

MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2006, 6:30 P.M.
BRADLEY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Muscogee County School District was held on Monday, September 18, 2006, 6:30 p.m. in the conference room at the Bradley Library.

The following Board members were present: Mary Sue Polleys, Chairman, James Walker, Vice Chairman, Brenda P. Storey, Philip T. Schley, Patricia Hugley Green, Fife M. Whiteside, John Wells, Naomi Buckner and Joseph Roberson.

Others present: John A. Phillips, Jr., Superintendent of Education, Greg S. Ellington, Legal Counsel, Del Parker, Don A. Cooper, Jr., Eddie V. Obleton, Peggy Connell, Myles Caggins, Billy Kendall, Harry Franklin and other representatives from the media.

Dr. Polleys called the meeting to order with an invocation. The pledge to the flag and the character education word was led by students from North Columbus Elementary School. Dr. Polleys recognized visitors in the audience.

The Board recognized the Northern Little League World Champs in baseball; Clubview Elementary on being named a charter school by the State Board of Education; Mrs. Yvonne Veasey, Contract Specialist on dedicating 50 years of service to the Muscogee County School District; and Mrs. Sharon Pearson from Eddy Middle School on receiving the ABCD Award.

Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to amend the agenda to add addendum items.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved official actions taken at the regular Board of Education meeting held on Monday, August 21, 2006.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Mr. Robert Stansell to the position of Assistant Director of Plant Services.

Upon motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved a revision to Board policy JBCD as it pertains to Transfer and Withdrawals. Mr. Whiteside noted that "wording has been added to this policy to make this policy be construed with Board policy JBCCA which taken together to make sure that the right of the public is not imperiled when assignment zones are changed before the Board votes on them."

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously voted to modify the calendar for Board meetings in November and December. There will be one work session on Monday, November 13 and one Board meeting on Monday, December 4. Additional executive sessions for legal, disciplinary or property matters can be called if necessary.

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board approved contracts for Georgia Department of Education Contract-Monitored Schools. According to State Board Rule, Baker Middle, Eddy Middle and Marshall Middle have been classified as Contract-Monitored Schools. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) opposing, (Mr. Whiteside).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board approved the new elective course offerings in the History and Literature of the Old Testament Era and History and Literature of the New Testament Era beginning the 2007-2008 school year upon receipt and approval by the Muscogee County Board of Education of the Georgia Department of Education curriculum for each course. There is not budgetary impact for FY07. Mr. Roberson commented, "I'd like to offer a substitute motion and that is we defer this as an action item until the State Board of Education has produced a curriculum and qualifications for the teachers." The substitute motion was seconded by Mrs. Green. Ms. Buckner, "The language in the motion says upon receipt and approval of the curriculum so in February we have to approve the curriculum then. Is that what this means?" Dr. Phillips, "Yes that is what it means. It is a two-step process. You are voting to approve offering this and at the same time you are going to look at the curriculum and review it and if you don't agree with the curriculum then it will not be offered. If you do not agree with the curriculum then it will not be offered." Mrs. Green, "I wanted to point out that I love the Bible and it was referred to as a Bible course that this is not a religious course. It is using the Bible to teach history and or literature as a textbook when it is very much a religious and spiritual doctrine and I don't see our urgency. At the committee meeting the law firm also pointed out that the State Department DOE has not even yet begun to appoint a committee to develop or establish a curriculum so I don't see our urgency in adopting this. More importantly we chose to step back with the pedophile law because we didn't want to get into the fire...I just don't see the urgency in us doing that. If we're going to jump out there with lawsuits that are waiting, we could better use that money when we are litigating. We need to concentrate on courses that's going to improve our graduation rate. If it's history we want to look at to enhance our young people we can do some other history courses like African American History, Native American History or Hispanic or in this day and age Middle Eastern History. I definitely support the substitute motion." Mr. Roberson, "I want to clarify. I'm not objecting to the Bible being taught and that's what the gist of this substitute motion clarifies for me. I do want to recognize the fact that there are parents and students who value their religious heritage and believes very seriously and will defend them vigorously in any Bible study. Be it related to literature, history, drama, music whatever perspective. We're talking about students electing to take it who already have faith. There are going to be students who have never read the Bible. We cannot have a course that is confusing, convoluted and diluting the authority of the Bible under the guise that we are going to be studying literature and history. I want to refer to something that is cited that is troubling for me on page 53. At the bottom it says, the Local Board of Education may recommend which version of the old or new testament may be used in the course provided however that the teacher of the course shall not be required to adopt their recommendation but may use the recommended version or another version. That to me says, even the teacher may not have accountability to us. I want Dr. Phillips or someone to speak to this because in my mind, this may allow persons who are Atheists, Agnostics, Satanists, or either so called humanists or some liberalized version of the Bible to be taught. Am I right Dr. Phillips?" Dr. Phillips, I think you're right. It's like a lot of legislation. It's not well written. It maybe at some point and time it will have to be defended in a court of law or it may have to go back to the legislature to re-write or it maybe up to the State Board of Education to put some rules and regulations specific to it." Ms. Buckner, "On Sundays' I send my child to church school and on Mondays' I send her to secular school. When I send my child to church school, the church and the Bible curriculum I

want it taught by a person who believes in the Bible and who thinks of the Bible as a holy book. However, as a Board member I should try to be more objective and wait until the curriculum comes in February. In February we can review that curriculum and adopt it if we think it is objective.” Mrs. Green, “I want to know if this Board is going to be as open and receptive for other books of faith as they come along?” Mr. Walker, “I think the Board would be receptive if it is mandated by the State Legislature. We’ll give them the same opportunity that we are giving in this case. This is not mandatory that every student does not have to take. It’s an elective and students who do not want to take it and parents who do not want them to take it have the choice.” Dr. Polleys asked for a vote on the substitute motion to delay the action until February. The vote on the substitute motion was (7) opposing and (2) affirming, (Mr. Roberson, Mrs. Green). Dr. Schley, “I don’t recall relating a personal experience at a school Board meeting. I took my pre-med at a Methodist University. At that time it was not an elective it was required that you take a full quarter of Bible study. That was 15 hours. Like most of the pre-med students, I was not very happy about that. I would far rather have taken a course in comparative anatomy that I hadn’t been able to work in. But take it I did. My professor was a gentleman named Dr. Boozer and the name alone got us off to a good start. Dr. Boozer taught that course without a hint of Methodist bias. It was taught from a point of view of literature, history and particular philosophy. Since that time, I enjoyed the course immensely and I’ve always been glad that I took it. That said. I have to say that I am concerned because, at that time the college students were of an age when they had learned discernment and I have a concern about teaching it from the 9th through the 12th grade. I would not be happy if we decided to teach it before a child was in the 11th or 12th grade. At the time we went to college we were all 16 but now you’re 18 when you go to college. Maybe by that time most of those kids have discernment. I can vote for it if in fact it is taught with careful oversight to insure that no bias is entered and if in fact it is taught to older students.” The vote on the original motion to approve the new elective was (7) affirming and (2) opposing, (Mr. Roberson and Mrs. Green).

Ms. Buckner made a motion to amend the agenda to add an item regarding a citizens study panel. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Green. Mr. Roberson made a motion, that a citizens study panel be established to include parents and religious leaders to give input and expressions regarding the new elective. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Green. After some discussion it was the consensus of the Board to add the item relating to a citizens study panel to give input regarding the new elective course to the October committee meeting.

Dr. Phillips asked if the Board would hear from Mr. Matt Bell, Principal at Hardaway High School, Mr. Howard Pound, father of Sarah Madeline Pound, and Mr. Mike Welch representing a fundraising effort to establish the Sarah Pound Field House and Rob Peacock Weight Room at Hardaway High School. The group noted that to date a total of \$640,713.00 in funds have been raised.

The parliamentarian noted that there was no need to amend the agenda on this item in which action will not be taken, this is a recognition.

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the purchase of additional Mathematics, Science and Social Studies textbooks to cover shortages across the district in middle and high schools. Mr. Whiteside asked for a report on the textbook issue at next month’s committee meeting.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved the Comprehensive Local Education Agency Improvement Plan. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 specifies that in order for a school district to receive funds under NCLB an approved CLIP Plan must be on file with the Georgia Department of Education.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved ProcessWorks to represent the Muscogee County School District as the Flexible Spending Account Administrator.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board awarded a contract in the amount of \$53,783.69 to Bill Heard Chevrolet-International-Isuzu for the purchase of a cargo delivery truck to be used at the warehouse. The vote was (7) affirming and (2) opposing, (Dr. Polleys, Mr. Whiteside).

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board approved the FY07 State Instructional Extension Program Allocations for Middle and High Schools in the total amount of \$818,839.00.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved Financial Statements for one month ending July 31, 2006.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mrs. Green, the Board unanimously approved air conditioning for the Physical Education/Multi-Purpose rooms at New Elementary No. 6 and New Rigdon Road Schools at the cost of \$230,000.00 to be redirected from 2003 SPLOST NPR funds.

Upon motion of Mrs. Green, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved air conditioning and the de-humidifying of the cafeteria/kitchen areas at Hannan and Brewer Elementary Schools at an estimated cost of \$120,000.00 for the two schools. Mr. Wells, “I would also like for the Administration to look for some funds to air condition the two new schools.” Mr. Walker, “Can we also look at the other schools that need air conditioning.” Dr. Phillips, “I think the day is going to come for us to look at all of our schools but with another SPLOST. I think it’s prudent to go ahead and add air conditioning to the new schools.”

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved the closing of the River Road Elementary construction project and depositing \$58,113.99 in the 1997 SPLOST NPR Fund to be used for other 1997 SPLOST Projects and \$13,647.04 in the 2003 SPLOST NPR Fund to be used for other 2003 SPLOST Projects.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board approved a purchase order to VirtuCom, \$121,409.00 for the upgrade of computers at various schools in the system. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) opposing, (Mr. Whiteside).

Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to amend the agenda to take action on addendum items.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board approved the purchase of computers and surge protectors for multiple school locations in the total amount of \$111,966.14. The vote was (7) affirming and (2) opposing (Dr. Polleys, Mr. Whiteside).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved a Congressional Earmark grant for Columbus High School, \$137,954.00.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the following consent agenda items:

- Human Resources Report/Professional and Classified. (Appendix A)
- GSBA Legislative Liaison, Mr. Fife M. Whiteside.
- Kinnett Stadium to be used by American Cancer Society.
- New budget, Middle School Connections, \$34,000.00.
- New budget, Title I Supplemental Educational Services, \$39,508.00.
- New budget, 21st Century Community Learning, \$1,092,286.00.
- Grant, Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Addictive, \$6,600.00.
- Grant, Youth Touch/Goldenrod, \$19,315.00.
- Grant, GDOE Academic Coach, \$82,500.00.
- Purchase order, Career, Technical and Agricultural Education.
- Purchase order, ALC Controls, \$15,981.00, Double Churches Elementary.
- Purchase order, ALC Controls, \$28,784.00, Georgetown Elementary.
- Purchase order, ALC Controls, \$18,590.00, Shaw High.
- Budget adjustment, General Fund, \$100,000; Technology, \$50,000; purchase textbooks.
- Financial Assistance, \$2,111.00.
- Audit of Financial Statement of 1997 SPLOST Capital Projects.
- Sales Tax Construction Program Report.
- Report on Transfer from FY03 SPLOST Critical Needs.
- FY97 Sales Tax Construction Program Report.
- Report on Transfers Capital Projects and Debt to SPLOST Fund to cover scope changes.
- Report of change orders/changes in project contingencies.
- Status Report for projects under construction.
- Report on system-wide Technology Plan.
- Report on Forecasted Revenue Collections.
- Report on Transfers from Capital Projects Fund.
- Sales Tax Construction Program Report for 1997.
- Sales Tax Construction Program Report for 2003.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to go into executive session for a personnel matter, property acquisition and two student discipline appeals.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the regular September meeting of the Board.