BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes for September 14, 2026

The Maryville Board of Education met in a regular session at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, September 14 at Coulter Grove Intermediate School. Board members present were Julie Elder, Nick Black, Isaac Simerly, Bart Stinnett, Candy Morgan, and student representative Caroline Carver. Chair Julie Elder 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 7th grade student Charlie McNutt.

UPDATE FROM COULTER GROVE

Dr. Ramona Best, Principal of Coulter Grove Intermediate School, presented an overview of the school's past, present, and future under the theme "Soar to New Heights," including preparations for CGIS to serve grades 4–6. She highlighted student experiences that contribute to the school's culture, including the Back-to-School Pool Party, Locker Night, Show Up Nights, the House structure and chants, House Points and SOAR Tickets, Altitude Adjustments, Hawk Olympics, and other activities.

Assistant Principal Wendy Newton shared CGIS's focus on making the transition year the "Best Year Ever" (BYE) while maintaining a strong, student-centered culture. Student Liaisons Colton Dann, Hannah Smith, and Charlie McNutt shared favorite CGIS experiences, skills they have developed, and advice for future students.

Assistant Principal Zac Hargett discussed the work of the CGIS Design Team in planning for the grade transition, with an emphasis on academic excellence, belonging, and meaningful student experiences. Teachers highlighted current and future cornerstone and keystone experiences, including Nesting Games, JA BizTown, Multiplication Madness, rocket construction and launch, Serve Day, and the first sixth-grade dance. Plans also include a student book study of *The Anxious Generation* following TCAP testing and the creation of student time capsules that will be returned during their senior year.

Mr. Hargett also shared plans to embed Ready Graduate concepts into the curriculum for grades 4–6, including digital citizenship, character development, health and safety, financial literacy, career connections, family life, service, and technology. The presentation concluded with a preview of new House flags for the 2027–28 school year and appreciation to the Board and Central Office for their continued support. Design Team materials and the master schedule were also provided.

ADOPT AGENDA

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

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS

No comments were made from the public.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

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

1. Approve Minutes of August 10, 2026, meeting (Attachment)
2. Approve second reading on policy changes to the Board Policies 4.100,4.300, 5.104, 5.501, 6.100, 6.202, 6.205, 6.301, 6.303, 6.304, 6.3041, 6.306, 6.318, 6.412,and 6.506 – (Attachment A1)
3. Approve Montgomery Ridge Intermediate School Chorus to ETSU for All East Honor Choir – Funding Source: parents (Attachment A2)
4. Approve Cyber Security renewal from Blumira - $30,000.00 – Funding Source: Tech Software (Attachment A3)
5. Ratify Executive Committee approval of a five-year contract for SmartPark system at the baseball field - $4500.00 per year – Funding Source: Maryville High School Baseball (Attachment A4)
6. Approve to declare certain items as surplus and authorize their disposal (Attachment A5)
7. Approve Montgomery Ridge Intermediate School Chorus and Drama to Franklin, Tennessee for workshops – Funding Source: parents (Attachment A6)
8. Approve Montgomery Ridge Intermediate School Chorus overnight to Nashville, Tennessee to attend TMEA Conference – Funding Source – parents (Attachment A7)
9. Approve Montgomery Ridge Intermediate School Music Department overnight trip to Ohio for a music festival competition – Funding Source: fundraiser (Attachment A8)
10. Ratify Executive Committee approval of increase for EIC contract from $1,291,000.00 to $1,305,909.16 (Attachment A9)
11. Approve Maryville High School Model UN overnight to Chattanooga, Tennessee for a ALTMUN conference – Funding Source: Model UN funds (Attachment A10)
12. Approve Maryville High School Girls Basketball overnight to Nashville, Tennessee for a tournament – Funding Source: Girls Basketball/Fundraiser (Attachment A11)

AGENDA

1. Consider naming the Maryville High School Performing Arts Center in honor of the Alexander family as the Alexander Performing Arts Center.

A. Motion to approve by Nick Black. Second from Bart Stinnett.

B. Dr. Winstead provided background on Senator Lamar Alexander's career and the Alexander family's longstanding connection to Maryville City Schools. He shared that Senator Alexander was contacted when MCS launched the fundraising campaign for the Maryville High School Performing Arts Center and has since made the campaign's largest contribution, as well as included a $1 million endowment for the Performing Arts Center in his estate planning.

C. Nick Black added that it was an honor to recognize Senator Alexander and the Alexander family in this way and expressed his pride in the Board's consideration of naming the performing arts center in their honor.

D. Motion approved unanimously.

2. Consider renaming Maryville Junior High School as Maryville Middle School.

A. Motion to approve by Isaac Simerly. Second from Nick Black.

B. Dr. Winstead shared the history of Maryville Junior High School, noting that the school was built in the 1950s, during a time when Senator Lamar Alexander's father served on the Maryville School Board. The school operated as Maryville Junior High School until 1986, when it became Maryville Middle School. It retained that name for more than 25 years while serving students in grades 7–8. In 2012, with ninth grade returning to the campus, the school once again became Maryville Junior High School.

With the upcoming grade reconfiguration and ninth grade moving to Maryville High School, the school will once again serve grades 7–8. Dr. Winstead recommended returning to the name Maryville Middle School beginning with the 202-2028 school year to reflect the new grade configuration while also honoring the school's history. The school will be known as the Maryville Middle School Rebels.

C. Candy Morgan asked about the rationale for using the middle school designation rather than junior high school. Dr. Winstead explained that the school's structure will more closely reflect a middle school model, with seventh- and eighth-grade teams. He also noted that, among schools nationwide serving grades 7–8, approximately 80% are designated as middle schools and 20% as junior high schools.

Ms. Morgan asked whether faculty members had expressed a preference regarding the name change. Maryville Junior High School Principal David Combs shared that teachers are excited about the upcoming transition and have not expressed strong feelings about either designation. Dr. Winstead added that the name change would require relatively few changes to existing signage.

C. Motion approved unanimously.

3. Consider first reading of update to Policy 4.600 (Grading System) (Attachment B1)

A. Motion to approve by Candy Morgan. Second from Isaac Simerly.

B. Dr. Winstead explained that the proposed update to Policy 4.600 relates to the weighting of Dual Enrollment courses. He noted that Dual Enrollment courses previously received five percentage points added to the final grade, which was later changed to four points. The policy is being updated to reflect that change.

Dr. Winstead also discussed GPA weighting, which is outlined in the Scholars Prep Guide rather than Board policy. Dual Enrollment courses had been weighted at .75 of a GPA point to differentiate them from Advanced Placement (AP) courses, which receive a full point. After reviewing practices in other school systems, MCS determined that providing a full GPA point for Dual Enrollment courses would help ensure students are not placed at a competitive disadvantage. Beginning this school year, Dual Enrollment courses will receive a full GPA point.

C. Motion approved unanimously.

REPORTS FROM DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Winstead expressed appreciation to principals and staff for their continued work during the grade transition planning. He noted the challenge of focusing on providing the best possible experience for students this year while simultaneously preparing for the upcoming grade reconfiguration.

All 31 teachers who will be reassigned to a different school have been notified. Staff members who will serve grades 9–12 and grades 7–8 will have several opportunities to work together, including half-day sessions during October and November professional development and following the February Spotlight event. These sessions will focus on building a shared vision for each school and defining the student experience following the transition.

Dr. Winstead also provided updates on current construction projects. At Sam Houston Elementary, the full parking lot is completed, and the exterior gym walls are now in place. The Performing Arts Center is also taking shape, with brickwork expected to begin soon and conduit and HVAC work underway inside the facility. Progress meetings continue every two weeks, and Dr. Winstead shared his excitement about the progress of both projects.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

Sam Houston hosted our first Dad Perfect night last week. Smokies and their father figures had a blast doing trick shots on the playground and even had to dodge water balloons being launched from the roof of the school!

COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS:

Isaac Simerly thanked Dr. Best for hosting tonight's meeting and expressed appreciation for the students who participated in the presentation, particularly their thoughtful advice to fellow students. He also commented on the *Anxious Generation* grant and shared excitement for the upcoming Homecoming activities.

Candy Morgan thanked Dr. Best for hosting and for providing a thorough update, including the detailed information provided in the Board packet. She also thanked the student ambassadors who participated in the presentation and expressed appreciation for the many individuals who contribute behind the scenes.

Bart Stinnett expressed appreciation for another great start to the school year and reflected on the spirit of "We Are Maryville." He shared positive comments received from community members and guests following the Alcoa game about what a special experience it was.

Nick Black thanked Dr. Best for highlighting the work of CGIS teams, teachers, and programs. He echoed Bart Stinnett's comments about the strong start to the school year and noted the enthusiasm and school spirit he observed in the student section, noting that student school board representative Caroline Carver serves as a student section leader. He expressed appreciation to all principals for their leadership and shared that he looks forward to a continued great year.

Caroline Carver, Student Board Representative, shared that she was glad to be back and expressed appreciation for everyone who helped make Alcoa Week a success. She noted that the work of district staff does not go unnoticed by students and thanked them for their efforts, particularly as the district prepares for significant changes in the coming year.

Julie Elder thanked Dr. Best and expressed appreciation for the work taking place at CGIS. Referencing Senator Alexander's quote that will be featured on his plaque in the Performing Arts Center about his Maryville City Schools roots shaping his belief in the power of education, she thanked Dr. Best and MCS educators for continuing the work that makes that legacy possible for students today.

Meeting adjourned at 6:12
Respectfully submitted by: Maria Greene