morning greeting works on communication skills with students verbally sharing various topics with each other. Math journals also provide an exercise in vocabulary. The technology program includes "COWS," computers on wheels, that teachers have access to through a checkout procedure. The CPS system engages students 100% of the time as each student is provided a remote to answer questions and receive immediate feedback on their accuracy. Northfield serves its ELL students by pushing in with teachers and with more individualized instruction. Four CDC classrooms are located at Northfield and every effort is made to try to include them in everything going on. Community and student participation is encouraged through spirit week, crazy hair day, hat day, etc. Turkey Trot was a great day for community involvement and positive activities. MTSU cheerleaders partner with Northfield. The PTO works hard and provides great support. Other successful activities include Grandparents' Day, Read to Succeed Day, the Science Olympiad. Students are very involved through the Coordinated School Health Program, enjoying the playground provided by that program. Basketball has been fun and exciting. Chorus, band, and the Student Council are great programs. Dr. Loyd stated that what is truly special about Northfield is—the students. Dr. Loyd

thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak to them about Northfield. Dr. Butrum, Mrs. Duggin, Mrs. Phillips and Dr. Andrews all spoke to their personal connection to these schools and thanked the teachers and administrators for what they do to provide students the best education possible.

B. 2008 State Report Card Letter Grades (Tab 4)

Mrs. Mathis stated that the Board has already had an extensive report in August on the system's adequate yearly progress (AYP). Although the grades are almost seven months old, and there are great things going on in the school system, they do help the system to become aware of areas of strength and the areas that need to be strengthened. The teachers have worked very hard to get good grades for students, and we are very proud of these grades. The system's academic achievement letter grades are: Math--A, 93% performed at a proficient or advanced level, 50.6%; Reading/Language Arts—A, 94% performing at an advanced or proficient level (the percent advanced actually increased from 48% to 50.4%); Social Studies—B; Science—B. A "B" indicates that we are exceeding what is expected of children. The system received an A in writing with 93% of the students performing at a proficient or advanced level. Mrs. Mathis reviewed the graphs and pictorial charts indicating that the system has maintained/shown growth since 2004 in the subjects as indicated. She pointed out that three A's and two B's are grades to be very proud of, and she is very proud of the teachers and students who have worked so hard. She noted that in value added, for the first time since 2004, the system received a C in math. She explained that a C indicates that a student succeeded in achieving one year's growth in that particular subject. To get a B, you have to exceed the state's growth standard and to receive an A you have to be exceptional. Progress in math has gone up and down, and the system is working on this subject.

All A's and B's in academic achievement indicate that the system performs consistently above the state requirements. Eight out of ten schools received all A's and B's in achievement on their report card. In value added, students performed at an exceptional level in the areas of reading, language arts and social studies. In science, student performance in science exceeded the state's growth standard. In math, students maintained the state growth standard. In writing, 93% of fifth graders scored in the competent and outstanding range. The system will be working with the Hispanic and limited English proficient students to meet the benchmarks set by the state.

Mrs. Mathis stated that she has chosen to receive assistance from the state to review what we have been doing. Mrs. Carol Stinson, a State Technical Assistance Team member, has been working with the system for about a month.

Mrs. Stinson stated that she has been a teacher, assistant principal, principal and Supervisor of Elementary Education, Curriculum, and Instruction for the Robertson County Board of Education. She appreciates the opportunity to work in this wonderful school district. She spent two days with Mrs. Mathis and meeting with principals and stated that Murfreesboro City Schools has some of the best administrators in the State of Tennessee. She toured every school speaking with principals, approximately 90-95% of teachers, students, support staff, receptionists, and parents. She stated that the Board should be proud that we have the type of schools that nurture children, and she would be proud to have her child attend any one of the schools.

Mrs. Stinson stressed that she is here to help the system move forward and students to achieve even more. No one has all the answers, but the Board has more talent and expertise in this room of administrators. As a team they can figure out what needs to be done, examine current practices to see what works well, what needs to be tweaked, and what needs to be aside and be done differently. She has seen a commitment to the literacy collaborative initiative and has seen the literacy coaches, technology staff, and professional staff working side by side. The system has made great decisions and moved the system in the right direction in so many ways. Mrs. Wade stated that after hearing such praise from someone outside the system, she would like for the Board to give the teachers, administrators, and others a hand for their hard work and successes.

C. Proposed New Board Policy BO 40—Code of Ethics (Tab 5)

Mrs. Baker explained that during the 2008 legislative session, the Tennessee General Assembly amended the comprehensive governmental ethics reform act of 2006 to recognize that local boards of education are separate governmental entities that can adopt their own ethical standards. Currently the Board operates under the city's ethical standards. The Board can now adopt their own ethical standards policy. TSBA was asked to draft a model policy that Mrs. Baker has changed to better serve a school system of this size and some of those issues. The policy basically requires all employees, board members, and others involved in the school system to disclose if they have personal interest in items they will act on. The policy also requires a strategy and disclosure of gifts over a dollar amount to be set by the Board. It prohibits the acceptance of any gift if that particular gift has strings attached requiring a board member to vote or award a contract a certain way. If it is just a gift at Christmas time or for recognition or appreciation, you can accept it but must disclose it if over a certain dollar amount. Dr. Andrews suggested that \$100 be placed in the policy for the Board to discuss at retreat prior to voting on the policy. Mrs. Baker also added that the section addressing acceptance of gifts and other things of value comes straight from board policy BO 34 that is already in place. Mrs. Wade stated that if the Board has any

questions or suggestions for Mrs. Baker regarding the policy, please copy those to Mrs. Mathis so she will be aware of the recommendations.

D. Review of Discovery School Admission Process – Requested by Ray Butrum (Tab 6)

Mrs. Mathis referred to the information provided behind Tab 6 regarding the Discovery School's admission process. She noted that Board Policy STU 3 School Admission, states that out-of-city students within Rutherford County may be admitted to our schools and out-of-county students may, at the director's discretion, be assigned to a city school. She pointed out that the original administrative directive 118 marked "voided" that was put in place when the Discovery School was first started has also been provided for reference. The current AD 118, revised in 6/07, titled "Admissions Process for The Discovery School at Reeves-Rogers" is also provided. She read, "*Regardless of residence, students will be selected using a specially designed matrix that assigns points to several assessment measures including reading and math achievement test data.*" Basically, that is the admissions process in terms of out-of-county, out-of-city and city students. She asked Dr. Butrum if there were other issues regarding the admissions process that he would like to have addressed.

Dr. Butrum: I did want the Board to become knowledgeable of the admissions policy, but I know The Discovery School is starting to have meetings for the 2009-10 school year. I had two parents contact me to say that they had attended the meeting and understood that out-of-county students were allowed to come in; they used to pay tuition.

Mrs. Mathis: They do. It's \$900 a year (per family).

Dr. Butrum: That is something I wanted the Board to discuss and maybe raise that tuition in light of the economy; how we are doing in comparison to other systems and making sure we are serving our city students first. Maybe suggest that our students who come in from out of county and possibly students who come from Rutherford County into the city be placed in specific schools that have room or small class sizes. We would not want to put them in John Pittard because they are having growth problems. But I do think that maybe we need to look at a different fee. I see where the state spends approximately \$8,000 per child so maybe consider charging half that fee, \$4,000, for out-of-county students. I would also like to maybe consider having those students be placed in a couple of schools with low numbers and have them attend that school for one year in the City Schools because I think we can provide a great education for any child in any school. But the Discovery School is our magnet school, so to speak, but I think they need to be in another school for at least one year and give them an

opportunity to test out of that school and move to the Discovery School. We may even specify different stipulations for Rutherford County students as opposed to out of county students because theoretically according to this policy we could have forty students from Cannon, Bedford, Rutherford, Davidson, or Sumner come in to our system, have their child graded on this matrix, and could have 40 students paying \$900 apiece using up all of those class spaces.

Mrs. Wade: Is that something you want put on a future agenda?

Dr. Butrum: Or we could discuss it now to possibly change the policy.

Mrs. Wade: I don't know, and I can't speak for other Board members, if they have had time to really look into this and get the answers they need or maybe talk with Dr. Clark. You are talking about changing a policy quite a bit.

Dr. Butrum: How many students do we presently have that are out-of-county students in our system?

Mrs. Mathis: At the Discovery School, we have four.

Mr. Anderson: I think there are sixteen total throughout the system.

Dr. Butrum: We have about 25% of those students attending our school for high achievers. Do we have a waiting list for students at that school? That is a concern. I think our city students need first priority and then work out something with the county students. But out of county, I don't know if that is something the Board wants to continue. We may want to change that policy, so I thought we should discuss that before they have to make decisions for the 2009-2010 school year.

Mrs. Wade: I am pretty sure this is the first that Dr. Clark has heard of the Board going over this, and it is wonderful when the Board brings up questions that they have. But all in the same point of view, Dr. Clark, you have a committee that works with you to do this, correct?

Dr. Clark: Yes.

Mrs. Wade: I want to respect that committee and also, Dr. Butrum, thank you for your question. It is going to broaden us a little bit. But I think we need the time to sit with Dr. Clark and maybe, I don't want to put too much on the board retreat, but it would give us time to look at this. And if you have suggestions, forward them to Mrs. Mathis; she can forward them to the other Board members after she has a chance to go through them. This will give us a chance to talk to Dr. Clark

and get our questions answered because right now, there is quite a bit to ingest tonight about changes. I do appreciate you asking, but if you don't mind, wait and get the things you have in mind and maybe some of the other board members that they want to discuss.

Dr. Butrum: Sure, and that is just my opinion. These concerns were brought to me by parents who are taxpayers in the city, and I think that would be a major concern of our city taxpayers that we might have someone come in from maybe Cannon County and for \$900 they are getting into one of the best schools in our system that deals with high achievers. I want us to look at this and make sure that we are putting our city students first.

Mrs. Mathis: I would like to let you all know that students are admitted based on criteria. For example, last year we had 80 spots in kindergarten, and we only accepted 63 students because others did not meet the criteria. So regardless of whether they are city students or not, it is really not opening any extra spaces unless they would meet the criteria. We certainly would not leave any child out that met the criteria. With only four out-of-county students, I just wanted you all to be aware of that.

Dr. Butrum: So there is not a waiting list in kindergarten, Dr. Clark.

Dr. Clark: No.

Dr. Butrum: Okay, but waiting lists in all of the other grades?

Dr. Clark: yes or some of them? (check with her)

Dr. Andrews: And there are some good reasons and history for the policy being the way it is right now. I agree with Mrs. Wade that this is probably not the time to go into this in great detail. But there are some good, solid reasons for having the policy the way it is.

Dr. Butrum: When do you start accepting applications, Dr. Clark?

Dr. Clark: We are accepting applications now.

Dr. Butrum: When will you decide on enrollment for next school year?

Dr. Clark: We will finish testing in January for our first round, and we will make selections from that first pool; and then, we will have a certain number of spots that are held because we will have some people moving in later in the summer so will have a second round of testing in June.

Mrs. Phillips: I was wondering if Mrs. Mathis or Dr. Clark had just a general review since that is what it says on the agenda.

Dr. Clark: The first step is the application and that is available online, at the central office, or you can pick one up at the school site. This year, we are adding visits to preschools during November and December giving us a chance to talk to teachers and to actually observe the children in their classroom, as this is the hardest population to identify. I also have informational meetings so that I can explain our programming and what students might be a good choice for the Discovery School. And on the other hand, determine what students that it might not work so well for or that it would be a struggle for them. We don't want to set anyone up for failure. I have had one informational meeting with approximately 100 attendees and will have one more. Parents have an opportunity to tour the building, ask questions, and hear our presentation about the program. For kindergarten and first grade, we start out with a literacy screener and an interview. For the older students, and also for that group, we do give a group ability test. We have those scheduled for January 10 and 17. Parents will receive letters for the first round in February and early March. A second testing will be administered to fill slots held back so students that score very high can be plugged in. One thing I would like to mention about the admissions process is that when we were initially designing the school, we visited schools in North Carolina and Connecticut. All of those hosts pointed out to us that selection of students is a very difficult thing, and it is never perfect. Don't ever expect to come up with a perfect system, although you will continue to improve it and grow with that. This is something that we deal with and struggle with all the time.

Mr. Campbell: I know you are in the process of screening and interviewing and getting those students admitted which indicates to me that this Board is on a time table if they are going to make any kind of changes or look or think about any kind of changes to admissions or whether it be at any other school, I am assuming, in Murfreesboro City. So we don't need to drag our feet; we need to get something done so the applications that are being received are ready pretty quickly because they are starting the process of enrollment. We don't want to tell a parent their child can attend and then change a policy where they are not able to attend. I would suggest, whether at retreat or in January but before our administrators notify parents, they know if there is going to be a fee, whether it is \$900 or more or less.

Mr. Wade: Thank you, Mr. Campbell, but along with the rest of us who have had a few things to say about the changes, we want to definitely respect Dr. Clark and the administration she has worked with. This is a good Board but a reasonable Board. Before we inflict anything on a principal and tell them what to do, we want to at least sit down with them and run it by them and let them know how the

Board feels through good communication. Wonderful ideas have flowed, but we still have to consider Dr. Clark and what she has done so far.

Dr. Clark: Thank you, and taking Mr. Campbell's point and hearing his thought there, it's a good thought. It is something that will take a lot of consideration, because I feel that what we are doing right now is working very well for us, giving us a good balance, and I am happy with the population and the balance. So what you might want to consider because we are already in late November and December is upon us and we are talking about this in January, would maybe to take this year to talk about it, and we would not make a hasty decision.

Mrs. Wade: Thank you, Dr. Clark

E. Personnel Update (Tab 7)

Mrs. Mathis shared personnel information as follows:

1. Persons Completing Ninety Days:

Jennifer Kropog	Office E.A.	MNP
Kendra Meyer	E.A.	John Pittard
Beth Reynolds	E.A.	Discovery
Wayne Rogers	Bus Driver	Transportation
Deloris Swader	Custodian	MNE
Vickie Young	E.A.	John Pittard

2. New Teachers Hired for 2008-09 (not new positions)

3. Interim Teachers Hired for 2008-09

F. Monthly Revenue and Expenditure Report (Tab 8)

Mr. Anderson reported that last month there was a question about revenue coming in on local sales tax; you can see that on this report, which is reflective of the August sales tax collections, we are right on target. The system received its money today for the September sales tax collections, and we are still on target. There is a concern about how rapidly property tax collections come in; other counties are experiencing a delay on the rate of getting property tax in, but we don't get property tax revenue until after Christmas. On the expense side, the system should be at 33.3% overall, and we are at 31.9% so we are in control on the expense side. School buses expense out early but this comes down as the year goes on. We are where we should be at this point in the year.

G. Attendance Report

Mrs. Mathis reported that at the end of the third month, K-6 student enrollment is 6,871; the system serves an additional 368 preschool students for a grand total of 7,239 students. Enrollment was up by 34 students last month but down 36 students this month. There is a lot of movement among students in our school system.

Mrs. Wade referred to the *Daily News Journal* article that reported that Murfreesboro ranked fifth in the nation as a top city for families. That is saying a lot about Murfreesboro, and she stated that she is sure they looked at the Murfreesboro City School System when this was decided.

Mrs. Phillips acknowledged the *Murfreesboro Post* for complimenting Murfreesboro City Schools on their report card.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Butrum moved to adjourn the Murfreesboro City School Board meeting; Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

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Director of Schools

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