

MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2006
BRADLEY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Muscogee County School District was held on Tuesday, February 21, 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, Pat Hugley Green, Fife M. Whiteside, and Joseph Roberson.

Others present: John A. Phillips, Jr., Superintendent of Education, Greg S. Ellington, Legal Counsel, Del Parker, CFO, Robin Pennock, Deputy Superintendent of Education, Peggy Connell, CAO, Myles Caggins, COFO, Billy Kendall, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent of Education, Don Cooper, CHRO, Eddie Obleton, CSSO, Harry Franklin from the Ledger-Enquirer and other representatives from the media.

Dr. Polleys called the meeting to order with an invocation. The pledge to the flag was led by students from Mathews Elementary School and the character education word was fairness.

Dr. Polleys recognized visitors in the audience; Mr. & Mrs. Halouska representing the League of Women Voters and Friends of the Libraries.

The Board recognized; Midland Middle School Academic Bowl winners; Columbus High Wrestling Team Dual; Kendrick High Wrestling State runner-up; Georgia Women's Inter-Sport Network Female Athlete of the Year; MCSD Schools featured in Georgia Trend; Connect with Kids Program and the ABCD Award.

Upon motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously approved official actions taken at the regular Board of Education meeting held on Tuesday, January 24, 2006.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously voted to excuse Mr. Wells from the meeting due to business out of the country on personal business.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Sally Sinclair to the position of Director of Adult Learning.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Dawn Upshaw as principal of North Columbus Elementary School.

Dr. Phillips noted that at the work session, “One of the issues that came up was whether we should have a specific uniform consequence that is mandated for principals to follow. We added a little more language to say that using out of school suspension as a last intervention. We would enforce the discipline code but, we would do it in a progressive manner and would use out of school suspension as a last intervention if it is continuously violated and maybe that would help the spirit of what some of our board members wanted without specifically saying you have to do x, y, z in a uniform fashion.” Mrs. Green, “I think that would be definitely acceptable. I was very concerned about children being suspended because; we know that when they are at home, there is no learning going on. Especially with some of the violations and depending upon what school you are at.” Mr. Whiteside, “I’m going to vote against this policy with a good bit of thought. I’m going to take just a minute to talk about the history as I recall it. I think the idea of a uniform dress code system-wide first bubbled up out of discussions by the Youth Advisory Council. I think it goes back about two years ago. I spoke with Mr. Obleton and I asked him what’s different between what they suggested what we should do and what’s in the policy. There are several things. The ones that seem to be most significant is the skirt length which this requires that girls have the length above the knee top, the heel length in which the YAC asked for 3 ½ inch heel limit and this says 2 inches, the other is shorts and the other is hooded jackets. If we’re doing this because it’s what the children wanted to do, it’s really not. Some of the things that are in here such as no shorts at elementary school are going to be pretty unpopular with parents.” Dr. Phillips, “Excuse me; this doesn’t apply to elementary schools.” Mr. Whiteside, “I miss understood. Then some of the other things in here that do apply at high school will be pretty unpopular at high school with children and parents. If the idea is that we create some kind of advisory policy and it’s really not enforced and every time we create a policy that is not enforced is weaken the respect that parents and children have for the school system. This morning at the Teacher of the Year breakfast, I counted (6) teachers who would not have been in compliance with this policy for one reason or another. If it’s really enforced, we are going to have parents and children who are upset about it. The bottom line is I shouldn’t be in the business of trying to decide how high a heel is for a teenage girl. It’s not my job. I think for the school board and the administration to get into the business of dictating a dress code that’s this detailed and minute’ really steps beyond what we ought to be done and really what high school principals ought to be doing. If we have competent principals, they ought to make those decisions at the building and if they are not making those decisions then I think it’s the superintendent’s job to make sure that something’s done about that. I don’t see any need for a change and my vote is no.” Dr. Polleys, “I was out of town last week and missed the discussion. There are three things that Mr. Whiteside mentioned, the skirt, heel length and I understand. But, what is it about the hoods? I just bought one for my grandchild who is not here.” Mr. Obleton, “Outside its good but inside the kids put it over their head and they like hitting each, put the hood over their head and lay on the desk.” Dr. Schley, “I think that this policy has been worked on extensively by several different stake holders in the matter including the children. I’ll vote for it.” Mr. Roberson, “In terms of suspension. Do we have data of suspensions because of violations of dress codes? I want to know if we are being excessive in suspensions having children out of school because of dress code. What is the problem actually with oversize clothing?” Dr. Phillips, “Primarily that suggestion has come from law enforcement. The covering of weapons, well, this makes it much more difficult to identify in bulky clothing. Most systems have addressed this in their dress codes. We took this from the YAC Committee, it went to the principals, middle and high school. The principals tried to make some consensus on some things but declined on others that they requested.” Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board approved the adoption new policy JCDB – Student Dress Code. The vote was (5) affirming and (2) opposing, (Polleys, Whiteside)

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously approved the adoption of Policy – FDC – Naming New Facilities.

Upon motion of Dr. Schley, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved Financial Statement for six months ending December 31, 2005.

Dr. Phillips, “There was some discussion about Thomas buses in the past. You should have at your desk the answers to those concerns. They seemingly have fixed the problems with these buses that have been problems in the past. As I understand it, it was an electrical problem.” Mr. Walker, “Is it any significant reason as to why these buses are \$10,000 less than the other buses?” Mr. Caggins, “One of the competitors gave a higher price than he should have to us and that’s the discrepancy we know. We weren’t getting the same price as some other systems that we know.” Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously awarded a contact to Thomas Bus Sales, Inc. for the purchase of (4) 90-passenger buses at \$80,779.00 each; (7) 84-passenger buses at \$80,495.00 each; and (1) 72-passenger lift bus at \$87,678.00 for the total purchase price of \$974,259.00.

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved the purchase to Lashley Tractor Sales for (6) Turn Lawn Mowers for Plant Services. The total cost being \$62,628.00.

Upon motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the purchase from Riverdeep Software the Destination Reading software for all grade levels at Wynnton Arts Academy, \$18,000.00.

Upon motion of Dr. Schley, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the purchase from RoData, Inc., video conferencing equipment for Downtown and St. Mary’s Road Schools, \$32,956.00.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved the purchase from Developing Minds, Inc, five days of professional learning activities for Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary, \$14,670.00.

Upon motion of Dr. Schley, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved change order no. 11 for construction at Columbus High which increases the scope of work to include the renovation of the Gymnasium by adding it to the existing CMR contract with Arco Builders, Inc.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved the Conversion Charter School application for Clubivew Elementary.

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

- § Human Resources Report/Professional and Classified. (Appendix A)
- § Local Facilities Plan
- § EEOC Claims
- § FLSA Claim
- § State Allocations
- § Donation from David Rothschild, II, \$3,101.25
- § Reimbursement to Cornerstone Literacy, \$158,654.00
- § New budget Anne Elizabeth Shepherd Home, \$11,000.00
- § Budget adjustment, Even Start Technical Assistance, \$20,000.00
- § Budget adjustment, Even Start Family Literacy, \$6,309.00
- § Budget adjustment, M&O of Buildings; to cover carpet cleaning for FY06
- § Budget adjustment, Grounds Capital Equipment (6) lawn mowers
- § Budget adjustment, Title I FY06; FY05 carryover funds, \$1,485,379.00
- § Budget adjustment FY06 contract with MH/HH/AD
- § Purchase order, Georgia Career Information Center software license, \$15,000
- § Purchase order, Georgia Vocational Staff Development Consortium for FY06 membership, \$15,137.00
- § Financial Assistance, \$1,630.00
- § 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 from 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

Dr. Polleys clarified that the total amount being paid by the School District is \$26,400.00 on Consent item (D)-Settlement of Fair Labor Standards Act Claim. The remaining amount of the settlement will be paid by GSBA.

Mrs. Green asked concerning Consent item (R)-Status Report for Projects under Construction, "There is no estimated date of completion for Rigdon Road. The newspaper had the date of 2008. I was having some concern about that date because we were presented (6) funding options and if something has changed for those (6) funding options, I'd like to know what that is. Why would we have an estimated date of 2008? Was that an error?" Dr. Phillips, "I don't know about the date that was put in there. The funding options that we presented almost a year ago many of those options are not feasible anymore. Recall that one of the options was that we were going to sell, develop property and use \$3 million or so to put toward Rigdon Road and it's not an option now." Mrs. Green, "That's one of the (6) options and it was not a favorable option. Originally, that school was on the 1997 SPLOST which is over and this current SPLOST will be over in 2007." Dr. Phillips, "The current SPLOST won't be over until 2008. If you remember, one of the things that we did was that we would not sell bonds in the 2003 SPLOST and that we would

work off of a cash-flow basis. That's one of the difficulties that we are having in expediting projects in that we have to wait until funds come in so that we can pay the bills. There may be other ways that we can fund that." Mrs. Green, "That school should not be put behind those new elementary schools because it is the last thing on the 1997 SPLOST." Mrs. Storey, "A new school was not on the 1997 only renovations." Mr. Roberson, "Some of us as Board members are getting calls about Rigdon Road for some definitive timeline. I recommend that at the next work session that we look at this so that we can respond to our citizens."

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Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Mrs. Green, the Board unanimously voted to excuse the absence of Ms. Buckner for personal reasons.

Mr. Whiteside, "My one point is not on the agenda. I believe in October we passed cell phone service. We requested that we be provided the internal procedure that we were to determine who was to get cell phones. I think it ought to be included next month's meeting." Dr. Phillips, "Yes, we sent that out in Board updates, is that not true Karen?" Karen, "Yes it was sent out in Board updates."

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously voted to go into executive session for a personnel matter.

Upon motion of Dr. Schley, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

Upon motion of Dr. Schley, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the regular February board meeting.

Greg S. Ellington
Legal Counsel