

MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 17, 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, April 17, 2006, 6:30 p.m. in the conference room at the Bradley Library.

The following School Board members were present: Mary Sue Polleys, Chairman, James Walker, Vice Chairman, 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, Peggy Connell, CAO, Eddie Obleton, CSSO, Don A. Cooper, Jr., CHRO, Billy Kendall, Administrative Assistant, 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 and the character education word were led by students from Hannan Academy.

Dr. Polleys recognized visitors in the audience, Teresa Tomlinson, Midtown, Inc., Leadership Columbus, John Lincoln, St. Elmo Gifted, Owen Ditchfield, South Columbus Concerned Citizens, Bill Howell, Rainbow PUSH, Bill Madison, NAACP, and Nadine Jenkins, Carver High, CAWANA.

The Board recognized the following: STAR Student/STAR Teacher; State Literary Champions; U.S. Military Academy West Point Student; City Middle School Basketball Championship; GHSA State Riflery Championship; Teacher Cadets; Georgia Science Teacher's Association; 2006 Women of Achievement Award; ABCD Award.

Dr. Polleys called on Dr. Schley. Dr. Schley commented, "The School Board was at a National Association for School Boards in Chicago. These meetings provide an opportunity for Boards from all over the country to gather and to discuss matters that affect us all. A great deal of the work that is done at these meetings occurs at something they call special sessions. These sessions deal with a broad array of problems, new laws, government mandates, funded and unfunded and particular different ways to provide education. Our district was honored by being asked to sponsor a panel discussion. The panel consisted of Dr. Polleys, Dr. Phillips, Mr. Walker, and particularly Dr. Pennock, Ms. Robertson and Mr. Denham. Just about every endeavor that you can think of produces a product. The product of Muscogee County School District is educated young men and women. Our charge is to provide them with the best quality education that our purse can afford. The majority of our youngsters pursue a fairly straightforward course from K through 12, they graduate and receive a diploma attesting to their achievement. There are a number however, that encounter bends in their paths and it's what can be done for these students that our panel addressed. The session was well attended despite the fact we were given an 8:00 slot on Monday morning. Most of your board was there along with a room full of board members and administrators from districts all over the country. Our panel went into detail to describe our alternative routes to a high school diploma, Rose Hill Center, Muscogee Evening High, Teenage Parenting Center, Academic Success and our new Early College program. I knew of course that the presentation was to be made but, I was unprepared with the polish with what it was done. The session ran well past the appointed time because of the interest of the audience, the questions they asked and the answers that were given. Dr. Phillips, Dr. Polleys, Mr. Walker, Dr. Pennock, Mr. Denham, Ms. Robertson, I am proud of you as indeed every educator who labors in this vineyard or indeed any citizen who is interested in education in Columbus, Georgia would be if they had been there to hear you."

Upon motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously excused the absence of Mrs. Storey due to out of town business.

Upon motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved official actions taken at the regular Board of Education meeting held on Monday, March 20, 2006.

The Board held the first public hearing on this year's growth in the tax digest. Dr. Polleys asked if there was anyone in the audience that would like to speak on this issue. Ms. Nadine Jenkins asked, "That 2.7%. Do you know how much money that is in dollar?" Dr. Phillips, "It is about \$2.1 million." Mr. Roberson noted that the next hearings are scheduled for May 8, 5:00 p.m. and May 15 at 6:30 p.m. and a hearing on the millage rate will be held May 15, immediately following the hearing on the digest growth. Dr. Phillips noted that it will be advertised in the paper.

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved new board policy FEDB – Construction Plans and Specifications. Ms. Buckner, "Do we have to get permission from parents in a certain area to replace a school." Dr. Phillips, "No you don't but, if you close a school and have shift the population, you do have to have hearings to advice the public of what you are doing. The final analysis is the Board's decision." Mr. Wells, "I don't know if we'll ever solve this problem of replacement versus renovation as far as everybody is concerned. This is a good start and I'm glad to see this policy instituted. Some schools do not need to be renovated, they need to be replaced and like you say demographically where the students are is where new schools need to be built."

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved the revision of Policy GAMA – Drug Free Workplace. It was noted that this is only if there is reasonable cause.

Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved the revision of Policy GBKA – Professional Personnel Lay-off. Dr. Phillips, "This refines the policy and removes the concept of bumping. It's been reviewed by our attorneys." Mr. Whiteside, "I've been on the school board for thirteen years. We've had a RIF policy every since I can remember. The point system that's built into the policy has never been kept up with. This may mean that they may start to keep up with it. What I don't want anybody to think is that this means that we're seriously considering lay-offs. To my recollection in the thirteen years I've been on the school board, the only time that we every thought about lay-offs was in 1995 which was a very bad budget year. We've always managed to never take any employees down except those who go by attrition and I'm sure that'll continue to be that way. I stand corrected. There was a year when we eliminated a whole class of employees. That's not the same thing as a lay off or reduction in force. We did that in response to state law."

Dr. Phillips noted that the draft policy presented was sent out for more input. Mr. Roberson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wells to approve the draft policy incorporating skirt length, shorts, and hoods. Mr. Roberson, "This will shift us to specific aspects of the dress code and this will help in the education process. It helps us to give individuals prerogative and freedom and at the same time to deal with issues of safety. Also it will help us with decency, thwart us from excessive sensuality, drug and gang insignias. I think in the long run we're going to see a reduction in suspensions related to dress code. It's probably more so at high schools, we have students trying to please peers. The expectations are going to be there." Mrs. Green, "I wanted to point out with regard to the length of the skirt, I thought the language was changed per the principal's request from the tip of the fingers to specific language." Dr. Polleys, "It was supposed to be changed." Mr. Whiteside, "I appreciate the meaningful comments that came back from the principals and the council. There were several comments made about the skirt length requirement. For my two-cents worth, I just don't think we're going in the right place. I've always thought this is a building-based decision." Dr. Schley, "I'd like to offer an amendment that both shorts and skirts should not be shorter than 3-inches above the top of the patella. I may be the only anatomist in this room however, the knee cap is the same on everybody." The amendment was seconded by Mr. Wells. The vote on the amended motion was unanimous.

Upon motion of Mrs. Green, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board unanimously approved the endorsement of Midtown, Inc.'s proposal to seek and build community consensus for the development of a plan for the property surrounding the Library and Sears building. Said plan will be presented to the Board of Education for consideration. Mrs. Green, "We need to release this project so that our focus can be education." Mr. Whiteside, "The cost of this planning will be born out of private funds." Dr. Phillips, "That's correct." Mrs. Tomlinson, "This is consensus building." Mr. Whiteside, "We are not making an economic commitment to do this?" Mr. Wells, "Not in this vote." Mr. Whiteside, "I think this is important for some of our constituents to understand that we're not making an economic commitment to this. The other thing is that some of our constituents who may be concerned about our committing public decisions to a private organization. As I understand it, all that is likely to occur here is that you'll bring back to us a plan which we'll have an opportunity to present to the public and we'll have to vote on it again." Dr. Phillips, "That's right. The decision making will be by this Board." Mr. Whiteside, "I commend you Mrs. Tomlinson to bring this effort forward." Mr. Roberson, "One of the things that we talked about in the work session was the timeliness. We have the new Rigdon Road Elementary School that is being built and all of this really fits in. It keeps us at the centerpiece of education and instruction. I wanted to clarify that by July we'll have a recommendation coming back to us." Dr. Polleys, "That's the optimistic timeline. Thank you Midtown, Teresa Tomlinson. We appreciate the leadership."

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

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously awarded a contract to Columbus Bank & Trust Company in the annual amount of \$21,303.68 to provide banking services for a five-year period beginning July 1, 2006 as described in the RFP.

Mr. Wells made a motion, seconded by Dr. Schley to award a contract to Clear Concepts Consulting Group to represent Muscogee County School District for the next five-year period in services for Phase I; assist in the selection of Short-Term Disability Insurance, Long-Term Disability, Dental Passive PPO and Dental DMO insurances effective January, 2007 at a cost of \$28,000.00; the services for Phase II; assist in the selection of Basic Life and ADD, Supplemental Life and ADD and Dependent Life effective January, 2009 at a cost of \$10,000.00. Mrs. Green, "I have a problem with the School District providing a captive audience for this consulting group slash brokerage firm of nearly 6,000 with all the (6) coverage's that are proposed here, we're only going to participate in (2) of them. I think that we should not in any form or fashion tell the MCSD employees who to do business with and we're not paying for the coverage. I cannot support this recommendation." The vote was (6) affirming and (2) opposing, (Green, Buckner).

Upon motion of Dr. Schley, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously awarded contracts to MediaSouth Computer Supplies, Inc., \$9,051.84 and Data Supplies, Inc., \$1,845.76 for computer paper in Department of Technology. Mr. Wells asked are cartridges being recycled. Dr. Phillips said that there is a process to get this done.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved the purchase of a cargo delivery truck from Bill Heard Chevrolet-International, \$52,744.18.

Upon motion of Dr. Schley, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously awarded a contract to Arco Builders, Inc. to serve as Construction Manager at Risk for New Elementary School No. 6. Mr. Wells asked, "In the next item we are recommending Freeman and Associates. Why didn't they get elementary no. 6?" Dr. Phillips, "Arco had the best rating for elementary no. 6. On the next one, actually, Arco had the best rating for it as well. We have a board policy that says that we don't want one construction company doing more than three projects or \$25 million and that's why we moved to Freeman and Associates."

Upon motion of Mrs. Green, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously awarded a contract to Freeman & Associates, Inc. to serve as Construction Manager at Risk for the New Rigdon Road Elementary School.

Upon motion of Mrs. Green, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously approved the close-out of the Wynnton Elementary School Construction Project and depositing \$75,809.50 in the 1997 SPLOST NPR Fund to be used for other 1997 SPLOST Projects and \$273,674.12 in the 2003 SPLOST NPR Fund to be used for other 2003 SPLOST Projects.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously approved the following consent agenda items:

- Human Resources Report/Professional and Classified.
- American Heart Association to use Kinnett Stadium.
- Georgia Special Olympics to use Kinnett Stadium.
- Donation from United Way, \$1,500 to Even Start Program.
- Security Services for Columbus Public Library and Branches.
- New budget, GLRS, \$2,629.00, Title VIB, Reading Grant.
- New budget, PES FY06 VI-B Flow Through.
- Grant, State Supervisors for Technology/Career Education, \$90,915.00.
- Grant, State Extended Year for Technology/Career Education, \$18,701.00.
- Grant, State Extended Day for Technology/Career Education, \$7,615.00.
- Grant, State Capital Outlay for Technology/Career Education, \$140,000.00 at Daniel Evening and Columbus High.
- Grant, Career Development for Muscogee Evening, School, \$7,500.00.
- Renewal, Construction Dumpster Services, \$7,980.00 Reeves Wrecking.
- Renewal, Putrid Garbage Services, \$213,172.82 Environmental Partners.
- Renewal, Scrub & Re-coating Gymnasiums, \$49,234.00 Stevens Gyms.
- Renewal, Pest Control, \$59,280.00 yearly (pest) and \$21,528.00, year (termite) Orkin Pest Control.
- Renewal, Fire Alarm Monitoring, \$6,660.00.
- Renewal, carpet cleaning, \$127,120.16, Southeaster Facilities.
- Renewal, air filter changes, \$115,941.35 year, Pure Air Service Network.
- Financial Assistance, \$1,643.76.
- Audit of financial statement of 1997 and 2003 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.
- Report on transfers from capital projects fund.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to go into executive session for student appeals.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner, 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 regular April meeting of the Board.

Greg S. Ellington
Legal Counsel