

MGSD Board of Education  
January 16, 2023, Regular Board Meeting

**MOORESVILLE GRADED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, January 16, 2023, 6:00 p.m.**

The Board of Education of the Mooresville Graded School District met during a regular monthly session on Tuesday, December 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; Dr. Debbie Marsh; Rakeem Brawley; Mrs. Monica Bender.

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

Mr. Whitfield, Board Chair, called the meeting to order, and held a moment of silence. Mr. Whitfield shared that MGSD's core values are in line with Martin Luther King. During the Martin Luther King Celebration Dr. Gardner shared these values, Authentic relationships, Empowerment, Equity, Integrity, and Safety. Preston Flagler led the pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of the Agenda:** On a motion by Mr. Brawley, seconded by Mrs. Pennell, the board voted unanimously to approve the meeting agenda as presented.

**Approval of the Minutes:** On a motion by Dr. Marsh, seconded by Mrs. Bender, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from December 12, 2023, regular meeting as presented.

**District Recognition:** Ms. Amy Rhyne with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Early Learning Division surprised Dr. Gardner and the Board of Education with a special recognition. MGSD received the first Science of Reading Champions of Change award for their strong work on LETRS. Ms. Rhyne specifically thanked Dr. Gardner and Jemma Conley, Elementary Education Director, for their dedication and implementation of LETRS.

**Student of the Month:** The School Board recognized & presented the Student of the Month Award to Preston Flagler, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at EMIS. Dr. Gardner shared the reasons the student was selected as listed on the nomination form.

**Artist of the Month:** The School Board recognized & presented the Artist of the Month to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Art Club at EMIS. Dr. Gardner shared the reasons the students was selected as listed on the nomination form.

**ABCD Award:** The board recognized and presented the monthly Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award to Ms. Terri Garrett, Front Office Receptionist at EMIS. The EMIS Administration Team nominated Ms. Garrett. Dr. Gardner shared the reasons she was chosen, as written on her nomination form.

**Spotlight on People:** (a): Mr. Ron Higdon, theatre teacher at Mooresville High School was recognized for receiving the 2023 North Carolina Theatre Conference (NCTC) K-12 Educator Award. Dr. Gardner congratulated Mr. Higdon for his hard work and dedication as he ensures that Mooresville High School Theatre program continues its tradition of excellence.

**Spotlight on People** (b): January is School Board Appreciation Month. Dr. Gardner thanked the board for their time, energy, and expertise to make informed decisions that benefit every student under their care. They tirelessly work to create an environment that fosters learning, growth, and success for all students and staff. Mrs. Graham, Principal at MHS presented each board member with a handmade mugs and drawings from MHS art students.

**Instructional Highlights:** “Utilizing Data Folders in the Classroom” – East Mooresville Intermediate Tracy Pratt-Dixon, Principal, along with teachers and students presented the impact data folders have made on student success. Data folders are used to track academic progress; build confidence; develops ownership; supports social emotional learning lessons; enhances parent conferences/communication; report cards/interim reports; and aligns with math standards. Students presented how the data folders help them stay on track and allows them to follow their growth.

**Schedule next meeting:** The next regular school board meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2023, at the Performing Arts Center at Mooresville High School, at 6:00 p.m.

**Public Comment:** No public comment.

#### **Items for Information:**

##### **Strategic Plan Update:**

- A. Mrs. McLean presented an update on the new 5-year Strategic Plan. Our Strategic Plan grows from our Core Beliefs. Our vision is to create a better community by empowering every individual to grow, thrive, and succeed. Our mission is “*We Are Mooresville*,” a learning community committed to providing a supportive environment where everyone can reach their full potential. Our Strategic Plan is a living document so the order or priority of any given strategy may shift depending on what we find is a greater need. More data will be presented in August to show you how these strategies are working toward reaching the goals we have set.
- B. **Maximize Opportunity & Achievement (MOA):** Dr. Royal presented the updates on Maximize Opportunity & Achievement (MOA).

##### **Year 1 implementation:**

- 1. **Develop a consistent process that provides all students with core curriculum.** Our secondary teachers have worked on course guide creation to ensure alignment with state standards while including relevant activities and levels of rigor. Our elementary teachers continue to refine their course guides. New curricular materials were purchased that are research-based and properly aligned to the NC standards. HMH (literacy and language), Open up (math), UFLI (literacy). We have revamped our Walkthrough observation tool to ensure we are able to inspect what we expect to see in our classrooms.
- 2. **Refine data-decision making and data analysis processes.** Through Dr. Gardner’s leadership and feedback from our school teams we are following the problem-solving model with more discussion as opposed to just projecting data on a slideshow. Schools are re-establishing PLC norms and expectations as needed.
- 3. **Ensure all K-8 students have access to in school club opportunities.** All K-8 students have been participating in in-school clubs, weekly.
- 4. **Expand opportunities for high school students to explore their post-graduation plans.**

MHS has increased enrollment in CCP classes with Mitchell Community College. Approximately 400 students are taking advantage of CCP classes this year. Students are interested in taking the CDM spring test. Fifty-three students enrolled in internships this school year. MHS has two students enrolled in NCSSM Connect.

**Year 1 Planning:**

1. **Research and implement a high dosage tutoring model.** An after-school tutoring program for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students has been implemented focusing on math and reading for our “bubble” students. We have also visited Union County to see their high-dosage tutoring in action.
2. **Explore grading practices that allow students to take ownership of the learning process.** Teachers at MHS are exploring this in a Professional Development Pathway. Standard-Based grading at elementary level has been implemented but have re-emphasized student data trackers.
3. **Ensure that NC portrait of a Graduate durable skills is embedded into instruction K-12.** We added this to our Universal Walkthrough instrument and PD training for principals and AP’s. Established rubrics for gateways and mini-gateways for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Benchmark data from Panorama surveys is being used for the next 5 years.
4. **Create a process where every student creates a career development plan.** The State has asked for volunteers with pilot platforms (Naviance, Major Clarity, etc.) which we have signed up for. Career explorations in middle school (CTE). Develop a plan to educate parents/families and community on terminology on our plans.
5. **Explore new and innovative school models to be implemented in MGSD.** Our teams will research different examples including Early College, International Baccalaureate (IB), A+Arts, Global studies, STEM, and Freshman Academy. We are researching and investigating dual immersion models at the middle school level.

- C. **Safe, Happy and Healthy:** Dr. Scott Smith and Dr. Sandy Albert presented an update on three strategies.

**Year 1 Implementation:**

1. **Focus on School Physical safety, student safety protocol, and procedures, as well as student behavioral needs.** Crisis response protocols including suicide and threat assessment processes have been reviewed with administrators and counselors. Mechanisms have been put in place to monitor and address school safety. Adjustments have been made to our current procedures to comply with the Parent’s Bill of Rights and we are closely monitoring the Center for Safer Schools @ DPI for further guidance around threat assessments. Mr. Mark Reddick, Director of School Safety, has worked with all school leaders to upload state-mandated information to School Risk Management Plan (SRMP) and update all Safe School Plans. Metal Detectors for athletic events have been added and we are working with Mooresville Police Department on the acquisition of a weapons detection canine. The Safe Schools grant has been submitted. School cameras, bus cameras, new walkie-talkies, etc. will be purchased if we receive this grant.
2. **Develop a district problem solving advisory team and ensure every school has a behavior problem-solving team.** A district Threat assessment team meets weekly to discuss the threat assessment process, review intervention plans, and provide feedback to school administrators. MTSS behavior teams are at each school.
3. **Develop a yearly plan at each school/department to create and foster a positive culture and climate.** Schools have a goal in their School Improvement Plan focusing on positive school culture which is reviewed with their leadership team monthly.

**Year 1 Planning:**

1. **Examine and review school physical safety plans and enhance as needed.** Mr. Mark Reddick, Director of School Safety conducted an informal needs assessment and a physical inspection at each school. We are exploring a District Safety Audit from an outside agency to get an external opinion on school safety.
2. **Develop a comprehensive approach to alternative learning K-12.** An alternative learning subcommittee has been created to explore alternative learning programs around our state. After conducting a needs assessment, exploring other districts, and consulting with other leaders, the committee is developing a 3-year plan that will be shared with the board at a work session in the future. The focus will be on middle school students and 9<sup>th</sup> graders next year.
3. **Ensure clear and consistent expectations for student discipline across all schools.** Meetings are being scheduled by our safety director to meet with principals to dig deeper into student code of conduct and discipline procedures.
4. **Implement a consistent, research-based social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum K-12.** All schools are using research-based social and emotion learning (SEL) curriculums this year. Quaver Ready is being used at K-5, Capturing Kids Hearts at both middle schools, Character Strong at MHS, and BASE Education at Miwaye. All these programs support the CASEL competencies for social-emotional learning.
5. **Explore innovative partnerships to offer additional mental and physical health support for students and staff.** Turning Point Family Services have been added to focus on mental health services in our schools. We continue to host mental health family nights as we increase services to our students.

D. **Recruit, Grow, and Retain:** Mrs. Angie Davis, Chief Finance Officer and Mrs. April Kuhn, Chief Human Resources Officer presented updates on Recruit, Grow, and Retain strategies.

**Year 1 Implementation:**

1. The success of a school district rests in the quality of its staff. A commitment to recruiting, growing, and retaining the best and brightest staff ensures excellence in every aspect of the school district. In year-one we have focused on quality over quantity of all staff. We evaluated the market for competitive pay structures for our employees. A salary study was done and implemented in September 2023. The pay scales were shared on our website. This addresses three of our core values; equity, integrity, and empowerment. Year one implementation came with a cost of \$2,000,000 which includes matching employee benefits.

**Year 1 Planning:**

1. **Develop a comprehensive staff recruiting plan that includes innovative and research-based practice to attract talent.** A Beginning Teacher Coordinator/Recruitment Specialist is being hired to lead our recruiting efforts for teachers and non-classroom employees. We have joined a Research Practice Network to help focus on recruitment strategies on our secondary level.
2. **Enhance leadership development opportunities across the district.** Executive coaches have been implemented for our new principals. Monthly meetings continue with principals, directors, and supervisors so they are receiving training in safety, finance, human resources, communication and general leadership.
3. **Create an all-inclusive onboarding system to immerse employees in the Mooresville Graded School District culture.** The Recruit, Grow, and Retain committee met in December 2023. The focus is a more comprehensive onboarding system. A stronger process and framework are needed for all.

4. **Ensure leaders have the skills needed to establish a culture of inclusive practices and belonging for all employees.** Continue to develop inclusive practices in our training of the leadership team.
- E. **Culture of Relationships:** Mrs. Tanae McLean, Chief Communications Officer presented an update on three strategies of Culture of Relationships.  
**Year 1 Implementation:**
  1. **Refine the Advisory Committee process for parents and teachers and add a student advisory committee.** Committee members consist of TOY, BTOY, and SIT chair, EC TOY, CTE TOY, etc. Student Advisory students include class president for each class level. PAC includes representatives from each school who have been recommended by the principal or have requested to take part on the committee. Two focus areas of our Strategic Plan are used to gather feedback and learn how they feel things are going in that area.
  2. **The district will facilitate at least four community engagement events and each school will hold at least two community engagement events per year.** Three community events have been held and the 4<sup>th</sup> event is planned. All events have been successful; Picnic in Liberty Park (served approx. 450), The Longest Table (served approx. 900), and Winter Wonderland STEAM (served approx. 300). MGSD schools have held community engagement events; Homecoming Back to the Yard; Basketball Blue; White Community Event; MHS School Community Clean up; Trunk or Treat; Breakfast with Santa; and Catawba Science Night.
  3. **Offer training and resources to staff and families to help them develop strong relationships that support the success and wellbeing of all students.** The Parent Advisory Committee has been asked what types of training and resources they would like to see the district offer. This is currently a work in process.

- Year 1 Planning:**
  1. **Develop a uniform communication framework.** We are looking at having an outside organization help guide in the effort to ensure that we are developing a communication framework that can speak to best practices from the district level all the way down to the classroom teacher one-on-one communication with parent level, as well as internal vs external communication.
  2. **Develop a comprehensive volunteer program to encourage community engagement.** Mrs. McLean is developing a MGSD Volunteer Handbook. This volunteer handbook will provide information on volunteer training, who to contact, board policies, and opportunities. The goal is to make it easy for people to volunteer and get involved in MGSD schools. This will roll out in August 2024.
  3. **Develop a uniform approach to student mentoring.** Mentoring programs should have someone doing matching, receiving monthly feedback from the school, the mentor, the mentee, and the family, tracing consistency and having conferences with the mentor. Mrs. McLean is currently exploring with CMS to see how we can work together on this goal. CMS partners with Big Brother, Big Sister of the Central Carolinas.
  4. **Develop a plan for targeted community outreach initiatives to traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations.** Currently, Mrs. McLean doesn't have anything of significance to report on creating an advisory group for identifying strategic alliances and developing a plan for targeted community outreach initiatives to our underserved and underrepresented populations.

#### **Items for Approval:**

- A. **2024-2025 MGSD School Calendar:** Mrs. Tanae McLean presented and requested board approval of the draft proposed 2024-2025 school calendar presented to the board for the first

read at the December board meeting. The proposed draft calendar was created using input from the MGSD Calendar Committee and the NCDPI calendar creation guideline.

**On a motion by Kerry Pennell, seconded by Debbie Marsh, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2024-2025 School Calendar as presented.**

- B. **Board Policies:** Mrs. Tanae McLean presented and requested board approval of Policy 8325 Daily Deposits presented for the first read at the December board meeting. MGSD follows the NCSBA when updating policies. Under G.S. 115C-445, which governs daily deposits, the threshold was increased from \$250 to \$1500. If the amount on hand is less than \$1,000, daily deposits are encouraged but not required.

**On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Rakeem Brawly, the board voted unanimously to approve the revisions to Board Policy 8325-Daily Deposits. Motion carried.**

- C. **Apple Device Buyback:** Angie Davis and Dr. Scott Smith presented information on the “Apple Device Buyback”. MGSD solicited a request for proposal for the buyback of approximately 5,900 currently owned 2017 Apple Macbook Air devices. The request for proposal was to ensure maximum value for currently owed devices, service for collection, and guaranteed payment timelines. The proposal was posted through the North Carolina State Interactive Purchasing System on 11/17/2023. A total of 16 vendors submitted proposals which were scored according to a weighted evaluation criteria rubric. Agi Repair received the highest total points as determined by the rubric. Agi Repair gave us a minimum guaranteed price of \$950,000. It could be more depending on each device. Device pickup will be between March 1, 2024 and May 31, 2024.

**On a motion by Rakeem Brawly, seconded by Monica Bender, the board voted unanimously to approve the sale of the equipment to AGi Repair per the agreed-upon terms and conditions of the request for proposal. Motion carried.**

- D. **Conflict of Interest:** Angie Davis presented information on the Conflict of Interest. All employees involved in the making or administering of contracts, as described in G.S. 14-234, shall receive a minimum of two hours conflicts of interest training regarding the making and administering of contracts as follows:

- (1) The training shall be required once in every odd-numbered year.
- (2) Upon assuming the responsibility of making or administering contracts, a school employee shall receive an initial training within 90 days and subsequent training in every odd-numbered year thereafter.
- (3) The training shall include position-specific education on conflicts of interest and ethical standards of conduct.
- (4) The training may be provided by a qualified source at the choice of the local board of education.

Training is required by April 1, 2024. NCASA is offering a training video that meets the legislative requirement at no cost to districts who are members.

**On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Monica Bender, the board voted unanimously to approve NCASA as provider of Conflict of Interest training for our school and district leaders. Motion carried.**

- E. **Audit Contract:** Angie Davis presented information on the annual audit conducted each year. This audit is conducted to ensure compliance with the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act, the Local Government Commission and all federal regulations per North Carolina General Statute. Pending approval, Anderson, Smith & Wike PLLC will conduct the next financial audit

beginning in the spring of 2024 with pre-audit compliance work and continue over the summer to finalize with a report back to the board in the fall of 2024.

**On a motion by Kerry Pennell, seconded by Rakeem Brawley, the board voted unanimously to approve the audit contract with Anderson, Smith & Wike PLLC. Motion carried.**

**F. Field Trips:** Dr Royal presented field trips for approval. The Mooresville High School Band is requesting permission to attend the following:

- (1) Catawba Ridge High School in Fort Mill, SC on February 3, 2024, for a competition. The trip will involve 40 students and 3 staff chaperones as well as parent chaperones. No cost associated with this trip.
- (2) Indian Land High School I Lancaster, SC on March 23, 2024, for a competition. The trip will involve 40 students and 3 staff chaperones as well as parent chaperones. There is no cost associated with this trip.
- (3) Dorman High School in Roebuck, SC on April 13, 2024, for a competition. The trip will involve 40 students and 3 staff chaperones as well as parent chaperones. There is no cost associated with this trip.

**On a motion by Monica Bender, seconded by Kerry Pennell, the board voted unanimously to approve the field trips outlined as presented. Motion carried.**

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

#### **New Employees:**

Anthony Powell, EC Teacher, SBMS/EMIS, 01/02/2024  
Connor Willis, Science Teacher, MHS, 01/02/2024  
Laura Holiday, Substitute Teacher, MGSD, 12/19/2023  
Christian Meniffee, Custodian, MMS, 12/13/2023  
Jenna Newberry, Substitute Teacher, MGSD, 12/20/2023  
Julie Simmons. Substitute Teacher, MGSD, 12/13/2023  
Charles McDaniel, Social Studies Teacher, MHS, 1/16/2024  
Beth Watson, Multi-Language Teacher, MIS/EMIS, 1/15/2024  
Staci Burchfield, Director of Nutrition, School Nutrition, 2/12/2024  
Mariah Ellingsworth, Substitute Teacher, MGSD, 1/16/2024  
Alden Hollingshead, BASP Led Teacher, PVES, 1/8/2024  
Penny Keegan, BASP Lead Teacher, MIS, 1/4/2024

#### **Promotions/Changes:**

Fallon Smith, School Counselor, PVES, 01/29/2024  
Stephanie Edmonds, Technology Manager, Technology Dept. 01/11/2024  
Cassidy Riddle, School Nutrition Assistant Manager, SES, 12/19/2023  
Mauren Fitzsimmons, Secondary AIG Specialist, C & I House, 2/11/2024

#### **Retirement:**

Kimberly Cline, Account Manager/Tech III, 4/01/2024

**Non-Continuing:**

Kelli Bolte, PT EC Teacher, SES, 01/06/2024

Deborah Campbell, School Nutrition Mgr. SES, 01/02/2023

Denise Deal, Technology Assistant, EMIS, 01/02/2024

Nanette Grueninger, Dual Immersion Teacher Assistant, EMIS, 01/11/2024

Shawna Mason, Teacher, MIS, 01/25/2024

Renee Parkman, Drafting Teacher, MHS, 01/15/2024

Candace Wilson, Bus Driver/Custodian, MMS, 12/05/2024

Billy Ferrante, Social Studies Teacher, MHS, 1/19/2024

John Hieb, Social Studies Teacher, SBMS, 2/10/2024

Kristina Lake, Teacher, EMIS, 1/2/2024

Alicia Stone, Substitute, School Nutrition, 1/8/2024

**On a motion by Rakeem Brawley, seconded by Monica Bender, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel list as recommended by the Superintendent.**

**On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Kerry Pennell, the board voted unanimously to adjourn from closed session.**

**There being no further business, on a motion by Monica Bender, seconded by Rakeem Brawley, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jason D. Gardner, Secretary  
Board of Education