BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes for December 15, 2025

The Maryville Board of Education met in a regular session at 5:30 p.m. on December 15 at the District Office. Members present were Julie Elder, Nick Black, Isaac Simerly, Candy Morgan, Bart Stinnett, and student representative Mackenzie Kovatch. Board Chair Julie Elder called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. and asked for a moment of silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Election of Officers:

Election of Board Chair:
Bart Stinnett nominated Julie Elder to serve as 2026 Board Chair. Isaac Simerly seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Election of Vice Chair:
Isaac Simerly nominated Nick Black to serve as 2026 Board Vice Chair. Bart Stinnett seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE FROM MARYVILLE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Maryville Academy Principal Kyle Harris presented *The Rest of the Story* on the work of Maryville Academy, highlighting both student needs and the comprehensive supports in place. He recognized the Maryville Academy team, including Jon Chambers, Randy Stanley, Zack Luther, Jordan Foxwell, Jake Porter, John Hubbard, Officer Adam Cook, Melody Moscript, and the school-based McNabb therapist.

Mr. Harris shared that approximately 90% of students have an average of 3–4 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), with many exposed to trauma, neglect, substance abuse, or separation from biological parents. While 15–20% of students return for a second placement, drug-related offenses remain high, though overall numbers have decreased over the past five years. The average length of stay is one semester (approximately 90 days). From the beginning, staff focus on goal-setting and equipping students with additional “tools in their tool belt,” grounded in values of respect, resilience, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

Students participate in age and gender-based groups focused on emotional regulation, appropriate socialization, substance use education, self-care, and healthy sleep habits. Weekly large-group sessions on Fridays reinforce these lessons through activities, games, and group projects. Mr. Harris emphasized that while students’ past experiences shape them, “the rest of the story begins now,” noting that their stories are just beginning.

In response to a question from Ms. Elder, Mr. Harris shared that the new building has positively impacted the Academy’s mission by providing additional space, including a cafeteria for meals, improved access to the gym, and the ability to host family nights.

ADOPT AGENDA

Chair 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.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Candy Morgan made the motion to adopt the consent agenda, and a second came from Isaac Simerly. The motion carried with full agreement.

1. Approve Minutes of November 17, 2025, meeting (Attachment)
2. Approve Maryville High School and Maryville Junior High School Robotics Team trip to Sevierville, Tennessee for Regional Robotic Competition – Funding Source: Sponsors (Attachment A2)
3. Approve Maryville High School and Maryville Junior High School Robotics Team overnight to Huntsville, Alabama for Regional Robotic Competition – Funding Source: MCS/Sponsors (Attachment A3)
4. Approve Maryville High School Band, Chorus, and Orchestra overnight to Nashville, Tennessee for rehearsal and performance at Gaylord Opryland Convention Center – Funding Source: Students (Attachment A4)
5. Approve 3-year Schoolinks software renewal - $33,279.54 - Funding Source: Year 1-ISM, Year 2&3- GP-voc ed software (Attachment A5)

AGENDA

1. Consider proposal from United Elevator Services to upgrade an elevator at Maryville High School - $81,780.00 Funding Source: Maintenance of Plant-maintenance and repair-Building (Attachment B1)
    a. Motion from Nick Black. Second from Isaac Simerly.
    b. Dr. Winstead provided an update on elevator maintenance and planned upgrades across the district. He explained that participation in the TIPS program allows the district to use a cooperative bid, eliminating the need to bid the project independently. United Elevator Services will continue providing ongoing maintenance. The district has seven older elevators identified for replacement and plans to upgrade one elevator per year over the next seven years to meet current specifications. The priority will be the MHS elevator near the cafeteria, with work planned for the summer; while the elevator box will remain, internal components such as wiring and pulleys will be upgraded.
    c. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Consider bus proposal from Cumberland through Sourcewell (cooperative bid) - $178,100.20 Funding source: IDEA Part B/GP-Transportation Equipment (Attachment B2)
    a. Motion from Isaac Simerly. Second from Candy Morgan.
    b. Dr. Winstead explained that the district owns eight buses dedicated to transporting Special Education students, with six operating daily and two used on a substitute basis. One of the daily-use buses has reached 200,000 miles and, under state law, may be used through the remainder of the school year but must then be retired from school bus service. To address this need, the district is proposing the purchase of a 66-passenger bus equipped with five wheelchair positions, utilizing a cooperative bid. The purchase will be funded through a combination of federal funds and IDEA funds, with the new bus expected to be in service for the next school year.
    c. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Consider appointing the following trustees of the Employees Sick Bank with terms expiring as indicated:
   - Isaac Simerly – December 31, 2028 and reappoint Cheryl Stoltenberg – December 31, 2028
    a. Motion from Bart Stinnett. Second from Candy Morgan.
    b. Dr. Winstead noted that state law requires the employee sick bank to have five trustees, matching the number of Board members. Per Board policy, the Maryville Education Association (MEA) provides a recommendation for the teacher representative, and MEA has requested the reappointment of Cheryl Stoltenberg. He also shared that the sick bank currently has 163 members, including 11 new members.
    c. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Consider appointing Candy Morgan to serve as the Board's legislative liaison.
    a. Motion from Isaac Simerly. Second from Bart Stinnett.
    b. Dr. Winstead shared that the Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA) requests each local board of education to designate a legislative liaison. He recommended that Candy Morgan continue serving in this role, noting her prior service and experience.
    c. Motion passed unanimously.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Winstead noted that the semester is winding down and expressed his hope that it has been a positive and rewarding semester for students and families. He thanked the students from their MHS Civics class for being in attendance and recognized principals for their leadership throughout the school year. He also referenced the release of final accountability reports from the previous year, highlighting that the district earned five Reward Schools: Foothills

Elementary, Sam Houston Elementary, John Sevier Elementary, Coulter Grove Intermediate School, and Maryville High School. While letter grades remain embargoed, results are comparable to last year. He acknowledged that, although the voucher program was not favored, associated funding benefited districts with strong performance, crediting teachers and administrators for their work.

Updates were also provided on district projects, including progress on keyless entry systems. Assistant Director of Schools Josh Oliver shared that installations are complete at Maryville Junior High, Montgomery Ridge Intermediate, Foothills Elementary, Maryville Virtual School, and the District Office, with systems now in the testing phase and keys being phased out gradually. Work is progressing at Coulter Grove Intermediate; installation at Maryville High School is scheduled to begin in January, and projects at John Sevier and Sam Houston are on hold pending parts.

Dr. Winstead stated that construction projects are progressing well, including work at Fort Craig and with the Maryville City Schools Foundation and the Family Resource Center, with completion anticipated by the end of January. Renovations to the former Maryville Academy building for the EIC are expected to be completed in late June.

Dr. Winstead concluded by wishing everyone a wonderful break.

RECOGNITIONS OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

Foothills Elementary: We were excited to celebrate our teachers and staff with 12 Days of Joy leading up to winter break, featuring highlights such as *Christmas Connections*, where staff enjoyed breakfast while students watched a performance by the MRIS Theater Program, made possible with support from FTO volunteers and MHS senior transition students.

Additional activities - including snowflake contests, sweet treats, and dress-up days - were small but meaningful ways to recognize and thank our incredible staff for the joy they bring to our students and community every day.

Montgomery Ridge: Fifth grade ELA students at Montgomery Ridge connected their novel study of *A Long Walk to Water* to real-world impact by launching a fundraiser for Charity: Water, centered on reflection, empathy, and experiential learning.

Students participated in a walking experience and carried jerry cans to better understand the daily challenges faced by millions without access to clean water, with 100% of donations going directly toward funding a clean water project. (Ellen Passmore)

Coulter Grove: Coulter Grove welcomed some festive fun to campus this season with the arrival of school elves, Sugar and Scout, who have been spreading cheer and “catching” students doing good near the front entrance.

In addition, several CGIS students were recognized for having their poetry selected to compete in the Chilhowee Poetry Club's annual contest, representing the school across grades 4–7. For 4th and 5th grades - Luna Hogg, Olivia Burkhart, Lillian Nehf, Hannah Smith, Leighton Day, and Grey Fox For 6th and 7th grades - Olivia Dillon, Waleska Marabel Leal, and Kate Ellington

Barbara Taylor was nominated for the Good Neighbor Professional award by Kenneth Wells who has served as a guest speaker for the CGIS liaison program.

District Office: Special Education Director Dr. Melanie Davidson was recognized by the Tennessee Association of Administrators in Special Education (TAASE) as the recipient of the Eastern Division Cup, an honor that is peer-nominated and peer-voted.

COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Candy Morgan thanked Principal Kyle Harris for his dedication to students, acknowledging the challenges of his role and commending him for excelling in it. She expressed appreciation for the safe and supportive environment provided for students and families. Ms. Morgan also encouraged principals to take time over the break to unplug, enjoy their families, and rest.

Isacc Simerly thanked Principal Kyle Harris and the Maryville Academy staff for their heart for students. He noted his appreciation for the quote shared at the conclusion of the presentation and expressed gratitude for the work being done to help students move forward.

Bart Stinnett thanked Principal Kyle Harris for his leadership and welcomed the students in attendance, emphasizing the importance of experiencing a supportive school environment. He wished principals a Merry Christmas and expressed appreciation for their work.

Student Representative **Mackenzie Kovatch** also thanked Mr. Harris, sharing that she has heard directly from students about the positive impact of his work. She expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming elevator project, noting from personal experience working with a wheelchair-bound student how critical accessibility and dependable supports are for students.

Nick Black thanked Principal Kyle Harris and the Maryville Academy staff for their dedication and commitment to students, noting appreciation for the support and care they provide. He expressed excitement as the semester concludes, reflecting on a strong year, and wished

everyone a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas and holiday season. Mr. Black also recognized Derek Hunt for his nine years of service as head football coach and his lifelong connection to the Maryville program, from student-athlete to coach, expressing gratitude for his contributions and noting he will be missed.

Julie Elder thanked Principal Kyle Harris and referenced the quote shared during the presentation, noting that often *you are the better thing* until something better can be added. She expressed appreciation to everyone for a strong first semester of the school year and encouraged staff to enjoy the break before reconvening in January. Ms. Elder also acknowledged Derek Hunt's decision to spend time with his family, citing it as further evidence of his mentorship and positive impact on students.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:08

Respectfully submitted by Maria Greene