

MGSD Board of Education
September 12, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes

MOORESVILLE GRADED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION
Regular Monthly Meeting, Tuesday, Sept 12, 2023 @ 6:00 pm

The Board of Education of the Mooresville Graded School District met during a regular monthly session on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at the Performing Arts Center at Mooresville High School, 659 E. Center Avenue, Mooresville, NC 28115.

Board Members Present: Mr. Greg Whitfield, Board Chair; Mrs. Kerry Pennell, Vice-Chair; Mr. Rakeem Brawley; Mr. Roger Hyatt; and Dr. Debbie Marsh were present.

Also Present: Dr. Jason Gardner, Superintendent, Kevin Donaldson, Board Attorney. Dr. Michael Royal, Chief of Schools; Dr. Scott Smith, Chief Operations Officer; Dr. Sandra Albert, Chief Student Services Officer; Mrs. Angela Davis, Chief Finance Officer; Mrs. April Kuhn, Chief Human Resource Officer; Mrs. Tanae McLean, Chief Communications Officer and Title IX Coordinator.

Madison Wyckoff, 4th Grade, MIS led the pledge of Allegiance.

Media Present: Ms. Debbie Page, Iredell Free News

On a first motion by Mr. Hyatt, seconded by Mr. Brawley, the board voted unanimously to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Motion carried.

On a motion by Dr. Marsh, seconded by Mrs. Pennell, the board voted unanimously to approve the meeting from the August 15, 2023, called meeting as presented. Motion carried.

Dr. Gardner and Dr. Marsh presented the following awards:

Student of the Month: Madison Wychoff - 4th Grader, MIS

Artists of the Month: Grayson Rahtes, Micah Caldwell, Isabella Hyman -5th Graders, MIS

ABCD Award Winner: Rick Blankenship, Teacher Assistant, MIS

Spotlight on People: MGSD School Board 2023-2024 Golden Bell Award
Training Excellence and Achievement Award.

School Instructional Highlight-Beginning and New Teacher Support Program- MIS
Mark Cottone (MIS Principal), Sarah Dillard (Instructional Coach), Danielle Walker and Andrea White (MIS Teachers) Presented: *Beginning & New Teacher Support*

Coaching support for all Staff, providing teacher support for 17 new teachers and meeting their needs and helping to “*Find their Marigold*” the essential rules to teaching.

Schedule Next Regular Board Meeting: **October 17, 2023 @ 6:00 pm (Third Tuesday)**

Staff Reports

Maximize Opportunity and Achievement - Dr. Royal

Athletic Department updates.

- Fall sports are well underway at all three of our secondary schools and our teams are having successful seasons thus far!
- MHS is piloting a girls flag football league with 9 other schools in the area. The league is sponsored by the Carolina Panthers. Try-outs will take place later this month and games will take place each Saturday in October with a culminating tournament to be played in Bank of America Stadium later this semester.

Curriculum and instruction updates.

- Today was the 23rd day of instruction, progress reports have gone home at each grade level, as of today.
- Clubs began at our elementary schools the last week of August and are going very well!
- September 5 was a required teacher workday in MGSD. Our K-5 staff continued their work with LETRS training, our 6-12 teachers spent the morning working on their curriculum guides, and a group of our middle school staff continued their training with Capturing Kids Hearts. Additionally, Dr. Waid and Ms. Conley led our K-12 assistant principals through a leadership workshop during the afternoon.
- Dr. Waid accepted an invitation to speak at the State Board meeting last week for the World Languages standards adoption.
- The Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) window for MGSD opens September 18-29. If any families have any questions concerning CDM, please visit the Curriculum & Instruction page on the MGSD website and/or reach out to Dr. Tracey Waid for assistance.
- MHS has over 15 college visits to our campus already scheduled for this semester. They have also personally invited a number of additional schools, including many technical schools, community colleges, and HBCUs.
- Curriculum Nights (K-5) are this week for all schools MIS- 9/11, EMIS, 9/13, K-2, 9/14.
- MHS is hosting a virtual meeting for students and families this Thursday evening for anyone interested in learning more about NCSSM Connect distance learning opportunities. This meeting starts at 6:30pm. More information can be found in Canvas, through the MHS newsletter or by contacting your school counselor.
- Hispanic Heritage Night is scheduled for October 4 here in the MHS Performing Arts Center.

Safe, Health, and Happy-Dr. Albert and Dr. Smith

- Our Safe, Happy and Healthy Committee has met and discussed priority areas as well as outlined our action steps for this year.
- We have developed a district Threat Assessment Team led by Mark Reddick, our Safety Director and the behavior team. They meet weekly, review all threat assessments, and provide guidance for school based threat assessment teams.
- In August our first comprehensive mental health team meeting was held. Our counselors, psychologists, nurses, EC specialists and social workers had an opportunity to hear about resources from Karen Swan from Food for Days, Allegra Hope from Dove House, and Meredith Fleming from Rainbow Kids. They also reviewed attendance, SEL support, and our mental health crisis response plans.
- As you know September is Suicide Awareness & Prevention Month. We will be hosting another Mental Health Family Night on September 19th at 6:30pm in the Selma-Burke Middle School Media Center. We will once again have a panel of community providers answering questions around mental health.
- Our first district Safety Meeting was held and we have started our first round of safety drills at all schools.
- The new intermediate level SRO is in the pipeline for hiring, we hope to have them on board by December.
- Other Departments are continuing their normal cadence of support on the operations side.

Recruit, Grow, and Retain-Mrs. Kuhn and Mrs. Davis

- The last few weeks were full of events to support our Beginning Teacher program. Support for new teachers must be an ongoing process and we held our first meetings for Beginning Teachers as well as training with our committed mentors in our schools. New this year is an intentional collaboration with our Curriculum team so that our support is aligned and streamlined so that teachers get what they need. Ms. Mays has been supporting this process by conducting one on ones with teachers to answer just in time questions and support in person as well as supporting our training models.
- Dr. Sandy Albert will be speaking at Appalachian State University to special education classes on September 27. She was invited to speak with special education classes at Appalachian State University about the partnerships between universities and public school systems. We are excited that teacher education candidates will learn about the importance of these partnerships and specifically that our very own will represent the great things happening in Mooresville Graded Schools.
- Additionally, we will be sending a team to the Appalachian State University Fall job fair on October 20, 2023.

- This month Ms. Kuhn & I kicked off our priority area focus with a collaborative meeting between the human resources and finance staff. The purpose of the meeting was to outline the strategic plan and set the stage for the two departments to be laser focused on the specific priority area of recruit, grow & retain. As the point of contact for onboarding, pay and employee benefits, we feel that our teams will have a large influence on the success of this priority area. We plan to meet as a group each month to dig deeper into our strategies and reflect on effective v/s ineffective practices.
- Also, along the lines of growing staff, the strategic planning committee felt that professional development should be offered to all MGSD employees. To that end, September will begin the monthly financial data manager meetings where school and departmental finance contacts will meet in person for an hour of professional development. Upcoming topics include FMLA and the new state parental leave policy.

Culture of Relationships-Mrs. McLean

- One strategy for our Strategic Plan that is in the planning stage this year is developing a uniform approach to student mentoring that includes engagement with community members and students in partnership with school staff. We will be holding our first meeting with this subcommittee next Friday, to begin this important work.
- Next week on Thursday, September 21, we will be celebrating our TOYs, BTOYs, and POY with a special luncheon. This is always a nice event that allows our teachers a moment to enjoy a nice meal with their colleagues. We look forward to seeing each of you at this celebration!
- We will be holding our first Parent Advisory, Teacher Advisory, and Student Advisory committee meetings on Monday, October 2. We are excited about these first meetings, particularly are newly formed student advisory committee. For this first year of SAC, we will focus on MHS students only and will meet with them during their BDU or Advisory time.
- Our first Picnic in the Park and STEAM event will be on Monday, September 25, at Liberty Park from 5-7pm. Currently 370 parents and students have RSVPd. We are excited to have our community come out and enjoy an evening of learning, fun, and food! The theme for this picnic is Curiosity Night. I want to thank Ms. Amy Smith for her hard work on the STEAM stations, as well as Iredell Co. Soil and Water and Brawley Garden Center for their contributions! Of course, a big thank you to Mooresville Fire and Rescue for use of the grill, as well as offering to bring a Fire Engine!
- Our Longest Table event scheduled for Sunday, October 1 is nearing and the outpouring of support has been amazing! I do want to reiterate that the event has been moved from Main Street to our own Blue Devil Blvd! While we were excited about a table running the length of Main Street with our community gathered to enjoy a free meal and visit, we listened to feedback from some of our Downtown businesses who have dealt with a lot of

Main Street closures over the past year. We did not want to contribute to another day of business loss for them so made the decision to move it to Blue Devil Blvd. We are excited about seeing the Longest Table run the length of BDB from Center to Cabarrus! We hope to see all of our community on October 1!

Superintendent-Dr. Gardner

- On September 6, the North Carolina State Board of Education officially released accountability data for the 2022-23 school year. This data is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all Mooresville Graded staff, students, and parents as we continue to navigate challenging times in public education.

Some of the highlights for the district include the following:

- Overall proficiency improved in 12 out of 14 tested areas for ELA and Math
 - HS Math I (+10%),
 - 6th grade ELA (+6.2%), and
 - 6th grade Math (7.7%)
- Two schools, East Mooresville Intermediate and South Elementary, improved their school performance grade from a C to a B while Rocky River Elementary School and Mooresville High School maintained a B letter grade.

As we work on pandemic related learning loss, a big focus last year was academic growth. I'm happy to report that:

- Six out of seven schools (Rocky River Elementary, South Elementary, Park View Elementary, Mooresville Intermediate, East Mooresville Intermediate, and Mooresville High School) improved their growth index compared to the 21-22 school year.
 - Out of 40 traditional schools in Iredell County MGSD has 4 schools ranked in the top 6 for highest growth
 - East Mooresville Intermediate ranked #1 (also exceeded growth)
 - Mooresville High School ranked #3
 - South Elementary ranked #4
 - Rocky River Elementary ranked #6
- Finally, MGSD has the 3rd highest graduation rate in NC (0.1% away from 1st).

While there were many data points to celebrate, we also realize that there is more work to be done. Our schools are already working hard planning for continued growth and improvement. At the October BOE meeting you will hear additional information related to district and school performance as well as next steps as part of our School Improvement Planning process.

Board Events-Mr. Whitfield

- The next month will be busy with the following events: Curriculum nights, MHS Voices, Teacher of the Year banquet, Mental Health Awareness, Hispanic Heritage night and Homecoming.
- Board law conference training coming up this fall.
- Mr. Hyatt mentioned that the Blue Devils Classic Band fundraiser held every 3rd Saturday, bands from all areas.

Public Comments - None

Items for Information

A. Board Policy Revision SB 49 Ms. McLean

- On August 15, the North Carolina General Assembly passed Senate Bill 49, also known as the Parents Bill of Rights. The District has consulted with the NCSBA to ensure alignment with this new legislation. The following policies presented as first read 1310, 4720, 4335, 3540, 7300, 6120, 3210. Any updates or questions, notify Ms. McLean before October's meeting. Mr. Hyatt mentioned that he heard there could be a delay in implementation, which Dr. Gardner confirmed.

Items for Approval

A. Annual Audit Report-Ms. Davis

Per the requirements set forth in North Carolina General Statute 115C-447, MGSD received a financial audit of accounts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. The auditors from Anderson, Smith & Wike were on site in August conducting an in-depth review of all district funds and individual school accounts. Shannon Dennison from Anderson, Smith, & Wike presented an overview of the audit. This year they examined Child Nutrition, Special Education, Covid-19 Education Funds, Emergency Connectivity, and the State Public School Fund. It was reported that there are no audit findings for the 2022/2023 fiscal year. Fund balance general fund has increased by \$600,000 and special grants by \$2,000,000. The general fund balance is about \$6,100,000, other special revenue (largely restricted grants) is about \$9,800,000, and capital outlay fund is just under \$5,000,000. The auditor reported that it is an excellent thing for the district to have built up the fund balance. Mr. Whitfield and Mr. Hyatt congratulated the staff and the district for a clean audit.

On a first motion by Mr. Hyatt, second by Dr. Marsh, the board voted unanimously to approve the audit. Motion carried.

B. South Playground Purchase-Ms. Davis

South Elementary School began experiencing deterioration in some of their playground structures pre-pandemic. Once students returned to in-person instruction, the unsafe conditions of the equipment became increasingly evident. The playgrounds are utilized by all students K-2 along with the before and after school care program. Through the persistence of school leadership and the South Elementary PTSO, the school has been able to raise enough money in fundraising, donations and grants to purchase new playground equipment. The new playground structure will be purchased from Barrs Recreation for a total cost of \$103,376.11. This purchase is done through a cooperative bidding program and has been bid out. Ms. Dotch and the team worked hard to make this happen.

On a first motion by Dr. Marsh, second by Mr. Brawley the board voted unanimously to approve the South Playground Purchase for \$103,376.11 Motion carried.

C. Employee Tuition Change-Ms. Kuhn

In an effort to continuously look for methods to recruit and retain our employees, the district shared a recommendation to end the practice of charging tuition for children of full time MGSD employees. Presently, any MGSD permanent employee who does not reside within the district boundary lines is charged a flat yearly rate of \$216.00 to enroll their children. The district believes that can be a barrier to some employees who wish to bring their children to MGSD. They also believe that the opportunity to enroll a student in MGSD tuition free can help the district recruitment of new employees and retention of continuing employees. MGSD presently has an estimate of 70 employees who use the tuition based option for enrollment. If approved, the district will refund any fees collected to date for the 2023-24 school year from employees. An annual transfer form will still need to be completed each year but the fee will be waived for full time employees.

On a first motion by Mrs. Pennell, second by Mr. Brawley the board voted unanimously to approve the employee tuition change. Motion carried.

D. Field Trips-Dr. Royal

- The Mooresville High School JROTC is requesting permission to attend the Kings Mountain National Military Park and Cowpens National Battlefield on October 18, 2023. This trip will involve approximately 20 students with 2 staff chaperones. The cost of the trip is five dollars per student.
- The Mooresville High School JROTC is requesting permission to visit Washington D.C on November 1-4, 2023 to visit various historical sites. This trip will involve

approximately 40 students with 3 staff chaperones. The cost of this trip is \$250.00 per student with opportunities to fundraise if needed.

- The Mooresville High School Marching Band is requesting permission to attend a band competition at Catawba Ridge High School in Fort Mill, SC on October 7, 2023. This trip will involve 135 students with band staff and parents serving as chaperones. There is no cost for students to attend this competition.
- The Mooresville Middle School History Club is requesting permission to visit Charleston, SC on March 13-15, 2024. This is an annual experience that involves approximately 45 students with 4 staff chaperones as well as parent chaperones. The cost of this trip is \$625.00 with opportunities to fundraise if needed.
- Selma Burke Middle School and Mooresville Middle School are requesting permission to visit the Trinity Center in Salter Path, NC as well as the NC Aquarium on February 7-9, 2024. This trip will involve approximately 48 students with 5 staff chaperones. The cost of this trip is \$300.00 with opportunities to fundraise if needed.

On a first motion by Dr. Marsh, second by Mr. Hyatt the board voted unanimously to approve 5 field trips. Motion carried.

E. Approval of NCSBA 2023 Voting Delegates-

The MGSD BOE is allowed to have 4 voting delegates at the NCSBA meeting. Mr. Hyatt shared that he will not be in attendance, so Mr. Whitfield, Ms. Pennell, Mr. Brawley, and Dr. Marsh can take the four voting slots. Dr. Marsh explained that districts are entitled to a certain number of delegates based on budget size and that there is a proposal to change that this fall.

On a first motion by Ms. Pennell, second by Dr. Marsh the board voted unanimously for the approval of NCSBA 2023 Voting Delegates of Mr. Whitfield, Ms. Pennell, Mr. Brawley, and Dr. Marsh. Motion carried.

Closed Session: Mr. Whitfield, Board Chair, announced that pursuant to NC G.S. §143-318.11 subsections (a)(6) & (a)(3), the board would go into a closed session to review personnel and consult with the board attorney. On a motion by Dr. Marsh, seconded by Mr. Brawley, the board unanimously voted to go into closed session. Motion carried.

On a motion by Dr. Marsh, seconded by Mr. Hyatt, the board unanimously voted to adjourn from the closed session. Motion carried.

Approval of the Personnel Report: On a motion by Dr. Marsh, seconded by Ms. Pennell, the board unanimously voted to approve the personnel report as recommended by the superintendent.

New Employees

Kelli Bolte, EC Teacher (50%) SES, 8/21/23

Bryanna McKeon, 8th Grade ELA/SS SBMS, 8/21/23
Jamie Nemeth, K Teacher PVES, 9/7/23
Kenecia Redfear, 8th Grade ELA MMS, 8/28/23
Elizabeth Balderaz, DLI Assistant RRES, 8/21/23
Dina Beimler, Substitute Teacher, 8/28/23
Cheri Jones, Substitute Teacher, 9/1/23
Scott Latta, EC Teacher Assistant, 9/7/23
Azar Malefard, Substitute CN, 9/1/23
Natoshia Martin, Substitute Teacher, 8/23/23
Ashley Mills, DLI Assistant PVES, 8/21/23
Karissa Petisce, Custodian/Bus Driver PVES, 9/12/23
Elizabeth Struss, Substitute Teacher, 9/7/23
Paula Velasquez, Custodian MIS, 9/6/23
Debra Youtsey, Substitute CN, 8/17/23

Rehire

Keri Hamilton, HS Science MHS, 8/21/23
Kerry Ann Eustace, SGI MIS, 9/13/23
Desiree Guzman, SGI RRES, 8/28/23
Jeanne Kouwe, Substitute Teacher, 8/24/23

Promotion/Change:

Orayana Owens, TSC Teacher PVES, 8/24/23
Angel Faulkner, Technology Assistant, 9/11/23
Shanica Gillespie-Watson, EC Teacher Assistant, 9/1/23
Kristin James, CN Assistant, 9/11/23
Susan Lewis, CN Assistant, 9/11/23
Rosa Sellan Bajana, Custodian/Bus Driver SES, 9/18/23

Retirement:

David Martin, Director of Maintenance, 12/20/23 29 years in MGSD and the state of NC

On a motion by Mrs. Pennell, seconded by Mr. Brawley, the board unanimously voted to adjourn from the closed session. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted:

Mr. Greg Whitfield, Board Chair
Board of Education

Dr. Jason D. Gardner, Secretary
Board of Education