

April 9, 2009

The Marshall County Board of Education met in regular session on Thursday, April 9, 2009, at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Conference Room at Jones School.

Members present were Ann Tears, Mike Keny, Todd Tietgens, Mark Wilkerson, Curt Denton, Craig Michael, Kristen Gold, and Randy Perryman. Delinda Owens was absent.

Prior to the prayer and pledge, Dr. Stan Curtis extended sympathy on behalf of the board to the Stacey family for the loss of their family members during the week.

To open the meeting, Chairman Tears pulled from the agenda "Adopt Mission and Vision Statement." Ms. Tears made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes; Mr. Michael seconded the motion, and the motion passed 7-0 (Mr. Perryman was not present for the vote).

Becky Hill, Supervisor of Elementary Education, thanked the board for allowing the instructional facilitators to make a presentation showing some of their responsibilities. She went on to say their mission, as is the board's mission, is to ensure every child experiences success every day. The instructional facilitators (Lori Gibson, Chapel Hill Elementary School; Meri Bigham, Cornersville Elementary School; Tammy Lewis, Marshall Elementary School; Betty Jones, Westhills Elementary School; and Debbie Harwell, Oak Grove Elementary School) introduced themselves and explained a little of their responsibilities, including but not limited to working hand-in-hand with the principal to ensure instructional goals of the school are well-planned, data driven, supported with personnel and materials, and evaluated for effectiveness; manage 3-tier reading at each school; act as mentors to all new teachers; offer a variety of strategies that will help teachers meet the needs of individual students; help with lesson and material development; help maintain resources within the school; share ideas from conferences and other teachers during faculty meetings or in-service. After the presentation, Dr. Curtis stated that not only will the instructional facilitators be used for the reading program, but they will be instrumental in interventions in all subject matters.

Nancy Aldridge, Grant Writer for the school system, and Suzanne Ingram, Technology Supervisor, gave an overview of two major grants Ms. Aldridge has written in the last two months: the Perkins Reserve Grant and the USDA Rural Utilities Services (RUS) Grant. The Perkins Reserve Grant is a CTE grant, but the materials from the grant can be used for all students. A goal of the Perkins grant is to improve graduation rates. Ms. Aldridge added that if the district receives the

grant, the system can offer more STEM and AP courses; students from all areas of the county would be able to take an advanced course through interactive distance learning. Also, recorded sessions can be used for Alternative School students, so they could tap into individual subject areas where they need help. The distance learning grant would also provide professional development for large groups of teachers to hear nationally recognized speakers. Parents could attend workshops made available through this grant; government and community organizations could benefit from the use of the equipment provided through this grant. Ms. Aldridge asked for \$99,500. She stated there will be one room at each school equipped with technology and presenter package. Ms. Aldridge will know by June if the county receives this grant.

Ms. Aldridge stated Marshall County has partnered with Bedford County in applying for the RUS Grant, because “they are even poorer than we are.” She stated that on free and reduced lunch, Marshall County has only one school (MES) over 65%, Bedford County has 11 schools; Marshall County has 46% economically disadvantaged, Bedford County has 65.2%; Bedford County has 1.4% more African Americans and three times the number of Hispanics than Marshall County, and twice the number in any other ethnic group. Ms. Aldridge went on to tell the board that in 2008, Marshall County spent \$909 less (per pupil expenditure) than the Tennessee average; Bedford County spent \$1807 less. Three areas Marshall County has no control over in the grading for this grant: rurality, economic need, and are we in an Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community (extremely impoverished schools or Indian Reservations); Marshall County will receive zero points for this category. Ms. Aldridge thanked the county commission for giving the school system over a million dollars for technology last year. She stated that seven schools will be “outfitted” (Lewisburg Middle School, Marshall County High School and all five elementary schools) with this budget. “If...we were to win both Perkins and USDA, every school in the system would have distance learning capabilities...every classroom.” The Marshall County School System’s share of the grant would be \$271,122; she will know by October if the system receives this grant. Mr. Wilkerson urged his fellow board members to contact all their elected officials at the state and federal levels to encourage them to award our request for the grant.

Mr. Wilkerson made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2009, special called session, and the minutes of the March 19, 2009, regular session. Mr. Michael seconded the motion, and the motion passed 8-0.

Daniel Batey, vice president of the Marshall County Education Association, presented the MCEA report. Mr. Batey stated the only issue he wished to discuss is the email system; he presented suggestions which the MCEA feels will make better use of email: school bulletins, inter-faculty messages (instead of making

copies announcing such events as field trips and placing in front office mailboxes); policy or procedure changes. Mr. Batey believes that by using the email system more efficiently, this will cut down on copy machine and toner costs, wasted paper, eliminate clutter and waste, and would provide a quicker dissemination of policies and changes. He complimented Ms. Ingram on letting everyone know about SSMS downtime, and using the email system for work and trouble tickets. He went on to say the MCEA would like to see the creation of an email list similar to the AllMarshall to which teachers could have access. He suggested email lists for individual schools, individual disciplines (math, English, etc.), grade levels; this would help eliminate unnecessary emails which clutter their inboxes, and it would help teachers to better contact their peers. He stated this will cut down on the budget, eliminate some waste, and improve communication.

Under the section “Approve Project Lead the Way”, Dr. Curtis explained to the board that the system is trying to get some CTE (Career Technical Education) programs to establish an engineering program in the district. Lyn Stacey, CTE Supervisor, said that through the program, Marshall County may get in the area of \$40,000 toward the program through a WIRED grant. Mr. Wilkerson made a motion to approve Project Lead the Way; Mr. Perryman seconded the motion.

During further discussion, Dr. Curtis mentioned he had attended a directors’ meeting earlier in the week and spoke with several in attendance who have Project Lead the Way (PLTW) in their district, and it has been very successful. He went on to say, if approved, the CTE courses will begin in the coming school year. Mr. Denton asked that if the district does not receive the grant, will there be a cost to the school system to offer the CTE courses. Mr. Stacey answered that the bulk of what the program costs would be equipment; a lot of the higher-dollar items are optional (for example: 3-D printer, C&C lathe, robot to load machines, etc.). Mr. Stacey continued that if the district does not receive the grant, the system could get by on Perkins funding. In response to the question that the engineering program would have to operate with less, Mr. Stacey said there would not be cuts, because Perkins funds could be used for the one-time purchases. Dr. Curtis pointed out that an employee is retiring from Spot Lowe Technology Center at the end of this school year, and the person hired for the engineering course would fill that spot; therefore, the position is already in the budget. Mr. Michael asked if the course taught by the retiree would be discontinued; Mr. Stacey said the new hire will split their time between courses. Mr. Stacey continued that the hope is to attract more students to enrolling for CTE classes, opening doors for students who do not typically sign up for classes at Spot Lowe (college- or technical-school-bound). He brought up the fact that funding for the system increases with each student enrolled in a CTE course versus a regular education class.

Mr. Michael questioned the annual cost. Mr. Stacey calculated the cost of consumables for the first class to be approximately \$1,000. The reoccurring cost is not that great; the biggest cost is to implement the program. Mr. Michael asked if the grant was discontinued after the initial \$40,000, would the system be liable to continue the four-year cycle of the course. Mr. Stacey said the courses required are state-approved courses; if Project Lead the Way or WIRED cease to exist, the district would continue the program. He went on to say that Project Lead the Way doesn't provide any funds; the nation-wide organization has a competitive bid process which makes the equipment and materials more affordable. Mr. Michael asked if the funding fell through, is there a dollar amount that needed to be put in the budget in order to keep the program active. Dr. Curtis answered that Perkins money would be applied to the program, so if the system does not receive the grant, the course would continue; he said Project Lead the Way would only allow the system to expand the course.

Mr. Keny asked about the "examination" referred to in the contract, which states the school district will "administer the most current version of the written examination provided by PLTW." He questioned if the student fails this examination, does he/she fail the course? Mr. Stacey responded it's just a way for PLTW to track the success of the program; the student will not fail the course dependent upon this examination.

Mr. Denton asked how students from Cornersville and Chapel Hill can take the course. Mr. Stacey said they would be bused to Spot Lowe first block.

Mr. Stacey stated that with the new Diploma Project, there will be an increased demand on the CTE program whether the system takes part in Project Lead the Way or not. The motion to approve Project Lead the Way passed 8-0.

Ms. Tears stated the Policy Committee met regarding Policy #6.312, Use of Personal Communication Devices by Students; members recommend the board pass the policy with the changes (see attached) to be in effect the coming school year. Mr. Denton made the motion to pass the policy with the changes; Mr. Perryman seconded the motion. In discussion, Mr. Wilkerson expressed his concern regarding the policy, including where the confiscated phones will be kept. Dr. Curtis stated that after the principals confiscate the phones, the devices will be kept in a lockbox in the school. Mr. Wilkerson said he understood there was a statement included on the policy releasing the school system from responsibility or liability, but he felt if his child's phone is lost, damaged or stolen and no one is responsible, he will be upset because he is still paying for the phone. He understands the students should follow the rules, but he does not believe this policy (with the changes) is the way to go. Mr. Wilkerson went on to say if this policy passes, it just sets the school system up for a lawsuit; Ms. Tears replied that

the committee had already checked with legal about the changes, and they were fine. Mr. Keny questioned if the committee considered a warning for the first offense; Ms. Tears stated that had been tried and was unsuccessful. Mr. Perryman added that in-school suspension had been tried at one point and was also unsuccessful. Ms. Gold asked if the principals and administrators had input in the policy changes; Ms. Tears said they were invited to the policy committee meetings, and Dr. Curtis stated he had consulted with the principals and these are the changes they asked for.

The roll call vote to approve Policy 6.312 with the changes was as follows:

Mr. Keny	No	Mr. Denton	No
Mr. Tietgens	Yes	Ms. Gold	No
Mr. Wilkerson	No	Mr. Michael	No
Ms. Tears	Yes	Mr. Perryman	Yes

The motion failed 5-3.

The following were presented in the consent agenda: Cornersville School FCCLA to attend FCCLA State Leadership Meeting in Nashville on 4/7-9/09; and Forrest High School cheerleaders to attend summer camp in Sugar Hill, Georgia, 6/19-24/09. Mr. Keny made a motion to approve the consent agenda, and Mr. Michael seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

Mr. Wilkerson made a motion to approve textbook adoptions, and Mr. Keny seconded the motion. Under discussion, Mr. Keny asked how it was determined which books to adopt; Dr. Curtis stated a committee of teachers view the books approved by the state (math teachers for math, science teachers for science, etc.) and choose which will be appropriate for the Marshall County School System. Mr. Denton asked if the board approved the list, is the system required to purchase them at this time; Dr. Curtis answered no—these are just the ones we can adopt. Ms. Gold asked if members of the Textbook Committee met with the board's Curriculum Committee; Dr. Curtis said the Textbook Committee met with the supervisors, but he wasn't sure if they met with the Curriculum Committee. Mr. Michael asked the cost if all the books on the list were purchased; Dr. Curtis said well over a million dollars. Dr. Curtis went on to say what is usually done is certain books (which are on a six-year rotation) are adopted one year, and certain ones the next. Mr. Denton asked why the board is adopting the list when the books may change within the next six years; Dr. Curtis said this is the list for the next six years. Mr. Wilkerson clarified that the list is like a catalog: when the money is available, the books can be purchased. Mr. Michael suggested the instruction supervisors take a look at the age of some of the books currently being used and perhaps reprioritize; Dr. Curtis stated that some of the older books now in use don't change as much as others (i.e. math, chemistry, geometry). Therefore, the content of books being considered for adoption has changed more than other

subjects. Dr. Curtis agreed that all the books should be evaluated. Ms. Gold asked if members of the textbook committee could report to the curriculum committee their findings of why they chose that set of books, so that the curriculum committee of the board could have more understanding why the books were chosen. Then for future adoptions the curriculum committee could review the list and bring it to the full board with a recommendation to approve the list. The motion to approve the textbook adoptions passed 8-0.

Mr. Wilkerson made a motion to approve Special Courses, and Mr. Keny seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

Mr. Denton stated that a Transportation Committee meeting was held on Monday, March 23, at which time committee members discussed whether to trade in the system's used buses for new buses; the committee decided not to trade but to keep the buses for further use. Ms. Gold brought up the fact there was some question about the bids and wondered if the buses had been ordered. Mr. Wilkerson followed-up saying it had been discussed about changing the bids and having Janet Wiles, Budget Director, check with the auditors to see if that could be done. Mr. Denton said it had been taken care of. Dr. Curtis added that attorney Chuck Cagle said the trade-ins could be taken off the bid due to the fact Mid South/Thomas was the low bidder. Referring to Edulog, Mr. Michael asked if numbers had been gathered from other systems using the program to see if they had seen savings; Dr. Curtis said he is in the process of getting those numbers to bring to the Transportation Committee.

In the Building/Maintenance Committee Report, Mr. Michael mentioned three items of discussion. 1) A date should be set for reviewing the Siemens Energy Report; Dr. Curtis said the report has been completed and Siemens is scheduled to meet with Dr. Curtis, Ms. Wiles and Sheldon Davis, Maintenance Supervisor, on Thursday, April 16 at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Michael said a committee meeting could possibly be set for the following week to review the report. 2) A meeting should be set to review the Maintenance Department's list of proposed projects. 3) Need to have some general discussion with the county commission on their requirements for their maintenance to determine how feasible it is for the school system to help out or take on that responsibility. Although it's the director's decision whether or not to allow maintenance to take on the job, Mr. Michael felt the Building/Maintenance Committee could also take a look and discuss it openly and perhaps conduct a screening process to assist in the decision. Mr. Michael stated that whether the system does or does not assist the county with maintenance, the discussion process will keep everyone "in the loop" and everyone can understand it together; Dr. Curtis agreed. Dr. Curtis went on to say the school system wants to be efficient and wants to help the community any way possible, but he has some concerns. Mr. Michael said one meeting could be held

to address all three issues. He then said the committee needs to meet to further discuss the building capacity opportunities that have yet to be looked at in detail.

Under new business, Ms. Aldridge asked for board approval to pursue the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant and accept the grant should the district be chosen. This grant will provide after-school activities for students (80% of students in the program have to be free or reduced lunch) on Monday through Thursday, for two-and-a-half to three hours each day (3:00-5:30 p.m.; includes afternoon snack); Ms. Aldridge would also like to provide two to two-and-a-half hours of activities on Saturday morning (9:00-11:00 a.m.). There is no match required; Ms. Aldridge is asking for \$109,775 through the grant. Ms. Tears asked how the students would get to class on Saturday and weekdays; Ms. Aldridge stated the school system would be required to provide bus transportation, which will be covered through the grant. Ms. Aldridge told the board the grant runs for a minimum of three years (\$109,775 per year), and could run as long as five years. Ms. Aldridge said the school system will provide the children tutoring and remediation in all the academic areas, and also recreation, physical education, field trips and non-competitive sports. She mentioned that parents could also be involved in some of the activities. Ms. Tears asked how teachers will be chosen for the program; Ms. Aldridge said the teachers had an opportunity when completing a survey to put their “name in the hat” to work with the grant – because she received so many interested, Ms. Aldridge, with the help of a committee, may have to come up with standards on experience when selecting the teachers. Ms. Tears then asked if a teacher wasn’t selected the first year, would they have the opportunity to teach the second year. Ms. Aldridge stated that the best way to make the grant operate is to use the same teachers, if they were doing a good job. She told the board that under the grant, teachers will earn \$15 to \$20 an hour, and assistants will make \$7 to \$10 an hour. Students (grades K-6) signing up for the program are not mandated to attend daily. Dr. Curtis added that this program is also a community service; it provides educational services for parents who would either put their children in daycare after school or are trying to find something for the children to do during the summer. Ms. Aldridge told the board they were welcome to attend a meeting to be held Tuesday (4/14/09) at noon for community members to swap ideas concerning this grant. Mr. Tietgens made a motion to pursue the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Grant and accept the grant if awarded; Mr. Wilkerson seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0.

Continuing new business, Mr. Michael thanked the board for the confidence and trust exhibited when they made him chief negotiator. He stated he was pleased to have served in this role during the time the first contract was negotiated in the county. He extended his appreciation and recognition to all who contributed to

the effort. "I think we have a solid relationship with MCEA," he said. "But I'm troubled by reports of criticism of specific board members in open meetings...particularly director's staff meetings. It's not possible for me to continue to serve as chief negotiator..." He removed himself as chief negotiator and turned his file over to Chairman Tears. He then stated the board needs to appoint someone to either be chief negotiator or to choose someone currently serving on the negotiations team as chief negotiator.

Referring to the board packet, Mr. Denton commented that receiving the packet four to five days in advance is not enough time to review the contents. Being a new board member, Mr. Denton feels some input or "guidance" beforehand, such as a newsletter or correspondence from Dr. Curtis, would help him in his decision-making. Mr. Wilkerson suggested this issue be discussed in the board's next work session, which is scheduled for Monday, April 20 at 5:00 p.m.

In the Director's report, Dr. Curtis suggested changing the May board meeting from May 14 to May 21 at 6:00 p.m., since May 14 is the date of Cornersville High School's graduation; the board agreed. He told the board the evaluations of principals are currently underway. Mr. Wilkerson asked if a determination had been made about early graduates taking part in end-of-the-year events (prom, graduation); Dr. Curtis said that in the recent Principals' Meeting, he told the principals to contact their early graduates and inform them they could take part in such activities, unless the students are under zero tolerance. Ms. Gold suggested that, during the May board meeting, the valedictorians from each high school be honored.

Continuing the Director's report, Dr. Curtis told the board about his trip to San Francisco for the National Conference on Education. He attended a lecture by Robert Marzano, one of the leading researchers in education; Dr. Marzano spoke on the art and science of teaching, "which is really a new way to look at how we evaluate teachers and how they engage students." He also attended a meeting on research that has been going on since 1984 on K-3 students: keeping the same 15 students in the same classroom. Conference attendees were the first to hear about the stimulus package being approved: Dr. Curtis told the board he receives weekly updates concerning what can be done with funds from the stimulus package. He spoke with an ENA representative at the conference; the representative told Dr. Curtis that if the state does not continue the SSMS (student management) program, ENA may take it over to keep the districts from having to pay for the program. Dr. Curtis said it looks as if the state has decided to continue SSMS. TOSS (Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents) legislation: appointed superintendents; 18 years for buses; taxing authority for the board of education; taking principals out of negotiations and putting them under management instead of under the bargaining agent. Mr. Michael asked the

current estimate of the stimulus; Dr. Curtis said IDEA is about \$586,000 this year and next year. He said Title money has been decreased by about \$50,000, but he has a call into Nashville; he can't understand why the funds have gone down while our free and reduced enrollment has increased. There may be a way to use 50% of the funds in areas other than IDEA; that may help when talking about supplies, curriculum, or jobs. "It just has to be spent according to the ESEA Act," which is the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Dr. Curtis said. Mr. Michael asked if the stimulus and stability package together equals 1.5 million. Dr. Curtis said the 1.5 is the IDEA and Title funds together, as far as new monies. Mr. Michael asked if that meant up to half of the 1.5 could be used as needed; Dr. Curtis said it wouldn't be exactly half: you have to take the difference in what was received last year and the stimulus money, add those two together, then divide by half. Dr. Curtis said the amount could possibly be around \$500,000 or \$600,000 over a two-year period (250,000-300,000 per year). Legislators encouraged school districts to not use the money on reoccurring items; make sure it's one-time purchases because that money will not be available in two years. Mr. Michael pointed out the \$250,000 could come in handy while trying to protect positions. Dr. Curtis warned the board that while he was at TOSS conference earlier in the week, attendees were told one thing about funds on Monday and something totally different by Wednesday.

Board members were reminded of upcoming meetings: Work Session, Monday, April 20 at 5:00 p.m.; Policy Committee Meeting, Tuesday, April 21 at 5:00 p.m.; and Budget Committee Meeting, Tuesday, April 28 at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Ann Tears, Chairman

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Dr. Stan Curtis, Director