

## MINUTES

Monroe City School Board  
2101 Roselawn Avenue  
Monroe, Louisiana 71201

The Monroe City School Board met in regular session, Tuesday, April 19, 2011 at Carroll High School, 2939 Renwick Street; Monroe, Louisiana 71202. The meeting was called to order at 6:20 p.m. by President Mickey Traweek. Prayer was offered by Bishop Rodney McFarland. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. H. M. Butler.

### Agenda Item 4: Roll Call

#### Board Members Present

Mrs. Victoria "Vickie" Dayton  
Mrs. Victoria "Vickie" Krutzer  
Mr. James Mickey Traweek  
Mr. Clarence Sharp  
Bishop Rodney McFarland, Sr.  
Mr. Verbon Muhammad  
Mr. Glynn Ludley

#### Administrative Staff

Dr. Kathleen Harris  
Attorney L. Douglas Lawrence  
Dr. Valerie Batley  
Dr. Phedra Brantley  
Mrs. Teresa Foreman  
Mr. Andrew Hill  
Mrs. Vickie Irwin  
Mr. Josh Leporati  
Dr. Lynn Morris  
Mrs. Dana Mullins  
Mrs. Sallie Sutherland  
Dr. Tammye Turpin  
Ms. Mamie Williams

### Action Item 5 – Adoption of the Agenda

It was moved by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Sharp, to move Action Item 7 to Action Item 8 and to adopt the agenda.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

### Agenda Item 6 – Points of Pride

Elementary Student of the Year: Sarah Scott, Lincoln Elementary School  
Junior High Student of the Year: Samantha Clark, Lee Junior High School

High School Student of the Year: Daniel Coenan, Neville High School  
Elementary Teacher of the Year: Amy Cooper, Cypress Point Elementary School  
Junior High Teacher of the Year: Cynthia Dunlap, M.L.K. Middle School  
High School Teacher of the Year: Kathleen Sandifer, Neville High School  
Elementary Principal of the Year: David Claxton, Sallie Humble Elementary School  
Junior High Principal of the Year: Whitney Martin, Lee Jr. High School  
High School Principal of the Year: Brent Vidrine, Neville High School

Mrs. Judiana Turner presented a token of appreciation to the Board for their support as the Carroll High School Dance team traveled to New York to participate in the Alvin Ailey Dance Workshop. She thanked Grambling State University for providing transportation.

#### Action Item 7 – Consent Agenda Items

All consent agenda items are to be moved to Action Item 8.

#### Action Item 8 – Items for Separate Consideration

##### Action Item 8:A – Adoption of the Minutes

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Sharp, the Board adopted the March 8, 2011 and March 15, 2011 minutes as printed.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

##### Agenda Item 8:B – Financial Report

Mrs. Krutzer asked if the budget is still projected to be \$3-\$5 million over budgeted.

Dr. Harris replied that the numbers are preliminary and that staff is currently working on the final budget.

Mr. Traweek noted that the Financial Report should be for information only.

##### Action Item 8:C – Permission to Travel

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Muhammad, the Board approved travel for: (i) Carroll High Choir to Washington, DC; April 28-May 2, 2011 (ii) Lee Jr. High 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade to Arlington, TX; May 13, 2011 (iii) Cypress Point Elementary 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade to Houston, TX; May 26-27, 2011.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

##### Action Item 8:D – Personnel Agenda

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer, the Board approved the Personnel Agenda with the deletion of A:5, B:2 and D:1.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Action Item 9:A-B – Strategic Planning RFP and Facilities Assessment RFP

Dr. Harris stated that these items were tabled at the last meeting. Again, she is asking for approval.

It was moved by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Bishop McFarland, to approve the Strategic Planning RFP and Facilities Assessment RFP.

Mrs. Krutzer stated that current studies should be evaluated before the Board moves forward with these studies.

Mr. Muhammad indicated that the plans are presented for action but they have not gone through committee. He then withdrew his motion.

Action Item 10-A – 2010-2011 Pupil Progression Addendum

Dr. Harris noted that approval of this agenda item will reduce the number of failures in the district. The Louisiana Department of Education is moving toward helping progress children by making sure that standards are not so punitive that there are high levels of retentions. Lowering the district mandated promotion rate from 78% to 70% will align MCS with the state.

It was moved by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Mr. Ludley, to approve the 2010-2011 Pupil Progression Addendum.

Mrs. Dayton stated that she is concerned that this will set students up to fail. It is better to address failures at a younger age; if deficiencies are addressed when students are older, there will be numerous drop-outs.

Mr. Muhammad asked why the grading scale is being reduced to 70%.

Dr. Harris replied that the state has moved their scale to 70%. She stated that the district will try to catch kids up with their cohort group by changing curriculum and instruction even if this item is not approved.

Mr. Traweck stated that standards should be raised not lowered.

Mrs. Krutzer stated that the rate has been at 78% for several years and there are tremendous amounts of failures. She further stated that this is not about lowering standards; this is about giving students a chance.

Mr. Ludley stated that he is in support of this item because it is devastating to young students to be labeled a failure. Teachers must work hard to progress students.

Bishop McFarland stated that the early years are critical in a child's education. The majority of over-age students are at the junior high level because they have been progressed when they were not ready to move to the next level.

Mrs. Sutherland noted kindergarten students must successfully complete the MCS Curriculum and score 75 or above on the Scholastic Readiness Test. She noted that there are students that score in the 80's and 90's in most of their classes and make a 77 in one class and fail for the year. Approval of this item will help with this issue.

In favor: Mr. Ludley

Opposed: Mrs. Dayton, Mrs. Krutzer, Mr. Sharp, Bishop McFarland, Mr. Muhammad, Mr. Traweek

The motion failed.

Mrs. Krutzer suggested that this matter be further discussed at a Curriculum Committee meeting.

#### Action Item 10:B – 2011-2012 School Calendar

Dr. Harris noted that two versions of the calendar were presented to principals. Staff overwhelmingly supported option 2.

It was moved by Mr. Sharp and seconded by Mr. Muhammad, to approve option 2 for the 2011-2012 school calendar.

Mrs. Krutzer asked if December 23<sup>rd</sup> is a half day.

Mr. Sam Moore replied that it is a half day. He noted that the calendar has the required number of instructional minutes for students, plus three emergency days.

Bishop McFarland asked why the district will be open on the 23<sup>rd</sup> when that day is observed as a holiday. He suggested that the district close on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and reduce emergency days by a half day.

Mr. Traweek noted that the 22<sup>nd</sup> will be a full day.

Bishop McFarland offered a friendly amendment to end the semester on December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Sharp and Mr. Muhammad accepted the friendly amendment.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 10:C – Provider Agreement with American Red Cross

On a motion by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Mr. Ludley, the Board approved the Authorized Provider Agreement with the American Red Cross to provide training for trainers for the medical magnet program and MCSD employees.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 10:D – Authorization to Purchase Nine School Buses

It was moved by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Mr. Sharp, to purchase nine school buses.

Dr. Harris indicated that the recommendation to purchase nine buses came from the Transportation Committee; her recommendation is to purchase fewer buses.

Bishop McFarland stated that there should not have been a recommendation from the committee because there was not a quorum present. Now is not the time to make such purchases because the district may be in a deficit.

The motion failed.

Action Item 10:E – Awarding of Audio/Video Conferencing System RFP

It is the consensus of the Board to award the Audio/Video Conferencing System RFP for the new administration building to Matt Music, Inc.

In favor: Mrs. Dayton, Mrs. Krutzer, Mr. Sharp, Bishop McFarland, Mr. Muhammad, Mr. Ludley, Mr. Traweek

Action Item 10:F – Awarding of Sale of Georgia Tucker School

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Ludley, the Board awarded the sale of Georgia Tucker School to TBM Land Company.

The motion carried on a majority vote. Mrs. Dayton recused.

Action Item 10:G – Permission to Hire an Assistant Transportation Manager

It was moved by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer, to delete Action Item 10:G.

The motion carried on a majority vote. Mr. Muhammad and Mr. Sharp opposed.

Mrs. Dayton stated that due to budget changes, the district can not commit to hiring additional staff.

Action Item 10:H – Permission to Hire a Part-Time Dispatcher

It was moved by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer to delete Action Item 10:H.

The motion carried on a majority vote. Mr. Muhammad and Mr. Sharp opposed.

Mr. Sharp suggested that the district pay overtime to an employee to provide the needed coverage in the Transportation Department. He asked that this item be revisited after the budget is balanced.

#### Action Item 10:I – Implementation of BoardDocs

On a motion by Mrs. Dayton and seconded by Bishop McFarland, the Board approved the implementation of BoardDocs with a 5 year agreement as recommended by the superintendent.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 10:J – Authorization to pay Luffey, Huffman, Ragsdale & Soignier

Mr. Traweck indicated that the Finance Committee chair asked the district's auditors for additional information. At that time, the committee was unaware that the request was beyond the scope of the auditors.

Bishop McFarland and Mr. Muhammad cautioned the Board on making such request.

It was moved by Mrs. Dayton and seconded by Mr. Sharp, to authorize payment of \$3,585.75 to Luffey, Huffman, Ragsdale & Soignier for additional work performed.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Agenda Item 10:K – Staffing Considerations

Dr. Harris indicated that the Board packet contained several executive summaries as it relates to staffing and budget. A more detailed summary of the budget will be available in May.

#### Addition to the Agenda

It was moved by Mrs. Dayton and seconded by Bishop McFarland, to add to the agenda the implementation of a total hiring freeze on all positions, with the exception of justified critical classroom needs, until the budget is balanced.

Attorney Lawrence noted that in the past, the Human Resources Department has been allowed to offer commitment letters to newly hired teachers for the next school year. He asked if this will be a part of the hiring freeze.

Mrs. Carroll stated that next year's needs have already been projected and persons are being hired to fill those positions. If staffing is an issue, the district may need to change the pupil/teacher ratio.

Mr. Muhammad asked if teachers were hired at the Job Fair.

Mrs. Carroll replied that no new positions have been created; teachers have been hired to fill vacant positions only.

Mr. Sharp asked if the hiring freeze will jeopardize the STAR program.

Dr. Harris stated that the STAR program is ending; therefore, the staff will be placed or

dismissed.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Implementation of a Hiring Freeze

On a motion by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Mr. Sharp, the Board implemented a total hiring freeze on all positions, with the exception of justified critical classroom needs, until the budget is balanced.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 10:L – Permission to Advertise for RFP for Universal Screener

On a motion by Mrs. Dayton and seconded by Mr. Muhammad, the Board authorized the administration to advertise for RFP for Universal Screener.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Agenda Item 11 – Report of Board Members

Mr. Muhammad noted that he had a very productive meeting with M.L.K. 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. He asked that the district consider placing students from Johnny Robinson Boys Home at all three junior high schools. He also asked the Board to support the principal of that school because he has only been in that position for a short time.

#### Agenda Item 12:A – Grade Level Configurations

Dr. Harris is asking for direction on how to proceed with grade level configurations for next year. She asked the Board to examine the documents in the Board packet for feedback. She noted that before any decisions can be made, public input is needed.

#### Agenda Item 12:B – Board Attorney Update

Attorney Lawrence stated the census numbers are in. He asked the Board if he can proceed with speaking to a demographer regarding school Board member districts.

#### Agenda Item 13 – Future Meetings

Next Board meetings: May 3, 2011 and May 24, 2011

#### Action Item 14 – Executive Session

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Muhammad, the Board convened in executive session at 8:35 p.m. to discuss Andrews-vs-MCSB {USDC-W.D. of La}, No. 65-11297.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

The Board reconvened in open session at 9:10 p.m. and took no action.

Mr. Traweek noted that the next two executive sessions deal with personnel matters. All parties involved have been notified that the matter will be discussed.

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer, the Board convened in executive session at 9:12 p.m. to discuss a grievance filed against the superintendent.

President Traweek indicated that the Board and Attorney Lawrence will discuss the matter; afterwards, the superintendent will join the Board for further discussion.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

The Board reconvened in open session at 9:28 p.m. and took action.

It was moved by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Bishop McFarland, to retain Hammonds & Sills to preside over the grievance and to authorize the Board President to execute any documents that may be required.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

President Traweek stated that whenever a grievance is filed, the district needs to ensure that state law and Board policy is followed. Attorney Lawrence will continue to serve as legal advisor to the Board and the third-party will mediate.

Attorney Lawrence noted that the next executive session deals with a policy compliance issue involving a payment of compensation benefits.

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer, the Board convened in executive session at 9:30p.m.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

The Board reconvened in open session at 9:55p.m. and took no action.

Action Item 15 – Recess/Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Mr. Sharp.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

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Mr. Mickey Traweek  
Board President

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Dr. Kathleen Harris  
Superintendent