

MINUTES
MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING/RETREAT
8:00 a.m.--Saturday, January 29, 2011
MTSU Foundation House
324 West Thompson Lane

ATTENDANCE

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

Staff: Director Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Karen Hawkins, Caresa Brooks, and Ralph Ringstaff.

Others: City Staff Attorney Kelley Baker, *Dailey News Journal* Reporter Mealand Ragland-Hudgins.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Mary Wade called the meeting to order at approximately 8:00 a.m.

II. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Discovery School Admissions Update (Tab 1)

Community Members Addressing the Board:

Jason Martin, 1501 North Lovvorn Road, Christiana.
Tiffany Pippin, 7216 Farmington Road, Lascassas.

Mr. Martin provided the Board with Board Policy STU 3, STU 5, AD 118, and May 18, 2010 board meeting minutes, pages 2-3. He maintained that the policies and directives are vague and do not support that city residents who qualify for entry would have precedence over county residents who qualify for entry to The Discovery School. He also stated that when choosing to enroll his child in the Discovery School, he was led to believe that his younger child if qualified would have an equal opportunity for admittance to Discovery. A matrix was used, not residence, in the admittance process. He also stated that from the May 18 board meeting minutes that Dr. Gilbert had stated that any change in policy would need to be adopted by December (2010) as the first round of testing for entry to Discovery takes place in January (2011). He pointed out that 32 other families are in the same position. He understands that admittance would be based on scores. He noted that he is very active at Discovery, contributes to the Explorer Fund, and supports the school in other ways. Having children at two different schools would be difficult. He requested that out-of-city families at Discovery with younger siblings who

qualify for admittance to Discovery be given the same opportunity as city students for admittance.

Ms. Tiffany Pippin addressed the Board noting that she has a third grade child at Discovery. She referred to the initial criteria that references that Merit students would be given admittance. The deciding factor has been test scores. Two Discovery School principals have followed this admittance procedure. The city's policy is vague. McFadden's admittance policy is clear in that it stipulates that students who qualify are entered based on (1) siblings, (2) county residence, and (3) city residence. She asked that the Board grandfather/allow siblings of county students who are attending the Discovery School to have an equal opportunity for admittance, if they qualify, as city residents. The history is that admittance was based on testing not residence.

Dr. Gilbert stated that she, Dr. Brooks, and Mrs. Hawkins along with Amy Holt from MTSU have worked to find a non-culturally biased test that will be used this year. After the 283 students are tested, the results will be taken to central office and reviewed. She understands the predicament that the county parents are in and appreciates their support of Discovery. It is her charge to follow board policy. Board policy specifically states that county residents can be assigned to a city school when space is available.

City Councilman Ron Washington serves as the Council's liaison to the City School Board. He pointed out that he represents the taxpayers of Murfreesboro City. City residents must have precedence.

Dr. Gilbert responded that board policy takes precedence. She will follow board policy that does stipulate that county residents are admitted to city schools on a space available basis. Administrative directives give the administration direction on procedures they follow to enforce board policy. She reviewed the information letter sent to parents from Mrs. Kaminsky in 2009-10 and from Dr. Clark this year, the application, and the scoring process chart. She reviewed the enrollment at Discovery School, including the number of city and county students admitted and put on the waiting list.

Mrs. Phillips stated that she was on the Board when the Discovery School opened. When the Discovery School moved from Bellwood to Reeves-Rogers, more classrooms were available allowing enrollment to increase affording space for county students. The policy was not violated but was interpreted two ways. Mrs. Duggin noted that a kindergarten class was added this year; 33 county students were accepted which is a classroom. She is concerned that city residents were placed on the waiting list. She is not opposed to grandfathering but is opposed to accepting a county student over a city student. When students from the county were grandfathered in when Erma Siegel was assigned a zone, admitting them did not prevent any city student zoned for the school from enrolling. Dr. Gilbert voiced a concern about the validity of testing children ages 4-5. Mrs. Duggin stated she would rather see the number of second and third grade classes increase rather than kindergarten.

Mrs. Phillips stated that City Schools has always been family friendly, and she does not wish to disrupt families. Dr. Andrews stated that all children attending City Schools are our children. Mr. Rainier shared an experience he had when enforcing a policy to charge county residents for access to the city's Parks and Recreation programs. The policy was repealed after six months. He does not support grandfathering/admitting county students over city residents. Dr. Butrum agreed with Mrs. Duggin. Mr. Washington pointed out that city residents pay city and county taxes, but the Rutherford County School System takes county students over city students for acceptance into McFadden. City students are put on a waiting list. Mr. Campbell stated that this issue did not come up suddenly as a November 16 PTO newsletter references that Dr. Gilbert attended a Discovery School PTA meeting and pointed out that she would be enforcing the Board's policy regarding admitting county students to city schools.

After discussion, Mr. Campbell moved students currently enrolled (Feb.1, 2011) at DSRR who have younger siblings who would enter The Discovery School while the older sibling is still in attendance, who live in Rutherford County outside Murfreesboro City limits, wishing to be tested for admittance to DSRR, that these siblings be considered for admittance with other city resident students. Siblings will be expected to follow the same testing considerations as other city resident students and may be admitted to DSRR using the same criteria. Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion.

On roll call: Campbell: yes; Duggin—no; Phillips—yes; Rainier—no; Andrews—yes; Butrum—no; Wade—no. The motion failed.

Mrs. Duggin asked how out-of-county students would be addressed. After discussion, Dr. Gilbert was asked to clarify this in an administrative directive to be reviewed by them at the next policy session. It was pointed out that administrative directives will be placed on the intranet, and Board members will have access to view them.

B. TSBA—Evaluation of Director of Schools (Tab 2)

Mr. Randall Bennett from TSBA addressed the Board reviewing the sample evaluation document behind Tab 2. He explained that Dr. Tammy Grissom would direct the evaluation. He pointed out that evaluations of all staff have become more important with Race to the Top. He noted that the sample evaluation contains the following sections: Board Relationship, Community Relationships, Staff and Personnel Relationships, Facilities and Finance, Vision, Student Achievement. In addition, twelve performance objectives were included (see document). This instrument also included an evaluation of the director by administrators.

Dr. Butrum suggested that a sampling of all employees, teachers/custodians/kitchen staff, etc. should also provide input. He stated that he would be willing to attend faculty meetings and distribute the evaluation documents, place them in a sealed envelope, and mail them back to TSBA. Dr. Andrews and Mrs. Phillips stated that they did not feel it

appropriate for Board members to do this. Mr. Rainier stated that the Board should know the position of employees who fill out an evaluation, although all evaluations will be unsigned. After discussion, Mrs. Baker stated that she would be willing to distribute the evaluations for the Board. Mrs. Phillips stated that she did not feel all employees would have the close association/interaction with the Director needed for them to provide beneficial input. Mr. Bennett stated that input from them would be valuable information but not as a part of the evaluation of the director.

Mr. Bennett stated that each Board member would be contacted for one-on-one input. Mrs. Wade and Mrs. Phillips stated they prefer a one-on-one interview in person rather than by phone. The Director of Schools would also be involved in the development of the evaluation instrument. Mr. Bennett stated that after determining the Board's expectations/performance standards, objectives, goals, and addressing any concerns, the evaluation instrument would be shared with the Board and Director of Schools for clarification and final approval.

Dr. Butrum stated that this year student scores cannot be used as a part of the evaluation. Dr. Andrews stated that next year they could be, and she would like to see the evaluation tied to the system's goals and vision. Mrs. Phillips stated that she would like to see the system's five-year/master plan be a part of the evaluation. Mrs. Duggin stated that rather than five choices on the rubric (Exceeds Expectations, Consistently Meets Expectations, Usually Meets Expectations, Seldom Meets Expectations, Never Meets Expectations), she prefers four choices for better clarity. Mrs. Duggin asked that the evaluation be completed by May 1, 2011; Mr. Bennett stated that this could be done.

C. Discussion of Black Fox Geese Situation –

Mr. Blaine Hyle, U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services

Mr. Hyle provided the Board a Powerpoint presentation. He noted that geese can be a health hazard. To manage the geese, you address three things: food, water, and safety. Resident geese stay year round. With the issues of safety, needing access to private property, etc., Mr. Hyle stated that he would recommend waiting until molt and use the most cost-efficient method, corral trapping, during June-July for the next 4-5 years at a cost of \$1,200-\$2,000 each year. Trapped geese are deposited in small numbers in rural areas where hunting is allowed which helps to keep the population down.

Dr. Butrum asked if the City might provide some funding as this would involve the citizens/community in the area around Todd Lake. Dr. Andrews moved that the Director work with the City to solidify plans to address the geese situation; Mr. Rainier seconded the motion. Mrs. Baker explained that Todd Lake is private property, but it has been extremely difficult to determine owners. After discussion, Mr. Rainier asked if Dr. Andrews would amend her motion that the School Board would address the geese population affecting Black Fox Elementary only. Dr. Andrews amended her motion stating that the Board direct the Director to contract with Mr. Hyle/U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Wildlife Services to address the geese issue on Black Fox property only; Mr.

Rainier seconded the amendment. On roll call: Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes; Campbell—abstain; Duggin—abstain; Phillips—yes; Rainier—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried. (Mr. Campbell and Mrs. Duggin abstained as they live in the area affected by the geese.)

D. Audit Report

Mr. Anderson provided the Board with copies of the audit of the General Purpose, Extended School, and Cafeteria programs. He stated that the schools' activity fund audits have been completed but have not been provided to the system to date. They will be provided to the Board when received. He referred to page 65 in the blue book pointing out that the audit report contains a statement that no material weaknesses were identified and on page 66 that there were no instances of noncompliance—it was a clean audit. Mrs. Phillips stated that she would prefer in the future to receive the audit report in advance of the meeting so questions could be asked if answers were needed. Dr. Andrews stated that the audit report could be placed on the next policy meeting's agenda if a Board member has questions. Mrs. Wade asked that Board members email questions or concerns about the audit to Mr. Anderson or to Dr. Gilbert so it can be determined if the audit report should be placed on the next meeting's agenda. Mr. Rainier commended the administration for providing the Board a monthly financial report and for the very satisfactory job they have done in the development and monitoring of the budget.

E. Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan/Projects (Tab 3)

Mr. Anderson referred to Tab 3, pointing out that Scales and Cason Lane Academy are projected to be at capacity in 2010. The purchase of land for a new school was listed in the five-year planning calendar for 2008-09 but has been delayed for the past three years. The City asked that the projected purchase of land for a new school be left on the five-year plan so they are kept aware of the potential need. The proposed cost of a new school would be \$20,950,000. Based on the number of permits issued by school zone and additional lot capacity currently available for building permits, the Scales and Cason Lane zones have the potential for the most growth. Mr. Anderson will use the city's formula to determine the approximate number of children who would live in these zones and attend a city school, although the Scales zone overlaps the Blackman county school zone. Scales currently has 941 students and Cason Lane has 898. There are approximately 8-10 empty classrooms systemwide. However, increases in student enrollment does not always come to one grade level, so it is difficult to predict the future use of classrooms. Some "empty" classrooms may have been assigned different uses. In response to Mrs. Duggin, Dr. Gilbert stated that the administration is looking at available space in schools, and the use of existing schools, such as Bellwood-Bowdoin Preschool. Dr. Andrews stated that one of the variables is the cost of land and construction. Mr. Washington stated that the administration should always be looking at possible school sites with the current economic situation and available land in areas such as the new Veterans Parkway; some landowners might be more willing to sell their property at a favorable price.

Mr. Anderson also referred to the "Long Range Plan" noting that the energy grants the system has obtained has allowed for improvements to the infrastructure (HVAC units, improved lighting, etc.). Weaknesses that must be addressed include the need for new televisions, projectors, repair to additional roofs, etc. In response to Mr. Rainier, Mr. Anderson stated that he is investigating more grants as aging HVAC units will need to be replaced.

F. Administrative Salaries (Tab 4)

Dr. Gilbert stated that she provided the Board information comparing what central office administrators are paid on a twelve-month contract to what principals make if paid on a twelve-month contract. She stated that she is asking for the Board to approve a \$10,000 increase in salary for Gary Anderson, Finance and Administrative Services Director, and for Priscilla Van Tries, Special Education Supervisor, retroactive to July, 2010. She provided the Board with an organizational chart that indicated that Mr. Anderson supervises multiple departments within the system as well as taking the responsibility as second in command in her absence, and is a negotiator for the Board. In addition, he has saved the system money through grants he has obtained and through his close management and scrutiny of the system's budget, expenditures, etc. Mrs. Van Tries not only supervises personnel associated with special education, school psychologists, etc. but her area is one that typically can result in lawsuits. Mrs. Baker attested that Mrs. Van Tries has indeed represented the system very well in avoiding situations of that nature. Dr. Andrews moved to increase the salary of Mr. Anderson and Mrs. Van Tries by \$10,000. Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion.

Dr. Butrum stated that Mrs. Van Tries's salary is well below where it should be and asked that her salary be increased by \$15,000 that would put her close to \$85,000, which is what other administrators make. He asked if Dr. Andrews would amend her motion to increase the salaries by \$15,000. Dr. Andrews as first and Mrs. Phillips as second stated they would agree to the amendment. Mrs. Phillips stated that she, however, would like to hear from other Board members. Mr. Rainier asked that the motion be amended to state that the raises be retroactive to January 1, 2011. Mrs. Duggin agreed with this amendment. Mrs. Wade was concerned that the perception of employees and the public would be that the administration could "find the money" for raises when the budget appeared to be a tight one. Dr. Butrum stated that the fund this would be paid from is already established for the entire school year, and the raises should be retroactive to the beginning of the school year. Dr. Gilbert stated that the raises can be taken from the JOBS funds, and the budget will be okay.

Mr. Rainier asked if this issue should be deferred until additional information such as certification, years of experience, etc. could be provided. Dr. Gilbert stated that principals' salaries are based on a formula and certified positions are addressed in terms of experience, degrees, etc. However, the way she approaches the central office positions is what they can produce, their knowledge, reputation/expertise in their area, etc. Dr. Andrews amended her motion that Mr. Anderson and Mrs. Van Tries receive a \$15,000

raise in salary retroactive to January 1, 2011; Mrs. Phillips agreed as second. On roll call: Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes; Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Phillips—yes; Rainier—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

G. Approval to Use JOBS Funds to Provide Tutors for ELL Students (Tab 5)

Dr. Gilbert stated that Kim Fowler has worked with the ELL program and had initially begun to work toward providing help to our ELL population who are underperforming. She is asking that the Board approve up to \$72,000 from JOBS funds to provide tutors for the ELL students identified as needing this help. The tutors will be retired teachers who will work five hours a day, up to 30 hours per week. Dr. Brooks noted that there is a great need to help students who are performing at the basic or below basic level. They have already developed a schedule and tutors are ready to go. Mrs. Hawkins stated that the system does not have the personnel to do this, and these students are under-served. In response to Mrs. Phillips' question, Dr. Gilbert stated that they are looking at hiring more ELL teachers next year.

Dr. Brooks stated that the younger students are getting PALS; SPIRES will be used in grades 3-6. It was pointed out that Mrs. Van Tries is pleased with the use of SPIRES. Mrs. Duggin asked if using retired teachers for 120 days would be more advantageous. Dr. Gilbert stated they are doing what is most efficient. Mrs. Duggin noted that last year two ELL teaching positions were vacant at Bradley. She suggested that the administration might look into helping teachers within our system who desire to obtain the ELL certification. Dr. Butrum suggested that the administration look at the possibility of an ELL Academy. Dr. Gilbert stated that they will probably "cluster" in classrooms next year. Mrs. Duggin moved to approve up to \$72,000 of JOBS funds for ELL tutors; Mr. Rainier seconded the motion. On roll call: Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes; Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Phillips—yes; Rainier—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

H. Discussion of Health Insurance (Tab 6)

(Will be placed on next policy meeting agenda.)

I. Discussion of 2011-2012 School Calendar (Tab 7)

Dr. Gilbert stated that the Board has been provided two proposed 2011-12 calendars--one with a two-week (12-day) winter break and one with a three-week (15-day) winter break. She has received emails from teachers who state that they need the time in January to prepare for the writing assessment administered the first week of February, so prefer a two-week winter break. MEA proposed a two-week winter break. With the snow causing schools to be closed in January, this winter break was exceptionally long. Parents were surveyed as to their preference for a twelve-day winter break or for a fifteen-day winter break. Approximately 3,300 responses were received with 49% in favor of a twelve-day winter break versus 51% in favor of a fifteen-day winter break.

Dr. Gilbert asked that the Board approve the twelve-day winter break, as proposed by MEA minus the daytime parent/teacher conferences. She noted that the two-week winter break calendar aligns with the county's calendar. Mrs. Ridley pointed out that two stockpiled days would be used for the PLC half-days leaving eleven stockpiled days. Students are in attendance for 180 days. Inservice days included within the calendar are board-assigned days. Dr. Gilbert stated that the only change she would foresee being made to the calendar as presented would concern the systemwide inservice, but she will not know how that will look until the end of the year.

Dr. Andrews moved to approve the 2011-12 calendar proposed by MEA that includes a two-week (twelve-day) winter break; Mr. Rainier seconded the motion. On roll call: Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes; Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Phillips—yes; Rainier—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

J. Discussion of Instruction Plan/Report Card (Tab 8)

Dr. Gilbert stated that Pam East is a specialist in assessment and is also a teacher in the system. Mrs. Hawkins reviewed the sheet behind Tab 8 explaining the system's progression to School Improvement II. In 2007, the system was on "target" which was a wake up call that things are not well and to address the deficiencies, things must be done differently. In 2008, the system did not make improvement and was placed on "School Improvement I" status. In 2009, the system improved and held at "School Improvement I, Improving" status based on "Confidence Interval," not based on the progress we were making but on the standard of error of the assessment. Now in 2010, the system did not make the mark and has been placed on "School Improvement II." Mrs. East added that the rigor of the tests went sky high and that the percentage of students who had to meet the benchmarks moved to 40% in math and 49% in reading and next year will be 60% and 69%.

Mrs. East stated that in Tennessee, with TVAAS, every child should make one year's growth. Mrs. Hawkins stated that teachers are frustrated and concerned, but they must know the truth. Dr. Gilbert stated that the schools are being given the tools. Dr. Butrum added that if teachers don't have the foundational knowledge, they can't understand. Dr. Gilbert stated that principals must become more aware so they are more comfortable in providing instructional leadership to teachers. LC's are now interventionists. Expectations have been raised, and we are working on the standards of today. Dr. Brooks explained that the system is doing now what the state would do if we go to the next level. It is important to use the people we have. Mrs. Duggin has donated 20 days to the system to provide LETRS training to the system's teachers. Dr. Brooks stated that they are addressing the teachers' lack of foundational knowledge through LETRS training. Mrs. Hawkins stated that the system will adopt a new math textbook this year and that will require staff development.

Mrs. East reviewed the sheets provided behind Tab 7 explaining the estimated system mean NCE scores and how to determine the estimated system mean NCE gain for reading/language, math, science, and social studies. She pointed out through the use of

colored charts where the system is performing and what needs to take place for improvement. The report cards for NCLB AYP status for the system, Black Fox, Bradley Academy, and Mitchell-Neilson were reviewed culminating in the chart titled “MCS 2010 TVAAS Matrix.”

Dr. Gilbert reviewed the “fishbone” charts with the Board pointing out that strengths and weaknesses were identified in the areas of curriculum, quality of instruction, leadership, and structures both at the system and building level. She then referred to the “MCS Instruction Focus Reading” and “Math” sheets detailing the system’s use of the three-tier intervention approach to address student needs.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wade adjourned the special board meeting/retreat at approximately 2:40 p.m.

Director of Schools

MISSION STATEMENT

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