

## MINUTES

Monroe City School Board  
2101 Roselawn Avenue  
Monroe, Louisiana 71201

The Monroe City School Board met in regular session, Tuesday, May 3, 2011 at Sallie Humble Elementary School, 3800 Westminster Avenue; Monroe, Louisiana 71201. The meeting was called to order at 6:25 p.m. by President Mickey Traweek. Prayer was offered by Rev. Robby Williams, Macedonia Baptist Church. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Sandra Voorhees.

### 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. Betty Carroll, Mrs. Teresa Foreman, Mrs. DaVona Howard, Mrs. Vickie Irwin, Mrs. Patricia Johnson, Mr. Josh Leporati, Mrs. Jackie Matthews, Mrs. Dana Mullins, Mrs. Sallie Sutherland, Dr. Tammye Turpin, Ms. Mamie Williams

### Action Item 5 – Adoption of the Agenda

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

### Agenda Item 6 – Points of Pride

Carroll High School Choir: On April 30, 2011, the Carroll High School Choir competed in the Heritage Festival in Washington, D.C. As a result of their outstanding performance the choir earned three superior ratings.

Schools of Recognized Growth: Barkdull Faulk Elementary, Clara Hall Elementary, Lee Jr. High, Lincoln Elementary

Schools of Exemplary Growth: Carroll Jr. High, Carver Elementary, J. S. Clark Elementary, Jefferson Upper Elementary, Lexington Elementary, Wossman High School

Lee Jr. High: Five Lee Jr. High students qualified for the Duke Talent Search based on ACT scores and will be recognized at Northwestern State University on May 10<sup>th</sup>. The school was also selected to participate in the Let’s Move Flash Workout. This project is in support of First Lady Michelle Obama’s initiative to curb childhood obesity.

2011 High School Scholars: Dr. Harris and Board members congratulated the 2011 High School Scholars. To be considered, students must maintain a cumulative 3.5 GPA or

better in grades nine to eleven and the first semester of grade twelve. They must also score a 25 or higher on the ACT.

#### Action Item 7 – Consent Agenda Items

Mrs. Dayton suggested that verbatim minutes be taken because Board minutes are a part of record forever.

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Sharp, the Board approved the following consent agenda items: 7:A – April 19, 2011 Board minutes; 7:B – Permission to travel: J. S. Clark Beta to Jackson, MS, May 11, 2011; Carroll Jr. to Vicksburg, MS, May 11, 2011; Wossman Band and Choir to Arlington, TX, May 14, 2011. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

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

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Dayton, the Board approved personnel agenda items A, B, D, and E. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

It was moved by Mrs. Dayton and seconded by Bishop McFarland, to table personnel agenda item 7:C (secondary and elementary supervisor) until the Diagnostic Study is complete and the budget is balanced.

Mr. Muhammad asked why he only received credentials on two persons. He then asked if interviews were conducted and who were the other candidates.

Dr. Harris replied that interviews were conducted and the finalists are being presented for approval. She stated that the Board president asked for information on the finalist and that is why it is in the packet. She further stated that she was only doing what she thought the Board president wanted.

Mrs. Dayton reminded the Board that the district is under a temporary hiring freeze.

Mr. Traweek stated that he only asked for credentials and resumes, he did not ask that the item be placed on the agenda. He noted that Board members can not place items on the personnel agenda.

Dr. Harris stated that she misunderstood the email that was sent by the president. She was only trying to provide requested information.

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

Bishop McFarland asked if the item must be brought back at the next meeting being that it is tabled.

Attorney Lawrence replied that it is determinable because the district is working on a balanced budget and the various studies have timelines.

Dr. Harris noted that school will begin without an elementary and secondary supervisor if

the studies are not complete before August; therefore, roles and responsibilities will have to be shifted so that classrooms will not be negatively impacted.

Public Input: Ms. Gloria Walker stated that the two supervisor positions have already been budgeted. She further stated that it is a waste of time and money to advertise and interview and then not act on the recommendation.

#### Action Item 9:A – Facilities Assessment RFP

It was moved by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Mr. Ludley, to approve the Facilities Assessment request for proposal.

Mrs. Dayton stated that her opposition is for financial reasons only; it is not an opposition on what the study will provide. She further stated that the district is finding itself in a \$5 million deficit and that she does not want to negatively impact the classroom.

Mrs. Krutzer stated that she is also opposed because of the deficit. Initially, the study was estimated to cost \$90,000 now it is estimated to cost approximately \$250,000.

Bishop McFarland made note that the deficit is only a projection.

Mr. Muhammad inquired as to why the item was tabled previously.

Mr. Traweck stated that Board members are very concerned about the budget. He indicated that the study is needed but the time is not right.

The motion failed six to one. Mr. Ludley voted in favor.

#### Action Item 10-A – Permission to Advertise for RFP for Online/On-Demand Professional Development for Educators

Ms. Bowlin noted that the Professional Development team has been charged with putting together a district plan for professional development. The team is asking to explore different vendors for delivery of high quality cost effective professional development. Depending on the services requested, the cost is projected to be \$50,000 to \$80,000. Being that this is a request for proposal, there is no cost to the district at this time.

Mrs. Krutzer asked if professional development will be in a group setting.

Ms. Bowlin replied that delivery can be in a group setting or individually. She indicated that the advantage is that the material is available online 24 hours a day.

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer, the Board authorized the administration to advertise for RFP for Online/On-Demand Professional Development for Educators. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Action Item 10:B – Convocation Speaker

Dr. Harris indicated that for the past several years, approximately \$47,000 has been

encumbered for professional development. This year all staff will receive professional development on the same day.

Mrs. Jackie Matthews noted that approximately \$18,000 was spent for facility rental, catering and guest speaker for last year's professional development. The cost for the speaker this year is approximately \$20,000. Included in this cost is the keynote speech, staff development for new teachers and books.

Mrs. Patricia Johnson stated that Mr. Ron Clark is a nationally known speaker and educator. Research was done on other speakers and his fee is slightly below average.

Bishop McFarland noted that the cost will be more than \$20,000 because the price does not include rental fees and meals.

Mrs. Matthews stated that the event will held at ULM's Coliseum and that fees may be waived because ULM and MCS are partners. Business partners and vendors are being asked to provide meals.

Mr. Muhammad stated that it appears that a contract has been signed and a deposit has been sent. He also stated that the Board needs to be consistent with spending; some items are approved and others are denied.

Mrs. Johnson stated that no contract has been signed and the company is aware that the matter must be placed before the Board for approval before moving forward.

Mr. Muhammad asked if any back to school activities are planned for students.

Mrs. Matthews replied that schools have orientation for students and parents.

On a motion by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Mr. Ludley, the Board authorized the administration to move forward with securing Mr. Ron Clark as the convocation speaker for the 2011-2012 back to school professional development.

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

#### Action Item 10:C – Partnership Agreement with Louisiana Patriots

Mrs. Krutzer asked if the district will be covered if there is an accident. She also asked if Wossman would have to commit to anything in order to partner with the organization.

Attorney Lawrence assured the Board that the district will be protected. He noted that the first game is scheduled for May 7<sup>th</sup> and that the contract and insurance matter can be worked through. He also noted that he did not see anything in the agreement that would indicate that Wossman would have to commit to anything.

Mrs. Dayton asked Attorney Lawrence to ensure that the district does not incur any liability for injuries by participants or attendees.

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Sharp, the Board approved use of the Wossman High School stadium by the Louisiana Patriots football team. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Mr. Traweek reiterated that the agreement is contingent upon satisfaction of appropriate insurance coverage.

#### Action Item 10:D – Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the City of Monroe

Attorney Lawrence stated that the City of Monroe is requesting the use of several school campus facilities to install approximately six to eight transmitters that will assist with data collection associated with public utilities. The city Attorney indicated that they will work with the district if there are any concerns.

Mr. Traweek stated that the citizens of Monroe will be getting new electronic water meters. He noted that the transmitters are very small and almost undetectable.

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Sharp, the Board agreed to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the City of Monroe to install transmitters on various school campuses. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

#### Agenda Item 10:E – Correspondence to the Department of Justice

Attorney Lawrence noted that there is protocol whenever there is a reconfiguration of grade levels and/or school zone changes because the district has been under a desegregation order since 1965. If the district is certain to do any of these things, this matter must be broached with the Justice Department as early as possible.

It was moved by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Mr. Sharp, to send communication to the Department of Justice notifying them of possible reconfigurations.

Mr. Muhammad questioned why the district would contact the Department of Justice if no plans have been finalized. He stated that he would welcome the DOJ into the district if they will be looking at how disproportionately students are zoned.

Mrs. Krutzer stated that her reason for asking that this item be placed on the agenda is because school will begin in three months. If grades will be reconfigured, time is of the essence.

Mr. Traweek stated that there are no plans to submit; therefore, there is no need to contact the Department of Justice.

Mrs. Krutzer withdrew her motion.

Mrs. Dayton asked that the Demographic Study be presented to the Board as soon as possible.

#### Agenda Item 11:A – Sales Tax

Public Input: Ms. Sandie Lollie questioned the amount of the Sales Tax and the number of employees the funds is being divided by. She noted that the gap between classified and certified is extremely large. She asked the Board to re-examine the amounts prior to distribution. Ms. Sandra Shaw stated that she is also concerned about the amount that classified staff is receiving. She asked if the Board could find a way to increase the amount for classified staff. Ms. Karen Jackson questioned the formula being used to calculate checks. She asked that staff educate employees on the method being used.

Mrs. Dayton noted that the amounts for certified has gone up 50% and classified has gone down 10%.

Mr. Traweek stated that the Board has no control over how the funds are distributed. The taxpayers determined the formula many years ago. Certified staff receives 88% and classified staff receives 12%. He stated that these funds are not guaranteed; it is considered surplus.

Mrs. DaVona Howard stated that there was a decrease in certified staff over last year because some employees were funded through other sources, and those sources were able to pick up the additional sales tax amounts. Previously, certified staff received two sales tax checks. In 2004 the Board voted to divide some of the funds into employee's monthly checks.

Mrs. Dayton stated that this is still confusing and there are other factors that must be considered.

Mr. Traweek asked if the staff could send an email with additional details.

Mrs. Krutzer asked if some teachers are receiving checks even if they are not being paid out of sales tax money.

Mrs. Howard replied that some of the teachers in one of the federal programs were able to pick up sales tax portion through that program versus it being paid through the sales tax money. She noted that a part of every employee's regular paycheck comes from sales tax and the remainder at the end of the year is allocated among persons in that particular fund.

Dr. Harris assured the Board that an email would be sent to employees with additional information.

Bishop McFarland asked that the Board receive the information prior to it being released.

#### Agenda Item 11:B – Value-Added

Dr. Harris explained that the value-added model assesses the change in the achievement of a teacher's students from the end of one school year to the end of the next. Unlike other similar models in use, Louisiana will incorporate student information with their test scores to determine the average student growth for those children with similar histories. The actual achievement for eligible students is compared to the average achievement to determine if the student has made more or less progress.

Public Input: Ms. Sandra Shaw questioned student's performance being tied to a teacher's evaluation. She asked if this will affect the first year teacher.

Dr. Harris replied that the data is based on three years of student scores. She noted that when the act becomes law, every school district in the state will be a part of value-added.

#### Agenda Item 11:C – Grade Level Configuration

Dr. Harris noted that this item is for information only.

Bishop McFarland asked if Board members were polled on the date that is listed on the agenda.

Dr. Harris replied that the date is merely a suggestion that was discussed in another meeting.

Mrs. Dayton stated that anytime changes like these are being made; there is a process that must take place. She stated that this matter needs in-depth discussion.

Mr. Traweek commended Dr. Harris for being proactive and presenting information to be considered. He stated that something has to be done to ease overcrowding.

Mrs. Krutzer stated that the superintendent took charge and came up with suggestions. At this point the district is almost in crisis mode; therefore, a date needs to be set to discuss this immediately. She noted that information is needed from the Diagnostic and Demographic Study to plan effectively. She suggested that a conference call be scheduled with the two companies as soon as possible.

Bishop McFarland stated that when information such as this is disseminated, and there has been no discussion with Board members that have schools in that district, they will receive criticism from the community. He stated that before information is distributed it is best to meet with Board members that represent that particular area.

Mr. Muhammad asked Dr. Harris if she said that the conversation about school closings came out of a Facilities Committee meeting. He stated that it seems as though the process is moving forward without Board member's input.

She stated that the Facilities Committee is a committee of the Board. She further stated that it is difficult for her to continue to try and give the Board information when they are unclear on what they want. She asks that the Board, by a vote of the majority, give her clear direction on exactly what information it wants. Before and during the retreat she was asked to provide information and scenarios on a solution to overcrowding; the information was provided and it is still not to the Board's satisfaction. It is understandable that the Board wants information before it is publicized, but she has a hard time understanding what is needed when the Board is not clear on what it wants. She asks that the Board president come up with a system to request information because the process so far has not worked. She stated that she is willing to provide the information; she just wants to be clear on when the Board wants information in private

and when they want it in public.

Mrs. Dayton stated that the Board is sending mixed signals and that the president, vice president and superintendent should meet and figure out the best way to improve communication.

Dr. Harris asked that Board members read the information in their packet prior to Board meeting. She stated that it is difficult to move the meeting forward when many of the questions being asked have been answered in the executive summaries.

Mr. Sharp stated that the Board has spent valuable time discussing informational items. He asked that only action items be placed on the agenda.

#### Agenda Item 11:D – Board Attorney Update

Attorney Lawrence stated that he has spoken with a demographer about Board redistricting and he is asking to be placed on a June Board meeting agenda for further discussion of this matter. Mr. Lawrence also stated that another video bingo parlor will open in Monroe and contact has been made with him about a possible partnership. School organizations such as booster clubs can partner with the organization to receive proceeds from video bingo.

Mr. Traweek noted that this will be a great opportunity for schools that do not receive much financial support. He stated that he will be looking to the superintendent for guidance.

#### Agenda Item 12 – Report of Board Members

Mr. Sharp stated that the sales tax formula is outdated and other parishes work to protect support staff. Huge amounts of money have been spent on studies; if this continues, there will be chaos. The district must do something to protect the classified staff because they are dedicated workers.

Mr. Muhammad thanked Mr. Sam Moore and the student from Carroll High School in their attempt to save the life a citizen during the recent flooding.

Bishop McFarland stated that Mr. Moore will be forming a committee to bring a recommendation to the Board for the naming of the Wossman High School gymnasium. He reminded Board members that high school graduations are approaching. He asked Board members to make an effort to attend all graduations.

Mrs. Krutzer suggested that the Finance Committee meet weekly until the budget is adopted.

Mr. Ludley requested that committee meetings not take place on Board meeting day.

Mr. Traweek commended Mr. Monroe and his staff on their hard work during the recent tumultuous weather.

Ms. Rachelle May asked for clarification on the extra 15 instructional minutes that have been added to the school day because of the recent emergency day. She stated that all principals are not consistent in arrival and departure times.

Dr. Harris stated that teachers should be on campus with students through the instructional day.

Agenda Item 13 – Future Meetings

Next Board meetings: May 24, 2011 and June 7, 2011.

Action Item 14 – Executive Session

On a motion by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Sharp, the Board convened in executive session at 8:55 p.m. to receive information on Workers' Compensation claims.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

The Board reconvened in open session at 9:25 p.m. and took no action.

Action Item 15 – Recess/Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m. upon a motion by Bishop McFarland 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