

MINUTES

Monroe City School Board
2101 Roselawn Avenue
Monroe, Louisiana 71201

The Monroe City School Board met in regular session, Tuesday, July 14, 2009 at the Monroe City School Board Media Center, 2009 Auburn Avenue, Monroe, Louisiana 71201. The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. by President Shelling. Prayer was offered by Reverend Robby Williams, Macedonia Baptist Church. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Reverend King Dawson.

Item 4: Roll Call

Board Members Present

Mrs. Victoria "Vickie" Dayton
Mrs. Victoria "Vickie" Krutzer
Mr. James Mickey Traweek
Mr. Jessie Handy
Bishop Rodney McFarland, Sr.
Mrs. Stephanie Smith
Mrs. Brenda Shelling

Superintendent and Administrative Staff

Dr. James Dupree
Mrs. Derenda Flowers
Mrs. Betty Carroll
Mrs. Vickie Irwin
Mrs. Julie Staley
Mr. Andrew Hill
Attorney L. Douglas Lawrence

Action Item 5 – Adoption of Agenda

Dr. Dupree asked that the Board convene in executive session to receive an update on a current investigation. Mrs. Smith asked that agenda item 7:B2 (approval of architect contract for Lee Jr. High gymnasium) be deleted from the agenda because the Board does not have the revised contract.

It was moved by Mr. Handy and seconded by Bishop McFarland to approve the agenda with the changes as requested by Superintendent Dupree and Mrs. Smith.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Action Item 6 – Adoption of Minutes

Mrs. Smith asked that a statement made by Mrs. Shelling regarding the faxing of her evaluation instrument be removed from the Board minutes of June 30, 2009.

President Shelling stated that she did speak with Mrs. Smith regarding the minutes and that the statement can be removed.

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Dayton, the Board approved the minutes of June 30, 2009 with the deletion as requested by Mrs. Smith.

The motion carried on a majority vote. Mrs. Smith stated that she is abstaining because she was absent from the meeting.

Agenda Item 7 – Superintendent

Action Item 7:A1- Executive Session

Mrs. Shelling asked if the executive session will involve anyone that may need to be notified.

Attorney Lawrence stated that the update should only be related to a discussion about the investigation of misconduct only. If the conversation carries over into a discussion about competency or fitness, the person involved must be notified. He stated that the executive session will be limited strictly to misconduct as in violation of the law or board policy.

Mrs. Shelling reiterated that since this is strictly related to misconduct and is not related to competency or fitness, the Board does not have to give notice of the executive session.

It was moved by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer to convene in executive session for ten minutes to receive an update on a current investigation.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

The meeting reconvened in open session and the meeting continued.

Agenda Item 7:A2 – Statement on School Performance

Superintendent Dupree noted that there is a commitment with the Department of Justice to offer advanced placement opportunities for students. Teachers at Carroll High, Wossman High and Lee Jr. have been trained at various universities in order to improve participation in advanced placement courses.

Action Item 7:B – Approval of Architect Contracts

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Smith, the board approved architect contracts with M3A Architecture, PLLC for a gymnasium at Wossman High and TB Architecture for replacement windows at Neville High School.

Mr. Handy inquired about the percentage the architects will receive.

Mr. Charles Monroe indicated that all three architects for the current projects have agreed to an 8.5% fee.

The motion carried on a majority vote. Mr. Handy stated that he is opposed because of the architect fees and because of pressing needs at other schools.

Executives from M3A Architecture thanked the Board for allowing them the opportunity to work on the gymnasium at Wossman High.

Action Item 7:C – Approval to Purchase the Tower Drive Property

It was moved by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Bishop McFarland to purchase the Tower Drive Property for \$600,000.00.

The motion carried on a majority vote. Mrs. Krutzer and Mrs. Dayton opposed. Mrs. Dayton stated that the property is in a good location but there are schools that are underutilized, and she does not feel comfortable supporting this project at this time.

Action Item 7:D – Approval of Principals' and Assistant Principals' Contracts

Superintendent Dupree recommended that all principals receive a two year contract.

On a motion by Mr. Traweck and seconded by Mr. Handy, the board approved two year contracts for principals and assistant principals with performance objectives and salary schedule as previously discussed.

Mrs. Dayton noted that she has received feedback from principals regarding the method of calculating school performance scores.

Superintendent Dupree stated that the method used for calculation could result in inaccuracy.

President Dayton offered a friendly amendment to allow the Superintendent to revise the school performance formula.

Mr. Traweck accepted the friendly amendment.

The motion and friendly amendment carried on a unanimous vote.

Action Item 7:E – Recommendation for Approval of a Principal at Carroll High School

Superintendent Dupree recommended Dr. Roy Higgins as his second recommendation for the principal of Carroll High School.

It was move by Mr. Handy to accept the Superintendent's recommendation.

It was moved by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Mrs. Dayton to allow the Superintendent to appoint a principal at Carroll High because of existing legal issues.

Mrs. Dayton stated that at the last meeting the Board directed the Superintendent to provide academic performance scores, test data and the results from the LA Tech assessment, and to set a meeting to discuss the data. She asked that a meeting be set as soon as possible.

Bishop McFarland offered a friendly amendment that individual Board members be notified of the appointee prior to the actual appointment.

Mrs. Smith accepted the friendly amendment.

Bishop McFarland asked who will lead the school until the next Board meeting.

President Shelling noted that the Board is in violation of its own policy. If the Board policy is not suspended, the Superintendent is required to bring another recommendation until the list recommended by the interview committee is exhausted.

Mrs. Smith withdrew her motion and Mrs. Dayton withdrew her second.

President Shelling stated that she is not advocating for any particular person and that Board policy must be followed.

Mr. Handy asked Attorney Lawrence if the Superintendent must bring the next recommendation immediately.

Attorney Lawrence noted that there are two policies that address this issue. Both policies indicate that another name must be provided if the recommendation is not approved.

It was moved by Mr. Handy to suspend policy until the investigation at Carroll High is completed.

President Shelling stated that this item must be added to the agenda.

It was moved by Mr. Handy and seconded by Mrs. Smith, to add to the agenda the approval to suspend Board policy.

The motion failed. Mrs. Shelling opposed. A unanimous vote is needed to add to the agenda.

Mrs. Smith asked Attorney Lawrence to explain the policy to her because what is being referenced is different from what the policy actually states.

Attorney Lawrence stated that from his research, the Board has a history of exhausting the list of approved names. He then read the following policies: Policy CBG - In the case of rejection, it is the duty of the Superintendent to make another recommendation. Policy GCF: If the board does not accept the recommendation, the Superintendent shall make another recommendation. He noted that if the recommendation placed before the Board is not accepted, there is a duty to bring another recommendation.

Mrs. Smith stated that the policy has not been violated because the policy does not state that the Superintendent must make one or two recommendations. The policy states that the Superintendent must bring another recommendation.

It was moved by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Mr. Handy to allow the Superintendent to place an interim principal at Carroll High until the investigation is completed and that the Superintendent informs the Board of the replacement prior to the appointment.

Bishop McFarland stated that the majority of the Board must approve the appointee.

President Shelling stated that she is of the opinion that the Board is in violation of its policy. She noted three occurrence where the Board exhausted the approved list of applicants before an appointment was made. She noted that the Board has historically exhausted the list of applicants.

Mrs. Smith stated that she is not against anyone; there are legal issues at Carroll High that must be addressed before anyone can be placed at that school.

Mr. Handy noted that the list was not exhausted with the principal position at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School.

Mrs. Dayton stated that there should always be an alternative option. We do not know who will be leading that school and it is unfortunate; this is like malpractice because there was reason to believe that there would be problems with the recommendation because of the ongoing investigation. This Board should have been furnished with a realistic plan to carry this school on. Carroll is in need of our help and I am in support of recruiting someone and paying what is needed to get a good leader at that school.

Mr. Traweck asked if an interim principal could be named soon. He then asked if a noon meeting could be called to resolve this matter.

Mrs. Smith noted that she will be leaving to go out of town in the morning and would not be available.

Superintendent Dupree noted that he presented candidates for Carroll High. An attempt has been made to give reasonable leadership at that school. In order to give coverage at

Carroll immediately, he has considered reassigning a principal. He stated that Mr. Breithaupt has worked at Carroll and is familiar with the staff.

President Shelling conferred with the Board Attorney. She then restated the motion.

The motion carried on a majority vote. Mrs. Shelling opposed.

Unfinished Business

8:A – Approval of the 2009-2019 Board Meeting Schedule

Public Input

Ms. Gloria Walker recommended that the Board set a standing meeting date of the first and third Tuesday and that the meetings not be rescheduled for personal reasons.

It was moved by Mr. Traweck and seconded by Mr. Handy to approve the 2009-2010 Board meeting schedule as printed.

Board members discussed possible changes to the calendar.

Mrs. Dayton stated that the Policy Committee discussed the master calendar, and her recommendation is that the Board calendar merges with the master calendar.

Mr. Traweck withdrew his motion, and Mr. Handy withdrew his second.

It was moved by Mrs. Dayton and seconded by Mrs. Smith, to allow the Superintendent to merge the calendars and to present the revised calendar at the next Board meeting.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item 8:B – First Reading: Employment of an Internal Auditor

Mrs. Dayton stated that the Policy Committee received the draft internal auditor policy. She noted that Board members voiced concerns about individual members being able to assign the internal auditor to address issues for personal reasons. The policy that has been drafted eliminates that from happening and will make this a fair and objective process. Mrs. Dayton read the draft policy into the record:

It is the policy of the MCSB to establish and support the position of Internal Auditor as an independent objective resource for the purpose of furnishing MCSB and top management with analysis, appraisals, counsel and information regarding the school system's operations in order to ensure maximum effectiveness, risk management, financial control and compliance. In carrying out the duties and responsibilities, the Internal Auditor will have full, free and unrestricted access to all system's activities, records, property and personnel.

The Internal Auditor reports directly to the MCSB and functions in accordance with an adopted job description and at the direction of the MCSB Audit Committee. The Internal Auditor will be an annual contracted position with review and evaluation by the MCSB. To maintain objectivity, the Internal Auditor and/or committee shall have no personal or professional involvement with or allegiance to the area being audited and should maintain an unbiased and impartial mindset to all engagements.

Furthermore, the Monroe City School Board will appoint the MCSB Audit Committee which will be comprised of one Board member and other committee members (no more than five total) to be appointed by the Chairman of the Board from recommendations and resumes presented by Board Members. The Superintendent and/or his designee will also serve on the committee in order to establish and maintain complete linkage and communication. The MCSB Audit Committee will select a person from within the committee to preside as Chair. The members appointed will have expertise and knowledge on financial reporting, risk management, internal and external control, compliance, ethics and management. The committee will operate in conjunction with and at the directive of the MCSB. The Internal Auditor and the MCSB Audit Committee will furnish reports and recommendations to the Board and Administration for consideration. A standing meeting time will be established by the MCSB. Any action taken as a result of the reporting, findings and/or recommendations is the sole responsibility of the MCSB.

Mrs. Dayton noted that several Board members have asked for job descriptions and the salary range for the position. He noted that these items can be obtained easily.

President Shelling asked that Board members notify Mrs. Dayton of any changes prior to the next board meeting.

Action Item 9 – Human Resources Agenda

On a motion by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Bishop McFarland, the Board approved the human resources agenda as presented by the administration.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item 10 – Board Committee Updates

- A. Transportation: Mrs. Krutzer – A committee meeting will be scheduled next week.
- B. Personnel: Bishop McFarland – Requested that reports from this committee be removed from this section of the agenda.
- C. Facilities: Mr. Traweek – No report.
- D. Insurance: Mr. Handy – No report

- E. Curriculum: Mrs. Krutzer – The committee will set a standing meeting date and time.
- F. Policy: Mrs. Dayton – Superintendent Dupree and Mrs. Flowers are working on the credit card usage policy.
- G. Finance: President Shelling – No report

Agenda Item 11 – President’s Reports and Announcements

President Shelling noted that a staff member, the Superintendent and several Board members traveled to Jackson, MS on July 6th to visit facilities designed by M3A Architecture.

It was noted that the Board President traveled to Little Rock, AR to attend the Southern Region Conference on July 8-10, 2009. She stated that the conference was very informative.

Agenda Item 12 – Superintendent’s Announcements

Mayor Jamie Mayo, Monroe City Council, Federal, State and Local Leaders and the Monroe Chamber of Commerce invites Board members to the official groundbreaking ceremony for the Monroe Regional Airport on Friday, July 17, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Bradley Scott of IDRA will be in the district on August 4, 2009. The purpose of this visit is to meet with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee to move forward with the written plan.

Action Item 13 – Executive Session

It was moved by Mr. Handy and seconded by Mrs. Smith to convene in executive session for thirty minutes to discuss: A.) Key-vs-MCSB (No.08-04082: Office of Workers’ Compensation) to take such action in open session as may be necessary and B.) To receive the results of the Superintendent’s Evaluation.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

After the allotted time, Mr. Handy asked for an additional ten minutes.

Action Item 14 – Reconvene In Open Session

The Board reconvened in open session at 8:05 p.m.

Action: Key-vs-MCSB

On a motion by Mrs. Dayton and seconded by Mr. Handy, the Board authorized the Attorney to appeal the Key-vs-MCSB case at the next court level.

In favor: Mrs. Dayton, Mrs. Krutzer, Mr. Traweek, Mr. Handy
Opposed: Bishop McFarland, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Shelling

The motion carried on a majority vote.

Discussion: Results of the Superintendent's Evaluation

President Shelling noted that the Board is held in strict confidence concerning the evaluation instrument itself. However, the performance objectives, in that it is related directly to the contract and to the performance of the superintendent, will be revealed.

Mr. Handy asked Attorney Lawrence to explain the difference in the two evaluation documents.

Attorney Lawrence stated that the fourteen performance objectives are specific terms of the contract that are a part of the contract document. The other item contained thirty-four different areas of evaluation. Those thirty-four areas are not exact or specific terms in the contract - they were in the addendum. One set of documents evaluate part of the contract and the other set of documents is the evaluation of the Superintendent's performance.

Mr. Handy stated that both instruments are related.

Superintendent Dupree stated that he would need to release any information that is of an evaluative nature.

President Shelling stated that one item is the evaluative instrument that evaluates the Superintendent in several different categories. The performance objectives are issues that are directly related to the Superintendent's contract which is available to the public. The performance objectives determine if the Superintendent has met the goals stipulated and identified by the Board; it is not an evaluative instrument.

Superintendent Dupree stated that he is concerned that some of the targets do not have a quantitative measure.

Mrs. Smith and Bishop McFarland stated that they did not address the performance objectives because the instrument is not fair to the Superintendent.

Superintendent Dupree stated that he objects to the public revelation on this matter.

Attorney Lawrence asked to speak with the Board President briefly.

Mr. Handy asked that his statements be read.

Attorney Lawrence noted that the statement he is being asked to read is on one of the documents. The document is not evaluative; therefore, it can be read. Attorney Lawrence read the following statement as written by Mr. Handy: "I do not have the information to

answer these questions correctly. These fourteen objectives do not coincide with the evaluation instrument we currently have. We need to stick with the evaluation instrument that we already have.”

Mr. Handy stated that there are questions that pertain to 2010-2011 that can not be answered. He asked that each individual Board member’s score be revealed.

President Shelling stated that the performance objectives had no numerical value assigned to them. It only notes if the item was achieved or not achieved. She further stated that there is nothing here that is a surprise to anybody on this Board - not even the Superintendent. When the Superintendent signed his contract, he indicated that he would address the performance objectives and that it would be a part of his evaluation. Additionally, there was a statement at the end that indicates that if he did not meet one part of any of the objectives that it would be grounds to dismiss. President Shelling directed Attorney Lawrence to read the objectives.

As directed by President Shelling, Attorney Lawrence read the following objectives:

Objective #1 – Increase average ACT scores: Insufficient number of responses from Board members.

Objective #2 – Decrease in the dropout rate with regards to providing data for the 2007-2008 school year before December 20, 2008: *Insufficient number of responses from the Board.*

Methodology on how to decrease the dropout rate before December 20, 2008: *Insufficient number of responses.*

Furnishing a plan to the Board to decrease the dropout rate before the end of February 2009: *Insufficient number of responses.*

Furnishing a plan to the Board before the end of 2008-2009 school term: *Majority of the Board indicated that they were not furnished with a plan before the end of the 2008-2009 school term.*

Implementation of a plan by the beginning of the 2009-2010 school term: *Majority of the Board could not grade.*

Objective #3 – Presentation of plan for Careers and Vocational Skills training by the end of the 2008-2009 school term: Majority of Board concluded no plan was presented

Plan for careers and vocational skill training implementation by the beginning of the 2009-2010 school term: No sufficient response from Board.

Objective #4 – Cause all obligations of the school district imposed on the school district by the school desegregation case (Andrews-vs-MCSB) to be fully implemented within the required time delays as required by law: *Insufficient number of responses.*

Objective # 5 – Conducting community and special interest group meetings: *Insufficient data to determine whether or not a plan to accomplish this was submitted by the January 2009 deadline.*

Conducting of first quarter meetings with community: *Insufficient data.*

Conducting of second quarter meetings with community: *Insufficient data.*

Conducting of third quarter meetings with community: *Insufficient data.*

Conducting of fourth quarter meetings with community: *Insufficient data.*

Objective #6 – Improve communication with School Board members, district employees and the community. *Insufficient data.*

Method, frequency and tone of communications with Board members: *Insufficient data.*

Content, detail and usefulness of reports and information: *Insufficient data.*

Responsiveness to reasonable requests: *Insufficient data.*

Nature and tone of communication with employees: *Insufficient data.*

Frequency, nature and quality of communication with the news media and other parties of interest: *Majority of Board found it unacceptable.*

Objective #7 – Reduction of the pupil/teacher ratio and the development of a plan by February 2009: *Majority of Board concluded that it was completed.*

Development of a plan by February 2009 to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio: *Majority of the Board concluded that it was completed.*

Presentation to the Board of a plan to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio before the first meeting of the year: *Majority of the Board concluded that it was completed.*

Reduction of the elementary school ratio to a level less than or equal to 24 students to 1 teacher: *Majority of the Board concluded that it was completed.*

Reduction of the pupil/teacher ratio for middle, junior, and senior high schools to a student/teacher ratio of 26 to 1 or less: *Insufficient data.*

Objective #8 – Staff Development plan to include LEAP, iLEAP, ACT and GEE preparation: *Insufficient data.*

Identification of training needs: *Insufficient data.*

Identification of training resources: *Insufficient data.*

Identification of funding sources to defray the cost of training: *Insufficient data.*

Ongoing training: *Insufficient data.*

Objective #9 – Development of a plan for presentation to the Board by the first meeting in March 2009 to increase the graduation rate. *No plan presented to Board.*

Implementation of a plan to increase the graduation rate: *Majority of Board concluded that no plan was implemented.*

Objective #10 – Promotion of the MCS district through the use of media and community meetings to communicate developments: *Majority of the Board concluded that it was not complete.*

Development and presentation of a comprehensive plan to promote public awareness before March 31, 2009: *Insufficient data and responses from the Board.*

Implementation of a plan to promote the MCS district before April 30, 2009: *Insufficient data and responses from the Board.*

Objective #11 – Plan to increase student performance scores: *Insufficient data from the Board.*

Objective #12 – Development of a Strategic Plan: *Insufficient data.*

Presentation of a Strategic Plan to the Board by the end of May 2009: *Insufficient data or responses from the Board.*

Plan to include a comprehensive facilities utilization review and improvement plan for facilities utilization: *Insufficient data from the Board.*

Plan to eliminate low performing schools: *Insufficient data from Board.*

Financial plan that addresses both the immediate and long-term effects of the local, national and global financial crisis on the school district to protect its financial position: *Insufficient responses from the Board.*

Objective #13 – Plan to eliminate ongoing multi-year employment of persons as substitute employees to be presented by the end May 2009: *Insufficient data from Board.*

Objective #14 – Providing a financial incentive plan that is tied to school performance scores to be presented to the Board for consideration on or before February 28, 2009: *Insufficient data from the Board.*

Presentation of a comprehensive plan on or before March 31, 2009: *Majority of the Board concluded that it was not presented.*

It was moved by Mr. Traweck and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer to initiate the process to remove the superintendent from his current position by furnishing written charges and fixing a hearing date to be determined, based on the report from the performance objectives.

Mrs. Smith noted that the agenda states that the Board will convene in executive session to receive the results. She stated that Mr. Traweck is adding to the agenda.

President Shelling stated that this is germane to the receiving of the results. She further stated that once the results are received it must be determined what will be done with those results.

Mr. Traweck inquired about the timeframe for setting a hearing.

Attorney Lawrence stated that the Superintendent's contract indicates that charges must be furnished and that a hearing can not be sooner than twenty days after charges are furnished.

Mr. Traweck stated that his motion needs to state that the hearing will be scheduled twenty calendar days from today.

President Shelling asked Mr. Traweck if he is amending his motion.

Mr. Traweck stated that he is amending his motion.

Mrs. Smith stated that Attorney Lawrence needs to address the legalities.

Mr. Traweck withdrew his motion and Mrs. Krutzer withdrew her second.

President Shelling announced that a special called meeting will be scheduled and posted within twenty-four hours to address this issue.

Mrs. Smith stated that this is unfair because she has informed the Board that she could not be present due to a family matter. She asked that the Board take that into

consideration and allow her to be present at the special called meeting. She indicated that she will return on July 21st.

Attorney Lawrence reminded the Board that any meeting that is scheduled must be posted twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.

President Shelling stated that she respects Mrs. Smith's desire to be present. She further stated that in light of the fact that the Board has taken the position that it has, it is going to be difficult to wait six more days for Mrs. Smith's return to Monroe. President Shelling noted that she will set a called meeting date of Thursday, July 16, 2009 at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Handy stated that all Board members should be present for action of this magnitude.

Bishop McFarland asked President Shelling to reconsider having the meeting when Mrs. Smith returns.

President Shelling stated that this puts the chair in a precarious position. She noted that this will allow the Superintendent to continue his role for another week. She stated that she hopes that everyone can continue to work for the good of the district in the next seven days. She then stated that she would oblige Mrs. Smith's and Bishop McFarland's request. President Shelling stated that the Board will meet Tuesday, July 21, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. to address this issue.

Action Item 15 – Recess/Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. upon a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Handy.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Mrs. Brenda Shelling
President

James A. Dupree, Ed.D.
Superintendent