

MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 20, 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, March 20, 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, 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 Cusseta Road Elementary and the character education word was hope.

Dr. Polleys recognized visitors in the audience; Mr. & Mrs. Halouska representing the League of Women Voters and Friends of the Libraries, and John Lincoln, representing St. Elmo Gifted Program.

Dr. Phillips recognized the Board members with a resolution (Appendix A) with March 10-14, 2006 being School Board Appreciation week. Dr. Phillips also noted that the Muscogee County School District will be hosting the Governor's Education Task Force meeting on Monday, March 27, 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the Cunningham Conference Center. The Board recognized the following; Eastway Elementary and Columbus High, NASA Project; Excellence in Technology & Career Education State Award; Report Card for Parents, 2005; Terrific Kids; State Reader of the Year; PTSA Reflections; School of Excellence Award; ABCD Award.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved official actions taken at the regular Board of Education meeting held on Tuesday, February 21, 2006.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the re-election of professional employees for the 2006-2007 school year with the exception of Philip Schley at Northside High; Cherry Gaye Wells at Columbus High; and Emily Whiteside at Key Elementary.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board approved the re-election of Philip Schley for the 2006-2007 school year. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) abstaining, (Dr. Schley).

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board approved the re-election of Cherry Gaye Wells for the 2006-2007 school year. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) abstaining, (Mr. Wells).

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board approved the re-election of Emily Whiteside for the 2006-2007 school year. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) abstaining, (Mr. Whiteside).

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Burl Levins as Principal of South Columbus Elementary School.

Mr. Walker commented, “I don’t have a problem with the people being nominated. My question is that we have a policy as to how these should appear on our agenda and these did not appear on the work session agenda.” Dr. Phillips, “The reason they didn’t is that the decision was not made at that time to recommend them. We didn’t finish the interview process and the final interview with me until late Thursday afternoon. The work session was the Monday prior to that. It was no way for us to bring this to you for the work session because, simply, the final interviews hadn’t been conducted. As soon as we did that, we did put them in the agenda that you received Friday. This is normally the course of action in many places. Sometimes the dates just don’t coincide with the work session, etc. We would have to call a special board meeting to do this and we just thought to move forth with.” Mrs. Storey, “As chairman of the Personnel Committee, I know that prior to this our course of action has been, we would not delay the business of the school where the appointments were going to be made by a month in waiting for the next committee cycle. I wanted these to be brought on so that the business of the school and the school district could continue on in a timely fashion and that was my recommendation as the chairman of the committee. We’ve done this in the past and I saw no need to break from that at this time.” Ms. Buckner, “I notice that all of the principals being appointed are assistant principals. Do we have any kind of board policy that addresses whether there is any experience for an assistant principal to become a principal? I notice that sometimes we do assistant principals and sometimes a person is appointed without any experience.” Dr. Polleys, “There’s not a policy that says a person must be an assistant principal in order to be a principal. They often are but there’s not a policy.” Ms. Buckner, “Since we didn’t discuss this in the work session, I wanted to make sure that everybody who applies for a job would know all the criteria when applying.”

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Molly Hart as Principal of River Road Elementary School.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Mr. Melvin Blackwell as Principal of Marshall Middle School.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Frank J. Brown to the position of Assistant Director for Transportation.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously approved the proposed attendance zone for North Columbus Elementary School. Dr. Phillips noted that those students attending Midland Academy will make only one move. The new school at Schomburg Road Elementary #6 will open in the fall of 2007. Mr. Kersey, “We do have the RFP’s out for this school. I don’t see any problem of having this school open in the fall of 2007.” Mr. Wells, “We have at the North Columbus Elementary School to open this year in 2006. It’s my understanding that the City will connect the road in the area.” Is it on tract for the road to be connected so that we will not have any additional traffic problems?” Dr. Phillips, “I have written a letter to the City Manager based on our last meeting that we had with them and asked them to expedite that and to get it done as quickly as they can. I did talk to the City Manager today about the possibility of a road to Williams Road as well. He said that it looked like that was possible. I also talked with him about a left hand signal at Williams and Veterans that would help things. We are working on that.”

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously approved the draft of Board Policy – JCDB – Student Dress Code. The draft will be circulated to principals, Local School Councils and the Youth Advisory Council for review and recommendations that will be brought back to the Board for final approval. Mr. Roberson asked that the draft be brought to the Discipline Committee at the April Committee meetings. Mr. Whiteside, “I wanted to clarify a couple of things. It was the direction of the Board at the committees for this to be sent to the school based councils for comment, wasn’t it?” Dr. Polleys, “I do remember you saying that and no one objecting.” Mrs. Storey, “I think at the committee what was asked was that we get it to the principals, back to the Youth Advisory Council for comments and where the cases that school councils were meeting, if possible.” Mr. Whiteside, “There was an awful lot of unnecessary controversy over this. The problem that we ran into, I voted against the idea of a system wide school dress code. I don’t think it’s necessary. I think we have competent principals who can figure that out on their own without having to put me in a position of having to go and measure little girl’s high heels just to see how high they are. I lost on that so I’m reconciled that we will have a system wide dress code. What caused problems for us was not talking to the parents who are going to be paying for the clothes that these children will wear. My whole point about the School Councils was that we did hear from parents but they were self selected and they had issues. I just want us this time when we do this was to take as broad a net as we can among the stake holders and get some real sentiment as to what they think should happen. We fixed about three problems but there may be others.” Mr. Wells, “I want to address the issue where it reads, each school is expected to create a progressive discipline plan to address dress code violations using out of school suspension as the last intervention. It’s hard for me to digest that students are being suspended for dress code violations. I think we should use our Saturday school for this. If a child continues to violate the dress code, we should send them to Saturday school. They may be struggling. We are trying to pass kids not prohibit kids from moving out. I do not like suspension. If we have to send them to Saturday school every day. I just don’t like suspending a student out of school.” Mr. Roberson, “I would like to request that this come back before the Discipline Committee although, it is a policy. I think that we need to look at it from this perspective.”

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved Board policy DK – Student Activities Funds Management.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously approved Board policy DO – School Properties Disposal Procedures.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously approved school calendars for the 2007-2008 school year. There will be two schools returning to the traditional calendar for the 2006-2007 school year, Baker Middle and Forrest Road Elementary.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved Financial Statements for eight months ending February 28, 2006.

Upon motion of Mrs. Buckner, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved BoardDocs, Inc. to provide electronic board agenda service. The budgetary impact will be \$25,654.00.

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved (125) teachers to attend training for Math Solution for the effective implementation of the new Georgia Performance Standards. The budgetary impact will be \$56,250.00.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved a purchase order in the amount of \$35,160.00 to Melson Tractor Company for the renewal of leases on tractors.

Upon motion of Mrs. Green, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously approved the funding option for a new Rigdon Road Elementary School.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved the Guaranteed Maximum Price Amendment in the amount of \$1,912,663.00 from Arco Builders, Inc., for gymnasium renovations at Columbus High School and the revised budget.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously awarded a contract in the amount of \$4,287,339.00 to Turner Construction Company for Construction Manager at Risk services at Jordan High Schools' construction project.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously awarded a contract in the amount of \$109,640.00 to M. Jordan Enterprise, low bidder for re-roofing and repairs at the Bradley Library.

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved the purchase and upgrade of the School District's telephone services at the Central Office for the total amount of \$14,239.31.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously awarded a contract to Work Space Plus, low bidder for the lease of portables at various locations.

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously awarded a contract to B&H House Movers, LLC, low bidder to re-locate portables from Johnson Elementary to the Facilities Building to be used by Financial Services. Mr. Wells, “What extra space is needed?” Mr. Parker, “Mr. Wells right now we have personnel scattered into three locations and this will assist employees out on workers compensation to have a confidential place.”

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Green, the Board unanimously awarded a contract in the amount of \$166,507.00 to Darton Roofing Company, low bidder for the re-roofing of North Columbus Branch Library. The total amount of \$194,814.00 will be transferred from the Library Reserve Fund. Mr. Whiteside, “We’re not paying for this are we?” Dr. Phillips, “No, this is out of the Library Reserve Fund.” Mr. Whiteside, “I just wanted it known that this is being taken out of a separate budget from the Library.”

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved the summer school schedule for middle and high school. Dr. Phillips noted that this program will be held at Kendrick High School. Mr. Walker, “Have we made provisions for those students who cannot pay the fee. Have we made provisions for them?” Dr. Connell, “We have scholarships available for those students in need.”

Upon motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved the Social Studies Textbook adoption for the 2006-2007 school year. The total budgetary impact is \$1,972,321.60.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously approved the Career and Technical Education textbook adoption for the 2006-2007 school year. The total budgetary impact is \$1,714,513.24.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board approved the following consent agenda items:

- Human Resources Report for Professional and Classified. (Appendix B)
- High school football schedule.
- Donation (\$7,500) from Synovus to Fox Elementary School.
- Donation (\$1,500) from Historic Columbus Foundation to Academic Success Center.
- Budget adjustment Title IIA carry over funds, \$48,161.00.
- Budget adjustment NPR Fund, 1997 SPLOST, \$36,275.00 to Mathews Elementary.
- Budget adjustment Plant Services, various accounts for upcoming purchases.
- New budget Title I-C Migrant Education Program.
- New budget Title IIIA, LEP, \$12,413.00.
- New budget Woodall FY06 K-8 Reading.
- New budget Safe and Drug Free Schools carry-over, \$47,174.00.
- New budget Early College, \$50,000.00.
- New budget Wynnton Arts Academy, \$6,900.00.
- Grant awarded Title I School Improvement System, \$66,538.00
- Grant awarded Title I School Improvement Supplemental, \$30,000.00.
- Purchase order, Dell Marketing, \$36,194.00. DOT.
- Purchase order, Software Express, \$30,435.00, DOT.
- Audit of financial statement of 1997 SPLOST capital projects.
- Financial Assistance, \$306.00.
- Sales Tax Construction Program Report.
- Report on Transfer from FY03 SPLSOT 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. Schley recognized the generosity of Synovus who donated (\$7,500) to Fox Elementary for playground equipment and Historic Columbus for their donation of (\$1,500) to the Academic Success Center for restoring the front doors at this school.

Mr. Whiteside, “We had some discussion at the committees about the Strategic Planning process and there was a fair amount of confusion that I think was created by some ambiguities in the record. I am correct in my understanding that we are going to take up the Strategic Plan perhaps as early as April and there is a Board committee that has been formed. One other matter. When we were doing committees prior to two or three years ago. We use to get committee minutes done. There was a note taker for each committee. I’d like to have that back for my committee, anyway.”

Mrs. Green, “I have had some concerning calls about the alternative school for middle schoolers, the disruptive children, there’s not enough room at the alternative school, they’re being sent back. I’d like that discussed at the next work session. In trying to prepare for student achievement and you have the disruptive students there as to what alternative learning locations do we have.”

Mr. Roberson, “We’ve had a Plant Services audit and there were considerable recommendations. When will these come back to the Board for specific consideration? Will that be at the next work session?” Dr. Phillips, “We can bring it back. I guess it could go under property committee or whatever. We’ll look at it and see. Our position is that we implement the plan. A lot of the issues will be budgetary and it all can’t be done in one year. We’re going to work with the Adams Group to give us an implementation plan and timeline. It will be a cost if we ask them to come back here on a regular basis, to review progress, etc. Some of that is necessary. When I talked to Matt he said that he will talk with me about this at a later date and see what we can come up with and I’ll bring that back to you. The timeline for the implementation and that, he’s going to help us develop that at no extra cost.”

Mrs. Green, “I was back out at Carver High School and noticed there was a balance due to the roofing contract. Have we paid that?” Mrs. Veasey, “We have not paid it.”

Mr. Whiteside, “This was handed out to us tonight. This is a printout of the Adams report. This is the actual report. Is this exactly the same document that was in the notebook on the table last week?” Miss Jones, “Yes, it is the exact same document.”

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously voted to go into executive session for a student appeal.

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

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the March meeting of the Board.

Greg S. Ellington
Legal Counsel