BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes for April 21, 2025

The Maryville Board of Education met in a regular session at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 21 at Coulter Grove Intermediate School. Board members present were Julie Elder, Nick Black, Isaac Simerly, Bart Stinnett, and Candy Morgan. Chair Julie Elder called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. and asked for a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by 7th grade student Britton Vananda.

Update from Coulter Grove Intermediate School

Principal Dr. Ramona Best introduced this year's theme, *Hearts and Smarts*, and Coulter Grove's vision of instilling a legacy of learning in both the heart and mind of every student.

Engage – Britton Vananda shared his journey as the 7th grade winner of *Ace of Shakes*. He reflected on the resilience it took to persevere after not advancing past the second round in both 5th and 6th grades, and the valuable lessons he gained through the experience.

Explore – Assistant Principal Zac Hargett and teacher Erica Harveston highlighted the CGIS House System, which fosters positive behavior and school spirit through friendly competition. A recent addition includes daily house meetings—built into the school schedule—to help students focus on daily goals and expectations.

Communicate – Sixth grade ELA teachers demonstrated how Magic School AI has transformed their instruction by providing immediate, targeted feedback on student writing. Student Layla Farner offered a student perspective on how the tool has helped her become a stronger writer. Teacher Erin Myers concluded by sharing additional ways Magic School AI is enhancing literacy instruction.

Empower – Assistant Principal Wendy Newton spoke about CGIS's commitment to community outreach through the Serve Program and Hawk Helpers. Students Amilia Lawson and Samuel Goodin shared how serving as Hawk Helpers has helped them grow as leaders and develop essential life skills.

Launch – Dr. Best closed the presentation by giving each guest a Hearts and Smarts pin to serve as a reminder that educating both the heart and the mind can, and should, happen simultaneously.

Board members thanked the students and teachers for their meaningful and engaging presentations. They expressed their appreciation for the students' exceptional speaking skills and their dedication to giving back to the school and community.

ADOPT AGENDA

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

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS
No comments were made by the public on agenda items.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Isaac Simerly made the motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Nick Black seconded the motion. The motion carried with full agreement.

1. Approve Minutes of March 24, 2025, meeting (Attachment)
2. Approve changes to Board Policies 2.802 and 4.602 – second reading (Attachment A1)
3. Ratify Executive Committee approval of quote from Playworld for shade structure for John Sevier Elementary School - $29,659.00 – Funding Source: John Sevier Adventure Club (Attachment A2)
4. Ratify Executive Committee approval of quote from KaiVac for a no-touch bathroom cleaning system - $30,979.02 – Funding Source: Operation of Plant – Plant Operation Equipment (Attachment A3)
5. Approve Newsela renewal - $41,087.98 – Funding Source: Summer School Funds (Attachment A4)
6. Approve Imagine Learning renewal for Digital Libraries 6-12 Comprehensive Content - $55,821.19 – Funding Source: Regular Educational Software (Attachment A5)
7. Approve Maryville High School Dance Team overnight to Gatlinburg, Tennessee to attend UDA Dance Team Camp (Attachment A6)
8. Approve Maryville High School Boys Basketball overnight to Nashville, Tennessee to attend Team Camp – Funding Source: Boys Basketball Account (Attachment A7)
9. Approve application and subsequent amendments of the FY26 Consolidated Application for IDEA/ESEA
10. Approve iReady renewal from Curriculum Associates - $41,281.60 – Funding Source: Summer School Funds (Attachment A8)

AGENDA

1. Consider a resolution affirming participation in Section 4 of the Education Freedom Act of 2025 for teachers to receive a one-time $2000.00 bonus (Attachment B1)
    a. Motion to approve by Candy Morgan. Second from Isaac Simerly.
    b. Dr. Winstead shared that the district has received the initial data file from the state identifying teachers eligible for the state-funded bonus. In accordance with the law, eligible teachers are defined as full-time employees who spend at least 50% of their time directly serving students. For Maryville City Schools, 394 employees meet this criterion, with the state allocating approximately $900,000 for their bonuses. These funds are expected to be available after July 1, 2025, in time for the August payroll. Dr. Winstead noted that an additional 480 employees, who do not meet the state's eligibility requirements, will receive a locally funded bonus from MCS, at an estimated cost of $400,000. He emphasized that the resolution being presented pertains solely to the $900,000 in state funding designated for the 394 eligible teachers.
    c. Nick Black noted that this resolution was prepared by competent legal counsel and addresses only the necessary requirements for eligible teachers to receive the state-funded bonus. He emphasized that it does not reflect the School Board's position on previous resolutions or on the issue of vouchers. Candy Morgan added that the resolution should not be interpreted as support for vouchers. She stated that if there is an opportunity to allocate funding back to teachers, the district should take it—underscoring that Maryville City Schools is pro-teacher, not pro-voucher.
    d. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS FROM DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Winstead reported that the final components of the budget are being completed in preparation for presentation to the City Council. He noted that the district should soon have confirmed figures for both sales tax revenue and fiscal capacity.

At the state level, Dr. Winstead shared that the legislature is expected to adjourn this week. He does not anticipate any legislative actions that would disrupt the district's day-to-day operations.

He also provided a facilities update, highlighting progress across several projects. Trusses are being installed on the new track building, grading work has begun at the tennis courts, and renovations at Maryville High School are well underway, with significant progress on site preparation.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

Spring Sing (April 11):
Students in grades 2–7 were invited to participate in this year's Spring Sing, a long-standing tradition that serves as an enrichment opportunity for exceptional choral music students. The event exposes students to high-quality music education experiences and connects them with outstanding musicians and resources. We are deeply grateful to our music teachers—Martha Robinson, Kristy Weekly Giles, Amanda Bivens, Mary Grace Taylor, and Kim Fuchs—for making the evening a memorable celebration for both students and families.

Maryville Scholars Banquet (April 16):
We proudly commend our junior and senior Maryville Scholars who were recognized for their outstanding academic achievements at the annual banquet. A special congratulations to this year's Lamar Alexander Scholarship recipients:

- Sarah Ashmore ($15,000)
- Drew Carver ($25,000)
- KJ Kirk, Anna Claire Pinkerton, and Maddie Yalove ($1,000 each)

Unleashed Potential: An Exhibition of Special Artists (April 18):
On Thursday, April 18, *Unleashed Potential: An Exhibition of Special Artists*, a district-wide art show celebrating the creativity of students with disabilities in Maryville City Schools was held at MHS. This inclusive event highlights the talents of students in grades K–Transition who receive special education services and wish to showcase their artistic expression.

TMTA Regional Math Competition (April 8):
Several of our top-performing math students represented Maryville City Schools at the regional Tennessee Mathematics Teachers Association (TMTA) competition. Competing against students from across the region, our students earned impressive honors:

Algebra 2

- 1st Place – Ananya Madduri

- 2nd Place – Shaurya Patel
- 3rd Place – Cooper Greenway

Statistics

- Tied for 1st Place – Andi Ni & Samuel Webb

PreCalculus

- 1st Place – Matthew Natale

Calculus

- 1st Place – KJ Kirk
- Tied for 3rd Place – Drew Carver & Ben Turner

We are incredibly proud of these students for their academic excellence and thank our dedicated math educators for their continued support and instruction.

John Sevier Elementary TCAP Red Carpet Event:
John Sevier Elementary hosted its annual TCAP Red Carpet event to help students gear up for testing week. Families created encouraging posters for their children, which were displayed after lunch to surprise and motivate them. The students were so proud and surprised to see their families' messages of support.

Chilhowee Club Youth Poetry Contest (April 1):
Several Maryville City Schools students were honored at the Chilhowee Club's annual Youth Poetry Night on April 1. The contest, a cherished tradition in Blount County and part of the statewide poetry program sponsored by the Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs, is open to all K–12 students in local public, private, and homeschool settings. MCS students received multiple awards:

Division 2 (Grades 3–5):

- **1st Place (tie):** Carissa Alexander (Coulter Grove Intermediate), "How I Should Be"
- **1st Place (tie):** Farrah Moore (Coulter Grove Intermediate), "The Forest You Became"
- **2nd Place (tie):** Maddox Carley (Coulter Grove Intermediate), "A Spring Day"
- **2nd Place (tie):** Elliott Young (Foothills Elementary), "Robot"
- **Honorable Mentions:** Rory Belitz (Coulter Grove Intermediate), "Ode to the South" & Carrie Flanagan (Sam Houston Elementary), "Moving"

Division 3 (Grades 6–8):

- **1st Place (tie):** Maia Nibali (Maryville Junior High), "I Can See Clearly"
- **3rd Place:** Piper Rainwater (Maryville Junior High), "The Old Lighthouse"

We are grateful to the Chilhowee Club for supporting young writers and providing this meaningful platform to celebrate the power of student voice and creativity.

Athletics: Maryville High School Athletic Director Landon Harris expressed his appreciation to the School Board for their leadership and support. He shared his enthusiasm about the ongoing progress of the district's athletic facilities and extended his gratitude to the District Office and school administrators for their commitment to hiring exceptional coaches and providing top-tier facilities to support student-athletes.

Mr. Harris also highlighted the strong academic performance of student-athletes, noting that every team maintains an average grade of A, with the median GPA exceeding the mean. He emphasized the well-rounded excellence of MHS athletes, both in the classroom and in competition.

COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Isaac Simerly expressed how impressive the integration of Magic School AI is within the classroom. He thanked the CGIS team and said he feels fortunate to have his children in Maryville City Schools.

Candy Morgan thanked Dr. Best for her dedication to educating both the hearts and minds of students. She expressed appreciation for the personal investment made in the lives of children and shared her excitement about the addition of lacrosse. She also celebrated the continued excellence of students in both academics and athletics.

Bart Stinnett thanked Dr. Best for the opportunity to visit CGIS and shared that members of the Discover Blount group had high praise for the school's building and programs. He noted the wide range of offerings within the district that connect with students' unique interests—whether academic or athletic—and commended MCS for meeting students where they are and helping them thrive.

Nick Black expressed his gratitude to Dr. Best and the CGIS team for their presentation. He shared how meaningful it is to hear directly from students and teachers. During these weeks of state testing, he encouraged everyone to stay focused and do their best, noting that MCS students have a strong history of success—and that tradition will continue. He added that he feels blessed to have children in the district.

Julie Elder extended her thanks to the MHS government students who stayed to observe the meeting and acknowledged how evident the theme of "educating hearts and minds" was throughout the evening. She remarked on how inspiring it was to see so many students involved in various school events, each demonstrating a deep sense of compassion, commitment, and community.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 6:20
Respectfully submitted by: Maria Greene