

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes for November 20, 2023

The Maryville Board of Education met in a regular session at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, November 20 at Maryville High School. Board members present were Nick Black, Isaac Simerly, Julie Elder, Candy Morgan, and Bart Stinnett. Chairman Black called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and asked for a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Coston Autry.

UPDATE FROM MARYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Mrs. Heather Hilton, Maryville High School Principal, thanked her administrative staff and introduced Wes Lambert, MHS Ready Graduate Advisor. Mrs. Hilton provided an update on the Early College Experience, the Workforce Development Center, and the school's partnership with TCAT. She shared the current and future opportunities for students that include welding, Machine Tool Technology, and cosmetology. Interest in Collision Repair is being assessed for next year. Mrs. Hilton also introduced a job shadowing opportunity as a way to introduce students into the community to gain insights about future career options.

Mr. Lambert introduced and demonstrated SchoolLinks, a new and innovative software tool, for students at CGIS, MRIS, MJHS, and MHS purchased in collaboration with Maryville City Schools Foundation. SchoolLinks allows students to create resumes, conduct college searches, learn about career pathways, develop four-year plans, and research job boards.

ADOPT AGENDA

Prior to making a motion to adopt the agenda, Chairman Black made a motion to amend the agenda by moving public comments on agenda Item 4 to the portion of the meeting where agenda Item 4 would be voted on.

Nick Black asked for a motion to adopt the amended agenda. Isaac Simerly moved to adopt, and a second came from Bart Stinnett. The motion was adopted unanimously.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Candy Morgan made the motion to approve the consent agenda. Julie Elder seconded the motion. The motion carried with full agreement.

1. Approve Minutes of October 16, 2023, meeting (Attachment)
2. Ratify Executive Committee approval for Maryville High School Model UN overnight trip to Chattanooga, Tennessee for ALTMUN competition – Funding Source: Model UN (Attachment A1)
3. Approve Maryville Junior High School Orchestra overnight trip to Atlanta, Georgia for Music in the Parks Performance Festival – Funding Source: Students (Attachment A2)

4. Approve Maryville High School Chorus overnight trip to Lee University, Cleveland, Tennessee – Funding Source: Students (Attachment A3)
5. Ratify Executive Committee approval for Maryville High School Cross-Country Team overnight trip to Hendersonville, Tennessee for TSSAA State Championship (Attachment A4)
6. Approve Maryville High School Baseball Team overnight trip to Gulf Shores, Alabama for Spring Break Baseball Tournament – Funding Source: Students (Attachment A5)
7. Approve Coulter Grove Intermediate School Leadership Team overnight trip to Charleston, South Carolina – Funding Source: Students (Attachment A6)
8. Approve Maryville High School Girls Wrestling Team overnight trip to Clarksville, Tennessee for a tournament – Funding Source: Donations (Attachment A7)
9. Approve Coulter Grove Intermediate School Liaisons overnight trip to Nashville, Tennessee for Ace of Shakes competition – Funding Source: School Funds (Attachment A8)

AGENDA

1. Consider changes to Board Policy section 1.105 (School Board Legislative Involvement), 2.400 (Revenues), 2.601 (Fundraising Activities), 2.8051 (Credit Cards/Credit Lines), and 4.603 (Promotion and Retention) First Reading – Attachment B1

- Motion made by Julie Elder. Second from Bart Stinnett.
- Dr. Winstead explained the policy changes stem from TSBA policy to align with state law and the state comptroller, with the exception of Policy 4.603 which addresses the Learning Loss Act.
- The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Consider adding boys' and girls' lacrosse as TSSAA-sanctioned sports for the 2024-25 school year.

- Motion made by Isaac Simerly. Second from Bart Stinnett.
- MHS Athletic Director Landon Harris provided survey results that supported students' high level of interest in lacrosse. Questions were asked from the board members about the number of players on lacrosse teams and the availability of potential coaches. Coach Harris indicated player interest and availability will be high; however, we will not know about coaches until we go through the process of hiring. Dr. Winstead added that TSSAA sanctioned boys and girls lacrosse will take place in the spring and provide great opportunities for students. The budget impact will be coaching supplements, as coaches will need to be hired before the conclusion of the 2023-2024 school year.
- The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Consider providing \$25,000 in start-up funds for each of the boys' and girls' lacrosse teams totaling \$50,000.

- Motion made by Candy Morgan. Second from Bart Stinnett.

- Dr. Winstead explained the district will provide fields and coaches; teams will take care of uniforms and equipment after the initial start-up.
- The Motion approved unanimously

4. Consider an appeal to have *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* removed from circulation in the Maryville High School library.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS

Prior to comments from the public on agenda items, Mr. Black reviewed the new statute that establishes a process and sets guidelines for challenged materials to be reviewed. He explained that comments from the public are limited to two minutes.

Lark McGee stated four of her students have gone through Maryville City Schools and acknowledged the school system's role in providing a strong academic background. She explained her purpose in challenging *Perks of Being a Wallflower* is based on adults contributing to the delinquency of a minor, specifically, two sexually graphic scenes and the inclusion of cigarettes and alcohol. Ms. McGee read a portion from the book. She stated her goal was not to ban the book from the community but to remove it from the schools.

Rachel Rushworth-Hollander introduced herself as an English teacher at MHS. She spoke against removing *Perks of Being a Wallflower* from the library. After providing a brief overview of the book, she explained how literature allows for different perspectives through the lense of characters. She praised MCS for providing students with a real, authentic education by promoting critical thinking skills and creating life-long learners. As a parent, Ms. Rushworth-Hollander commended the district's strong common-sense policies that honor a parent's curricular concerns.

Samantha Astor, a parent of 3 current MCS students and two "bonus" boys who are proud MHS alumni, recollected her childhood as a daughter and granddaughter of lifelong learners and leaders. She spoke against removing *Perks of Being a Wallflower* from the MHS library, stating her parents valued reading and never said no to buying books, as they taught her how to listen and understand a world apart from what she knew. She stressed the importance of providing access to books, even those that make readers uncomfortable in order to understand a world that is larger than their own.

Coston Autry, MHS Student Council President, recited a quote by Ray Bradbury and provided a brief overview of *Perks of Being a Wallflower*. He spoke against removing the book from the MHS library and stated the school followed district policy when the decision was made for the book to remain in the library. Mr. Autry shared that when a book is restricted, a crucial pathway of understanding is shutdown, restricting books sets a dangerous precedent, and the the diversity of the student population goes unacknowledged. He explained that *Perks of Being a Wallflower*, read in its totality, is a charge for good.

Marion Vose, retired MHS Librarian, spoke against removing *Perks of Being a Wallflower* from the MHS library. She explained the importance of supporting student academics and making students feel welcome in the library, regardless of ability, background, and interests. Ms. Vose stated that *Perks of Being a Wallflower* is not a “how to” manual, but rather, the book shines a bright light on teenage experiences.

Dustin Park thanked Coston Autry for being a good example of why MCS is an incredible school system. Mr. Park stated he is the parent of three students in the school system and was disappointed to see the removal of *Perks of Being a Wallflower* on the agenda. After reading the book, he shared that he would have loved to have read the book when he was in high school, as he associates himself with some of the characters. Mr. Park read his favorite passage from *Perks of Being a Wallflower* and stated he would be fine with his own 15-year-old reading the novel. He expressed his gratitude to the review committee and shared the trust he has for the librarians and thanked teachers for believing students can read books that tackle difficult subject matters.

Ginny Aires, a parent of two MCS alumni, read a statement on behalf of her daughter speaking against removing *Perks of Being a Wallflower* from the MHS library. In her statement, Ms. Aire’s daughter shared she was disheartened to hear that 1st Amendment rights were being questioned. She acknowledged that books often take readers out of their comfort zones and force them to consider the good, the bad, and the ugly. She shared her own experience reading the book as a 9th grade student, stating it opened her eyes to multiple harsh realities, helping demonstrate the way young adults process pain and support each other. She further stated that children are a product of everything encountered in the world.

Don Jones, a United Methodist Pastor, shared that part of his job has been to work with survivors of sexual abuse. He stated families are more likely to seek help if the victim of abuse is a female, rather than a male. Mr. Jones spoke against removing the book from the MHS library on the basis that *Perks of Being a Wallflower* is a great resource for young people to know they can seek help.

Ava Oldham, an MHS student, stated she was shocked to see Item #4 on agenda and spoke against removing *Perks of Being a Wallflower* from the MHS library. Ms. Oldham shared the novel has been one of her favorite books and movies for the past five years and said the novel expresses many of the dark and sad parts of growing up. She stated that taking away books that allow relatability is not the way to solve delinquency in children.

Mohib Ahmed, a senior at MHS, thanked the board and public for engaging in a democratic process. He stated his opposition to removing *Perks of Being a Wallflower* from the MHS library and expressed that the experiences of the characters in the book are, unfortunately, a reality for

many teenagers. Mr. Ahmed stated that students should not be denied stories dealing with difficult issues, as it prevents opportunities to cope with real-life situations. He gave his trust to librarians and educators to make sure the books in the library are appropriate and conducive to learning.

Dr. Winstead reiterated board policy outlining the three tiers to removing a book from the school library. He stated that *Perks of Being a Wallflower* had progressed through two tiers, and the board would make the final decision based on the age and maturity level for students served at the high school.

Mr. Stinnett inquired about the book's availability to freshman students and asked how many times *Perks of Being a Wall Flower* had been checked out of the MHS library. Ms. Kristin Braun, MHS Librarian, explained that freshman do not have the ability to check books out of the MHS library. According to records, eleven students and two teachers have checked the book out in the past two years.

Chairman Black read the statute and question before calling for a motion.

Julie Elder moved to deny the appeal and keep *Perks of Being a Wallflower* in circulation in the MHS library. Candy Morgan seconded the motion.

Bart Stinnett thanked Ms. McGee for her comments and stated her love for MCS and children is evident. He shared that he was impressed by the students who spoke and is proud to represent the city and citizens, as he respects those on both sides of the issue.

Isaac Simerly echoed Mr. Stinnett's sentiments, stating he was impressed by the decorum, maturity, and professionalism. He gave his appreciation of Ms. McGee's commitment and dedication. Mr. Simerly commended the accountability that exists for access to books in the school libraries. He acknowledged that *Perks of Being a Wallflower* initiates a healthy conversation and can be beneficial at an appropriate age.

Candy Morgan also thanked Ms. McGee for speaking and expressed her appreciation at the room full of people who were in attendance. Mr. Morgan expressed her desire and the School

Board's desire to hear from the community, as they embrace the responsibility of making decisions on what is best for students.

Julie Elder thanked Ms. McGee for her courage in speaking at tonight's meeting. Ms. Elder reiterated this material is not required reading for any student in our system and is in circulation only at MHS. Ms. Elder also stated that parents should know that if they have an issue or concern with material, the schools are always willing to have a conversation. She expressed her gratitude for being part of MCS and the community.

Nick Black expressed his appreciation for Ms. McGee speaking and initiating a conversation that brought about a very thorough review of *Perks of Being a Wallflower*. He also expressed his appreciation to the students, teachers, and community members who spoke at tonight's meeting. He reflected on his own reading experiences as a teenager and his introduction to books that explored topics outside of his own experiences. Mr. Black concluded with a positive statement about the tone and rhetoric of conversation during tonight's meeting.

The motion was approved unanimously.

REPORTS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Mike Winstead, Director of Schools, wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. He shared that End of Course testing will kick off the week students return from Thanksgiving break.

Dr. Winstead provided an update on facilities. Fort Craig renovations are beginning this week. The site review for the MHS project is complete, and Phase 1 pricing and sub-contractors should be identified by the 1st week of December. At that time, the City Council, School Board, and PBA will come together to determine Phase 1 funding. As this is taking place, MHS will work on the building and classroom layout to determine a guaranteed price by April for Phase 2, with a bond issue sometime after summer.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

Foothills:

The Annual Foothills Elementary School RACCOON ROMP raised \$38,023.10! This parent run fundraiser supports all things Foothills! There is still money rolling in! We wanted to thank our entire school community for their generosity and support!"

John Sevier:

We'd like to give a shout out to the following 3rd grade JSE students who were our top runners in our Fall annual Run Club 5K on Thursday November 9th.

Margot Prater with finishing time of 23 minutes 47 seconds

Mason Kourofsky ... 25 minutes 8 seconds
McClendon Carley ... 25 minutes 23 seconds
Adrianna Wood 25 ... minutes 24 seconds.

Also for JSE, the annual John Sevier Fox Trot raised \$36,592.90! JSE would like to thank students, staff, parents, and the community for their generous support.

Maryville High School:

Abigail Burkhalter has been selected to join 50 other high school students across the country on the All - American United Nations 2023-24 Cohort. As part of this exciting journey, the All-American Model UN travel team will attend prestigious conferences hosted by renowned institutions, including Yale, Columbia, Georgetown, the University of Connecticut, Northwestern University, and Harvard during the upcoming season. These conferences provide students with invaluable opportunities to showcase their diplomatic skills on a global stage, further solidifying All-American Model UN's position as a leader in the field.

*Athletic recognitions attached

COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Candy Morgan thanked Mrs. Hilton for hosting tonight's meeting and expressed her excitement about the opportunities that SchoolLinks provides students. Mrs. Morgan also thanked those who attended tonight's meeting.

Julie Elder also expressed her excitement about SchoolLinks and asked students who have already used the software to raise their hands. She also thanked those who spoke at tonight's meeting.

Isaac Simerly expressed his excitement about lacrosse and thanked Mrs. Hilton and Mr. Lambert for their presentation and hosting tonight's meeting. He commented on the outstanding professionalism and maturity during the discussion about agenda Item 4.

Bart Stinnett thanked Mrs. Hilton and Mr. Coulter for hosting the meeting and asked them to also thank Coach Lambert. Mr. Stinnett stated he was impressed with the students who attended and spoke. He also expressed his pride for educators and parents who are passionate about both their beliefs and MCS.

Nick Black expressed his appreciation for everyone who attended tonight's meeting. Mr. Black encouraged one-on-one conversations with the board and expressed his appreciation for public comments. He concluded by stating he is blessed to be part of MCS.

Meeting adjourned at 6:52

Respectfully submitted by: Maria Greene

2023-2024 MHS Athletic Results and Highlights

- **Boys Golf** Region 2 District 4-AA
 - 45-22 overall
 - 3rd place District 4 tournament; 3rd place region tournament
 - Individual medalists: Leo Huddleston, Owen King, Jack O'Quinn
- **Girls Golf** Region 2 District 4-AA
 - 33-19 overall
 - Champions District 4 tournament, 1st time since 1998.
 - 4th place region tournament
 - Individual medalists: April Johnson, Rylee Tucker
- **Volleyball** Region 2 District 4-AAA
 - Keirnan Stamey (12th) – 1000th Kill at Lenoir City, August 31, 2023
 - Ashley Taylor (12th) – 1000th dig at Regionals, October 10, 2023
 - Volleyball goes 5-0 against district foes to win the district outright for the 4th year in a row
 - District Tournament Champions – 6th year in a row
 - Region Champions – 4th year in a row
 - Beats Science Hill in sectional earning a trip to state tournament for 4th year in a row.
 - Lost to Houston, then Brentwood to end season at state tournament
- **Boys Cross Country** Region 3-3A
 - 2nd in region
 - Bryce Bohanan – All Region
 - 3rd consecutive trip to State meet – finished 15th overall
- **Girls Cross Country** Region 3-3A
 - Blount County Champions
 - 3rd in region
 - Gracie Franklin, Emma Roberts – All Region
 - 3rd consecutive trip to State Meet – finished 12th overall
- **Girls Soccer** Region 2 District 4-AAA
 - 7-9-4 record
 - 1st round district win on penalty kicks vs HVA
 - elimination in 2nd round of district tournament vs Bearden
- **Football** Region 2-6A
 - Finished 3rd region. 6-4 Overall record
 - Eliminated in 2nd round. 7-5 overall record
- **Cheer**
 - Seniors, Brooke Burgin, Ava Blankenship, and Reese Phillips were selected to the TCCA All-State Cheer Team (very difficult to be selected and considered quite prestigious)
 - 3rd at State Championship

- **Dance**
 - 3rd in both jazz and pom at state championships
- **Bowling Boys** Region 2 District 3
- **Bowling Girls** Region 2 District 3
- **Boys Basketball** Region 2 District 4-4A
- **Girls Basketball** Region 2 District 4-4A
- **Boys Wrestling** Region 2 District 4-AA
- **Girls Wrestling** Section 1
- **Swim and Dive**
- **Baseball** Region 2 District 4-4A
- **Boys Soccer** Region 2 District 4-AAA
- **Softball** District Region 2 District 4-4A
- **Boys Tennis** Region 2 District 4-AA
- **Girls Tennis** Region 2 District 4-AA
- **Boys Track** Section 1-AAA
- **Girls Track** Section 1-AAA

Seniors committed to post-secondary athletics.

D1:4 D2:2 D3:1 NAIA:3 NJCAA:

XX commitments XX different programs

Name	Sport	Institution	Level
1. Hailee Butler	Rowing	Stetson University	D1
2. Gracie Franklin	Track/XC	Milligan University	NAIA
3. Kristy McCord	Softball	Concord University	D2
4. Bekah Duck	Softball	University of Pittsburgh	D1
5. Jada Edwards	Basketball	Freed-Hardeman University	NAIA
6. Emma Sheets	Swim and Dive	Lenoir-Rhyne University	D2
7. Cade Batchelor	Baseball	Belmont University	D1
8. Taylor Hoag	Soccer	Longwood University	D1
9. Emerson Darnell	Softball	Johnson University	NAIA
10. Emma Meyer	Swim and Dive	Centre College	D3
11.			D1
12.			

