

## MINUTES

Monroe City School Board of Education  
2006 Tower Drive  
Monroe, Louisiana 71201

The Monroe City School Board met in regular session, Tuesday, December 13, 2011, at J. S. Clark Elementary School, 1207 Washington Street; Monroe, Louisiana 71201. The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. by President Traweek. Prayer was offered by Bishop Rodney McFarland, Sr., Free Gift Baptist Church. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Keldrick Gorham, Minnie Ruffin Elementary School.

### Agenda Item 1C: Roll Call

Board Members Present: Mrs. Victoria Dayton, Mrs. Victoria Krutzer, Mr. James Traweek, Mr. Clarence Sharp, Bishop Rodney McFarland Sr., Mr. Verbon Muhammad and Mr. Glynn Ludley

Administrative Staff: Dr. Kathleen Harris, Attorney L. Douglas Lawrence, Mrs. Betty Carroll, Mrs. Derenda Flowers and Mrs. Vickie Irwin

### Action Item 1D – Adoption of the Agenda

On a motion by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Bishop McFarland, the Board approved the agenda with the following addition/changes: Addition of Bond Analysis Fees resolution as 3E:2, change 5E (Academic Turn Around Proposal) to 3E:3, change 4A (Salary Study presentation) to 3E:4 and change 3F (executive session) to 5E. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

### Agenda Item 2 – Point of Pride

Katherine High's fourth grade science class at Minnie Ruffin Elementary was the 2011 LACUE Student Video Contest winner in the Elementary Academic category. Mrs. High was recognized at the LACUE Conference Awards Ceremony in New Orleans November 29, 2011. The video, *More Than an Egg Meets the Eye*, chronicled the class' project.

Mr. Traweek congratulated the Neville High School football team on winning the 4A Football Championship.

### Action Item 3A – Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer, the Board approved November 15, 2011 and December 7, 2011 minutes as printed. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

### Action Item 3B – Field Trip Request

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Ludley, the Board approved the following field trips: Carroll High School Basketball Team to Starksville, MS, December 27-30, 2011; Wossman High School Band to Slidell, Morgan City and New Orleans, LA; February 17-21, 2012 and Carroll Jr. High 8th Grade to Natchitoches, Lafayette, Baton Rouge and New Orleans, LA; April 30 - May 5, 2012. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 3C – 2011 Compliance Questionnaire

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Sharp, the Board approved the 2011 Compliance Questionnaire as printed. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 3D – September 2011 Financial Statements

On a motion by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Bishop McFarland, the Board approved September 2011 financial statements as printed. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 3E:1 – October 2011 Financial Statements

On a motion by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Bishop McFarland, the Board approved October 2011 financial statements as printed. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 3E:2 – Additional Analysis Fees

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Muhammad, the Board approved a resolution approving the payment of an additional analysis fee to Southwest Securities, Inc. in the amount of \$4,000 relative to the issuance, sale and delivery of three million forty-five thousand dollars (\$3,045,000) Sales Tax School Refunding Bonds, Series 2011, of the Monroe City School Board of the City of Monroe, State of Louisiana delivered November 29, 2011. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 3E:3 – Turn Around Proposal

Dr. Harris noted that the proposal is the same one that she has spoken to Board members about. She is asking to place consultants at Carroll High, Carroll Jr. and Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School to set up sustainable reform. She noted that Dr. Ortero from Knowledge Quest is in attendance to answer any questions.

It was moved by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer to accept the proposal as recommended by Dr. Harris.

Public Input: Ms. Debora Benton encouraged the Board to support the recommendation of the superintendent. She stated that she wants Carroll High to become an accredited high school. She further stated that it is about the students and changes must be made.

Mr. Muhammad stated that he is concerned about what will happen when the consultants are gone. The cost of the proposal is a half million dollars.

Dr. Harris stated that the district must set aside money to deal with schools that are not making yearly progress. The money must be spent on an outside provider to provide supplemental educational services. The group will come in and set up a framework that will be enduring; a framework that we can hire three new principals and sustain the program with help from IDRA. There is a transition plan to make sure that the changes made through Knowledge Quest are routinized and standardized to build upon improving those schools.

Mr. Sharp stated that Carroll High, Carroll Jr. and Lincoln Elementary are his utmost priority. He stated that he does not think that the money should be spent on outside consultants because there are people inside the system that can do the job.

Dr. Harris reiterated that the money must be spent on an outside consultant group; it is the law and the district has no other choice. She noted that this plan gives the district more control over how those services are provided.

Dr. Jose Otero, Executive Vice President of Knowledge Quest Academy, noted that the state dictates what the data should be for every school. Once the school drops below that level, it is not up to the district to make decisions as to what will happen at that school. Knowledge Quest will come in and set various pieces in place. Between all of the new mandates and regulations, it is easy to lose sight of the students.

Mr. Traweek asked if there is anything at Carroll High that can be corrected quickly.

Dr. Otero stated that it would be unfair for him to answer that question because there must be an analysis of the school.

Mrs. Krutzer stated that her constituents want to know if his company will evaluate all teachers and if they will use the rubric from the Department of Education. She also asked if his administrators will come from outside the district.

Dr. Otero replied that employees will come from outside of the district and that they must operate within the state guidelines.

Mrs. Krutzer stated that she contacted several school districts in Louisiana and Knowledge Quest received very good commendations.

Mrs. Dayton asked if the company has a pool of employees to select from.

Dr. Otero replied that through company protocol, they interview persons that could potentially be employed.

Mrs. Dayton stated that she is for doing whatever it takes to bring the schools up to the highest possible level because they want the children to be successful; however, she is concerned that there is less than 100 days left in the school year. She also stated that at this point she does not have enough confidence in the company to make a decision in support of the proposal.

Dr. Otero noted that they must have support from the parents and the Board for the program to be effective. The schools did not go by the wayside through the mechanism of one person; it took time for the schools to get where they are and it is going to take time to bring them back.

Dr. Harris stated that the district must do something. If the Board denies this recommendation, the money must be spent the traditional way by allowing different vendors to come in and solicit parents to hire them for afterschool tutoring; however, it does not provide whole school reform.

Mrs. Krutzer noted that Carroll High has had four different principals in 10 years and the school has continued to fail. If something is not done, students from the three failing schools will be allowed to transfer to other schools that are already at capacity.

Bishop McFarland stated that the Board is not looking at the big picture. Students from failing schools will continue to transfer. Students from MLK and Carroll Jr. will have a choice to transfer and they will choose Lee; a school that is already overcrowded.

Mr. Muhammad stated that he cannot support the recommendation at this time because of rezoning. It's the middle of the school year, and there are other matters on the table.

Mr. Traweck called for the vote. In favor: Mrs. Krutzer, Bishop McFarland, and Mr. Ludley. Opposed: Mrs. Dayton, Mr. Sharp, Mr. Muhammad, and Mr. Traweck. The motion failed.

#### Action Item 4A – Reconsideration of Human Resources Director

Mr. Traweck indicated that someone on the prevailing side must make the motion to reconsider this item.

No motion was made to reconsider the appointment of the Human Resources Director.

#### Action Item 4B – Appointment of Human Resources Director

No action taken due to no motion made to reconsider the appointment of the Human Resources Director.

#### Action Item 4C – Human Resources Agenda

On a motion by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Bishop McFarland, the Board approved the December 13, 2011 Human Resources Agenda as printed. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 5A – Board Policies First Reading

On a motion by Mr. Sharp and seconded by Bishop McFarland, the Board accepted the following policies as first reading: DJC (Payroll Procedures), DJE (Purchasing), DJED (Bids and Quotations), GBN (Dismissal of Employees), GBRA (Employee Conduct),

IDDF (Education of Students with Disabilities), IFBGA (Student Computer and Internet Use), II (Testing Program) and JBCC (Student Assignment).

Action Item 5B – Contract for Online Solicitation Service

On a motion by Mr. Sharp and seconded by Bishop McFarland, the Board approved a contract with Bid Express to provide online competitive solicitation for posting and receiving bids as recommended by the administration. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Action Item 5C – Awarding of School Food Service Bid

On a motion by Mr. Sharp and seconded by Bishop McFarland, the Board awarded School Food Service Equipment bid SFS12-06 as recommended by the administration and indicated on the tab sheet. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Action Item 5D – Purchase and Installation of Window Shades at Neville High School

On a motion by Mr. Sharp and seconded by Bishop McFarland the Board awarded window shades bid MC12-05 to Noel Enterprise d/b/a Smith Blind & Awning. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item 5E – Salary Study Presentation

Carolyn Long, President of Management Advisory Group, presented a brief overview of the final salary study. She noted that the market salary/comprehensive study shows that the Monroe City School District is 9% ahead of the market at the entry level and 3.5% behind the market at the maximum of ranges. There are inconsistencies in salary ranges for teachers and classified staff. Step plans are very common for teachers and she recommends the continuation; step plans are not necessary for classified/non-instructional positions and are not recommended. She also recommends that the work day be increased from 7.5 hours to 8 hours for positions listed in the study. A policy that deals with paying overtime to exempt employees is not necessary and is not a common practice. The base salary for those employees is presumably high so that it anticipates that longer hours will be worked. Additionally, certificated administrators should be removed from the teacher scale as it relates to sales tax distribution. She noted that additional information can be found in the detail report.

Mr. Traweck asked if there is one particular area that needs adjustments immediately.

She replied that the district needs a strong internal Information Technology Department which goes hand-in-hand with a strong internal Human Resources Department.

Bishop McFarland and Mrs. Dayton agreed that the recommendations need to be implemented.

Action Item Executive Session 5F – Executive Session

It was moved by Mrs. Dayton and seconded by Mr. Sharp to convene into executive session to discuss personnel issues related to the employment of the superintendent.

Dr. Harris stated that based on the way the agenda item is worded, there is not enough information to understand the need for executive session; therefore, she ask that any conversation that occurs on this particular item take place in open meeting.

Public Comments: Ms. Gloria Walker noted that she is disappointed that the Board is allowing the students to suffer. She asked Board members to resign if they will not support students. Rev. Oliver Billups stated that he and other ministers are concerned about the plight of MCS students. He also stated the reason Monroe cannot get big business to come to our city is because of the poor educational system. He encouraged everyone to work together for the betterment of all students. Mr. Quincy Gardner stated that he is concerned about the actions of the Board. He is sad that the Board cannot work together for the sake of students. He further stated that he does not agree with every decision that the superintendent makes but he has to have faith in her. Rev. Roosevelt Wright stated that he is disappointed that the Board does not see the value in the superintendent. Dr. Harris is an educator; not a politician. Mr. Jessie Handy stated that he is glad that the superintendent wants discussion of her employment to be held in open session. He further stated that he is disappointed that Mrs. Dayton and Mr. Traweek did not support the recommendation of the superintendent to offer assistance to Carroll High, Carroll Jr. and M.L.K. – those schools have been in bad shape for a long time and is in need of assistance. James Turner stated that he is a student at Carroll High School and that he has been hearing many negative comments about his school in the media and community. He also stated that it is not the teachers that are failing; it's the students that are failing themselves. Dr. Veronica Lewis stated that there are too many students that have not had their needs met. The Board leads the district; therefore, they are responsible for students. Ms. Kaye Witherspoon stated that students do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care. She asked Board members to show students how much they care about them – they are the future.

Mr. Traweek noted that the Board will not go into executive session and that the discussion will take place in open meeting.

Mr. Sharp stated that he wants what's best for students. He encouraged the ministers to come together and present a plan.

Mr. Muhammad stated that the only issue he has with the superintendent is a matter of respect. When plans are rolled out, they get to the media first. It would be fair for the superintendent to roll plans out to the Board first – it puts him in a difficult position when the media have the information before the Board does. It's a matter of respect, if we can get on the same page we can move forward.

Bishop McFarland stated that it appears that some Board members desire to run the superintendent out of the district and he wants to know why. He asked if there is a hidden agenda. The Board needs to give the superintendent an opportunity to perform and stop micromanaging. He also stated that he does not agree with every decision she makes but she needs the opportunity to make the school district better. The superintendent is doing

the best she can with what she has been given.

Mrs. Krutzer stated that she can remember the previous Board and the games that were played, the comments that were made, and the votes that were taken and it wasn't about children. She stated that she has probably taken more flak from the superintendent than any other Board member, but she is the superintendent. She stated that the superintendent has to learn how to compromise. She has deficits, there are communication issues, and there is disrespect. She indicated that the district has bought out one superintendent's contract and that she is not going to do that again. Right now there are children that are failing; if the district does not do something with those schools, the State will take over.

Mr. Ludley apologized to Dr. Harris for the way she has been treated by the Board during her tenure. Students deserve to be exposed to the types of educational opportunities she is trying to implement. If Dr. Harris leaves, she will be okay, but many of the students will not. The district would not be in this position if the Board would have put students first; students are the ones that will be hurt by this action. Students are undereducated and radical changes need to be made. He believes that gender and race plays a part in the way the superintendent has been treated. He then asked Mr. Traweck why he was opposed to the plan to move the schools forward.

Mr. Traweck replied that he does not feel that Dr. Otero has an adequate plan. He stated that it is late in the school year and that Patrick Traylor is doing a wonderful job at Carroll High. He noted that Mr. Sharp and Mrs. Dayton represent students at Carroll and they do not support the plan. He further stated that he would expect the same support if it were a school in his district.

Mr. Muhammad stated that the superintendent has to be able to give-and-take. Some of the issues have been personnel matters. He said he told the superintendent that he would not support anything dealing with central office if she doesn't do anything for employees such as bus drivers and cafeteria workers. He further stated that their styles may clash but it can be worked out – there must be some give-and-take. As a new Board member, he wants to be successful and he wants the superintendent to be successful.

It was moved by Mr. Sharp to place the superintendent on administrative leave with pay for 30 calendar days pending an investigation of concerns and to appoint an interim, Ms. Derenda Flowers, director/administrator, until an interim is named. Mrs. Dayton seconded the motion.

Attorney Lawrence noted that the motion is a double motion. Mr. Traweck informed Mr. Sharp that he can only make one motion.

Mr. Sharp moved to place the superintendent on administrative leave with pay for 30 calendar days pending investigation of concerns. Mrs. Dayton seconded the motion.

Bishop McFarland stated that nothing has been established during the conversation to call for an investigation. The motion has nothing to do with what was discussed in open forum.

Mr. Traweck asked Mr. Sharp to restate the motion.

Mr. Sharp restated the motion. “I move to put the superintendent on administrative leave with pay for 30 calendar days pending investigation.”

Bishop McFarland inquired about the investigation. He reiterated that nothing was established; there is no cause. He stated that nothing was discussed to give the motion merit.

Mr. Traweek indicated that the Board attorney stated that there was nothing illegal about the motion.

It was moved by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Bishop McFarland to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Traweek stated that there is already a motion on the floor and then he stated that the motion is pulled.

Agenda Item 6 – Recess/Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Bishop McFarland. The motion carried on a majority vote. Mr. Traweek and Mr. Sharp opposed.

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Mr. Mickey Traweek  
Board President

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Dr. Kathleen Harris  
Superintendent