

MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
BRADLEY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM
TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2002, 6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Muscogee County School District was held on Tuesday, January 21, 2003, 6:30 p.m. in the conference room at the Bradley Library.

The following members were present: Mary Sue Polleys, Chairman, James Walker, Vice Chairman, Brenda P. Storey, Philip T. Schley, David E. Ebron, Fife M. Whiteside, John Wells, Naomi Buckner, and Owen Ditchfield.

Others present: John A. Phillips, Jr., Superintendent of Education, Charles Staples, Del Parker, Brenda Dozier, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Gordon Stallings, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Robin Pennock, Chief Academic Officer, Shirley Jaeger, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, Bill Hortman, Associate Superintendent, Billy Kendall, Administrative Assistant and representatives from the media.

Dr. Polleys called the meeting to order with an invocation and pledge of allegiance to the flag led by students from Reese Road Elementary.

Dr. Polleys welcomed Ms. Buckner as a newly elected board member representing District 4. Dr. Polleys presented Ms. Buckner with the certificate from her swearing in ceremony. Dr. Polleys also welcomed Dr. Phillips to his first official Board meeting. Dr. Phillips thanked the Board and said he's "looking forward to working with the Board, being here for a long time and making a difference for the children our number one priority". Dr. Polleys welcomed Dr. Robin Pennock as the new Chief Academic Officer.

Dr. Polleys called on Dr. Schley for the annual election of officers for the Board.

Upon motion of Dr. Schley, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved the election of Dr. John A. Phillips, Jr. as Secretary of the Board.

Dr. Schley prefaced his motion for nomination of Chairman of the Board, seconded by Mr. Ebron with, "I wish to place in nomination the name of a dedicated educator who has given unstintingly of effort and devotion to the progress of this school district. I wish to nominate Dr. Mary Sue Polleys. In addition, I wish to nominate to serve as Vice Chairman, Mr. James Walker, Mr. Del Parker as Treasurer and Mr. Jim Humes as Parliamentarian". The vote was unanimous.

Dr. Schley made the motion, seconded by Mr. Ebron, to re-engage the Law Firm of Hatcher, Stubbs, Land, Hollis and Rothschild as chief counsel for the school district. The vote was unanimous.

Dr. Polleys welcomed visitors, Leadership Columbus participants, Mr. & Mrs. Halouska, League of Women Voters, and Friends of the Libraries, PTA representative from, Gifted Program at St. Elmo.

Dr. Polleys called on Major Brinkman from Carver High School for recognition of Cadet Courtland Pegan who won the nations' highest award in JROTC the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross. Dr. Phillips presented the medal to Cadet Pegan. Dr. Polleys called on Mrs. Brenda Dozier who recognized Shaw High School for their Region Championship and State finals. Mrs. Dozier also recognized Columbus High School, winners of the Knox Culpepper Sportsmanship award.

Upon motion of Mr. Ditchfield, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously approved official actions taken at the regular Board meeting held on December 20, 2002.

Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved the revision of Policy BBC-Board Committees. This revision will include an audit committee of the Board.

Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved the setting aside of a section in Policy GBM-Professional Personnel Transfer for the remainder of the 2002-2003 school year as it pertains to Employee Initiated Transfers.

Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved New Horizons to use Kinnett Stadium on Saturday, May 17, 2003 for a Walk-A-Thon.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved financial statements for five months ending November 30, 2002.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the Administration to communicate with State School Superintendent Kathy Cox, Georgia Board of Education Chairman, Cathy Henson, and the Director of Planning and Budget, Bill Tomlinson regarding the reduction in funding for Pupil Transportation. Mrs. Storey explained that "the State was sued by DeKalb County school district and found to be at fault and the DeKalb County School District was awarded \$105 million for wrongfully withheld funds by the State over the past 24 years and they stayed the award except \$3.8 million which the State says all school districts will pay a share of this. I'm not sure of the legality of it." Dr. Phillips commented, "it seems to be an issue of equity and it sends a strong message to local school districts from the State, that don't sue us for wrongdoings or we'll let everybody pay for the mistakes. This has a lot to do with the desegregation issue, M to M transfers in which DeKalb County felt like they should have been paid or helped with the transportation costs to implement their desegregation plan. I think the State should help with the costs but at the same time, I don't feel that this should be a burden to other school districts across the state." Mr. Wells, "I'd like to pose the question to the Board that if we sued we would prevail also since we are in the same circumstances? There has to be something done. Could I ask the Administration to get up what they think we have lost in transportation. As Dr. Phillips said, can we get an equity settlement?" Dr. Phillips said, "let's consult with counsel for advice." Mr. Whiteside commented, "we've made a substantial commitment to M to M and we need to explore this possibility. Perhaps the best is to ask the Superintendent and Counsel to bring us an answer at the next board meeting."

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved change order no. 9 in the amount of \$21,000.00 to be deducted from the original contract for construction at East Columbus Magnet Academy on the basis that no representations are made concerning future work or otherwise.

Mr. Wells, made the motion, seconded by Mrs. Storey, to approve the Johns Manville settlement offer of \$1,222,980 for the defective roof systems at Hannan and Brewer Elementary Schools and approve the distribution of \$244,596.00 of the settlement amount to Gilmer and Pastor, LLP for legal services. Mr. Ditchfield commented, “the money that is received after deducting legal fees will be put in a fund and will pay for the monitoring of those two schools roofs for two to three years to see if the rusting is increased or if there is more damage and if so the money would be used to replace those roofs. This is the part I want to be clear on. When that period passes and there does not appear any deterioration, the rest of the settlement will go into our sinking fund and can be applied to any school roof that needs replacing.” Mr. Caggins, “we believe that the money should go to the sinking fund and we believe also that there will be a need to replace the roofs because of the deterioration.” Mr. Ditchfield commented, “I want to be sure that we can promise Hannan and Brewer that down the road they won’t need a roof and the money won’t be used for some other project. Can we make that promise?” Mr. Caggins, “that will come from the Superintendent and the Board for sure.” Dr. Phillips commented, “I agree with Mr. Ditchfield, I think that we should set this aside in the sinking fund but to earmark it for those two schools. We can monitor the situation over a period of time. If in a reasonable period of time we have to come in to replace some of it, then we can do so and then release those funds for other things.” Dr. Polleys called for a vote on this item. The vote was unanimous to approve the settlement.

Dr. Polleys directed the Board to the one addendum item. Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously voted to modify the agenda to consider the addendum item on the Board’s code of ethics.

Mr. Ditchfield made the motion, seconded by Mr. Ebron, to approve the Code of Ethics. Mr. Wells asked that the Board, “read the sample Code of Ethics from NSBA which is a broader version.” Mr. Wells made a substitute motion to consider the alternate code of ethics. There was no second on the substitute. Dr. Polleys asked for any discussion on the original motion. Mr. Whiteside asked counsel if there was anything that could be construed as lessening or modifying the duties that the Board is under by way of State law?” Mr. Staples commented, “Our opinion would be that the State law governs regardless of whether you specify the law in your code or not.” The vote was (8) affirming and (1) opposing, (Wells). Mr. Wells commented, “I’d like to state for the record that I’m not voting against a code of ethics because I’m already covered by two or three codes of ethics by being a sworn member of the board of education. I just don’t particular like the one that is put before us tonight.”

Upon motion of Mr. Ebron, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the following consent agenda items:

- Personnel Report (Appendix A).
- Library board appointments, Don Cook and Robert Dickerson.
- Audit of SPLOST Financial Statement.
- Resolution authorizing Trust Fund Investments.
- Contract to Atlanta Freightliner, \$1,225,673.00 (4) 72-passenger buses with lift; (13) 84-passenger buses for 2003-2004 school year.
- Confirmation purchase order Strategic Equipment & Supply Corporation/Medley Division, \$21,639.75, dishwasher, pant leg duct, silver soak sink, pre-rinse spray unit, booster heater and hose reel, Spencer High.
- Confirmation purchase order R&G Mechanical, Inc., \$13,890.00 for installation of storm sewer at Hardaway High.
- Confirmation purchase order R&G Mechanical, Inc., \$11,168.00 for removal, disposal, installation of water storage tank/boiler and replacement of water pipes at Hardaway.
- Purchase order Keys Technology Group, Inc., \$12,000.00 for Parent Involvement Communication software at Baker Middle School.
- Purchase order Earth-Scapes, Inc., \$12,715.80 for Track and Field Event Stations at Lakebottom for Columbus High Relays.
- New budget FY03 K-3 Statewide Reading Psyched Grant from GDOE, Woodall Program.
- New budget Title I FY03 Part A; School Improvement, \$128,240.20.
- Budget adjustment Transportation Department Field Trip Account to Maintenance Supplies, \$50,000.00.
- Budget adjustment additional funds, \$109,862.00 for Safe & Drug Free Schools.
- Budget adjustment Warehouse purchase vehicles, \$40,000.00 to lease a refrigeration truck for delivering frozen foods to schools; purchase fuel inventory control and reporting system.
- Academic Success Center, Climate Improvement Project.
- Financial Assistance, \$676.56.
- Bradley-Turner Foundation donation, \$33,334.00 for Teenage Parenting Center.

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Mrs. Storey wanted to publicly acknowledge the donation from the Bradley-Turner Foundation of \$33,334.00 for the Teenage Parenting Center.

Mr. Ditchfield commented, “these two gentleman that have been appointed to the Library Board are both outstanding individuals and I am very pleased that they have volunteered to serve on the board.”

Upon motion of Mr. Ebron, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to go into executive session to hear a student discipline appeal, discuss the acquisition of property and a personnel matter.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Ditchfield, the Board unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Ditchfield, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the regular January board meeting.

Mr. Charles T. Staples
Legal Counsel