

MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
Work Session, October 16, 2007

MEMORANDA

The Board of School Trustees of the Monroe County Community School Corporation met in work session, for which proper notice had been given at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 16, 2007, at the School Administration Center, 315 E. North Drive, Bloomington, Indiana.

Board members present: Jeannine Butler, Susan Daniels, Teresa Grossi (via conference phone), Valerie Merriam, Jim Muehling, Lois Sabo-Skelton and Sue Wanzer

Also present: James Harvey, Superintendent; Tim Thrasher, Comptroller; Mary Lovejoy, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; Mike Shipman, Director of Assessment and School Operations; Mike Scherer, Director of Extended Services; Karen Adams, Fairview Elementary School Principal; Janet Tupper, Administrative Assistant; and Tina Peterson, Executive Director of MCCS Foundation. In addition, 22 people signed the visitors list, which is included with the record of this meeting.

President of the Board, Jim Muehling, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Board members received information about and/or discussed the following:

Fairview Elementary School – Mr. Muehling said this meeting was called for the purpose of concentrating on Fairview Elementary School. He noted that the Board had held six public forums to share with the community as well as teachers and staff various options for Fairview Elementary School. He asked Mr. Harvey to review options that were shared at these forums.

Mr. Harvey presented some possibilities for Fairview, including (1) renovation of the existing building, (2) building a new school on the current site, (3) building a new school on another site or (4) renovating the school to be used for a different purpose (such as a magnet school, an early childhood center, New Tech High School, etc.). He discussed some possible locations for the new school if it is not constructed on the current site. He explained that options 1, 2 and 3 are about keeping Fairview as a K-6 school.

Dr. Lovejoy reported on the work of the Fairview Restructuring Committee. She said by law Fairview is required to complete a restructuring plan. She said the committee has been talking about some of the options given to them by stakeholders, Board of Trustees representative, teachers, etc. She said there are many people on this committee including parents and others very involved with Fairview. She explained that we are required to develop a restructuring plan because Fairview has not made AYP (average yearly progress) and this is the year which calls for a plan for restructuring.

Dr. Lovejoy further explained that Fairview made great gains last year toward AYP and when looking at the plan you would recognize how time intensive and how dedicated they were to meet standards. She noted that Fairview missed AYP performance because of an attendance issue but that does not allow us to not go through the process. She said the committee pursued two pieces of conversation: (1) Building: what are we going to do with the building and that has been discussed at the many community forums, and (2) Program: programming issues are equally important.

Sharing slides to add visual context to the presentation, Dr. Lovejoy said the restructuring committee is responsible for creating a plan for improving Fairview student achievement, a plan for ensuring that Fairview makes AYP, and a plan that is consistent with the law. She pointed out that alternative governance structures include: reopening Fairview as a public charter school, replacing all or most of the staff (some of that took place as a corrective action), contracting with outside private management

company (very costly), or implementing other major restructuring initiatives.

Dr. Lovejoy explained major restructuring initiatives might include: (1) closing Fairview and assigning students to other school; (2) closing the school and opening it as a Theme School which could be problem-based learning, WonderLab STEM support for science, technology and mathematics, or a fine arts/literature program; and (3) changing the governance structure of the school with a K-2 administrator and a 3-6 administrator or parallel block schedule, for example; (3) reorganizing the school into smaller learning communities, such as multi-age classrooms or parallel block schedule; (4) pairing Fairview with another school so that K-3 and 4-6 students are together – similar to Binford-Rogers; or (5) expanding or narrowing grades served, such as one for preschool education and parent training or a magnet school.

Dr. Lovejoy noted that one of the disadvantage of magnet schools is that only include a percentage of students who live in a particular school district. She said a Theme based school would not have to change the student population at all but the Board could also have an allocation process where ‘x’ spots would be filled by other students.

Mr. Muehling asked if the committee has a recommendation. Dr. Lovejoy said not at this time. She said they must have their report completed by May 1 and that gives the Indiana Department of Education time to read it and to offer revisions. She noted that the report would have to come to the School Board before May 1. Mr. Muehling noted the tight timeline, i.e. implementation for the 2008-2009 school year and asking to give feedback and then make adjustments.

In response to Ms. Wanzer’s question, Dr. Lovejoy said we can define how a magnet school would work but we would have to guard our current population. She said we can determine a magnet that works best for us. Mr. Harvey noted that if we are going to create pieces for families we must have policy that supports it. Ms. Wanzer asked if there is an advantage to calling it Theme based or Magnet. Dr. Lovejoy said if we went with fine arts/literature program or science it would be more acceptable to the public.

Mr. Muehling said he heard from staff they want to keep their kids and it would be nice for other students to come to the school to create a different mix of children – not to lose students who are there now but to add. Dr. Lovejoy agreed that this would help change the perception of Fairview. She said many great things are going on at Fairview but this would bring positive attention to the school that it deserves.

Dr. Grossi said she is glad that Dr. Lovejoy was a part of this school discussion. She also expressed appreciation for the input received from Karen Adams, principal, and the faculty at Fairview. She asked if there is a decision that needs to be made or coming to consensus about the site and the talk about programmatic issues that would drive the building decision. Mr. Muehling said that was why Mr. Harvey shared options. Dr. Grossi said in some ways programmatic will take longer. She asked if we need some discuss about whether to stay on the Fairview site.

Fairview Site Discussion – The Board agreed to discuss site options for Fairview, taking into consideration what they heard during the forums, information shared by the administration as well as Fairview faculty/staff and from the Restructuring Committee.

Dr. Sabo-Skelton said she has walked the site as well as various other sties and talked with faculty and parents and children. She said this (the current Fairview site) is a beloved piece of land. She said she feels that site, near downtown is exemplary and that the school should remain there. She said they talked about moving the population and even considering putting New Tech High School (NTHS) in this

building. She said she is leaning toward keeping the school on the same site with the current student population.

Mr. Muehling said he also heard people say they want the school to stay on the present site but would like feedback regarding the building itself.

Dr. Butler said we really appreciate the time that faculty and parents gave to this topic. She said it is obvious that everyone there feels the school should remain on the present site and the Restructuring Committee will be working on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) issues. She noted that the Restructuring Committee's work just began and that will help the Board make a final decision as to what the school needs to look like. She understood that the Board would receive that recommendation before May 1. Dr. Butler said she is leaning toward building a new school on the Fairview site. She said she also feels that we have to be sure that we not build a school too small. She understands that people do not want it to be located in Butler Park and she agrees. She said she also heard people talk about making the school environment friendly and Mary (Krupinski, architect) has taken notes. She noted that parents and faculty are on the restructuring committee. She said she hopes that parents, community, faculty and administration at Fairview feel their ideas have been heard. She reiterated that she wants to build a new school on the present Fairview site.

Ms. Daniels said she did not have her mind made up going into the process and appreciates the community forums. She said there are a lot of issues to be aware of and she had a big issue about the population and ultimately it comes down to the fact that restructuring will take care of issues to be taken care of to make Fairview a successful school. She said that she is also leaning toward building a new school on the current Fairview site. She said she heard people say if you do not do something about programming any building will not take care of the issues. She noted that we are looking at a new building to correct those building issues and we have some great minds working on restructuring and leaving it intact. Ms. Daniels said this is a very exciting time for Fairview; just looking at options she thinks it will be one of the crown jewels of Bloomington.

Ms. Merriam thanked community members, parents, teachers and children who spoke at the forums. She said she started walking spaces in June and she also went across the railroad tracks and walked through the woods. She said she does not think that she could ever vote to destroy urban green space for any building. She noted that Parks & Recreation had a plan and second on the list was to acquire urban green space. Ms. Merriam said she would like for Fairview to stay where it is and to remodel sections that can be remodeled or, if not, build a new school. She said she thinks it serves no purpose to send Crestmont children to different schools. She said the problem with Fairview is poverty and transiency; it is amazing that they have done so well. She said she would like to see more diversity. She said some day the B-line Trail will be completed and it will be an enticement for people to move back into the neighborhood. She thinks we will see a different economic base developing there. Ms. Merriam said if we are serious about a thematic school, it needs to be downtown. She said one thing teachers told us is when they took kids on a field trip to Indianapolis, they had never seen a skyline and for some it was the first or second time they had been on an escalator. She said there are many opportunities downtown that we can start incorporating. She added that she sees it as a potential Lotus space.

Ms. Wanzer said as we talk to different groups and media, it is important to talk about how Fairview has been one of the most successful schools due to faculty and staff. She said she thinks they are to be congratulated. She thanked the administration, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Scherer, Dr. Lovejoy and others for their efforts to share information with the Board. She said she has heard people say keep the school on the same site, keep the neighborhood kids in school, attract more kids, develop community space, etc. She said she would like for us to use a different school but she is supportive of building a new school. She

said she wants to keep neighborhood kids in the school and to enhance the program.

Dr. Grossi said as an educator it seems to her that we need to move toward a growth model. She said she will vote for the same site and a neighborhood school, whatever form that takes. She said the current building is not conducive to learning and not acceptable for all kids. She said she is in awe of the community commitment and this is not just a school issue but a community issue. She said being able to tap into downtown is wonderful. She added that it has been an incredible experience to listen to what people had to say.

Mr. Muehling summarized that he heard Board members say they would like to see happen for Fairview: (1) the school maintained on the same site; (2) instructional issues addressed and they are being addressed and what they come up with will determine size; (3) incorporating space with community accessible space for recreation, gym and meeting space could be used for other community activities; (4) depending on the cost for renovation, it may be better to start over.

Ms. Merriam said we also need to be concerned about displacement of student during construction. Mr. Muehling said that is why he thinks it would be a good idea to build a new building near Rogers Street. Ms. Merriam said she is worried about parking for teachers. Ms. Adams said they have been talking to the city about parking issues and think something can be worked out. Dr. Grossi was under the impression that the city is looking into parking accessibility. Mr. Harvey confirmed that Mr. Scherer and Ms. Adams have been working with the city.

Mr. Harvey said the Restructuring Committee needs to know if the Board has ideas and if it is headed down a specific path. He said by law governance moves away from the school to the school corporation and that is why certain people are on that committee. In response to Dr. Grossi's question, Dr. Lovejoy said the committee will meet at least once or twice a month. Dr. Grossi suggested that Dr. Lovejoy could come to a regular Board meeting to share an update on the committee's activities.

Mr. Scherer said if the Board wants Fairview to stay in Phase I of the long-range facility plan for bonding in December 2008, we would need to have an idea if there are special spaces designated. He said it may be that you cannot tell us program so we may have to delay the process and call it Phase I-B. He said we would have a 1028 hearing on December 16, 2007 because we need to sell bonds in December 2008. He said if we need to wait until May we could do that.

Mr. Muehling said a new school will attract new children and with the new programming others will choose to stay at Fairview which would make the population in the 325-345 range. Mr. Scherer said we need to know capacity. Mr. Harvey said if we are talking about thematic kinds of things, we have talked about doing some of these things. He said collaboration is going on at Fairview now with Boys and Girls Club, School of Music, etc. He said it could be things we do in cooperation with the city or Indiana University or a fine arts grant to help build a facility. He noted there are some interlocking things but they cannot be done in two months.

In response to Ms. Merriam's question, Mr. Harvey said until a school makes AYP for two successive years, the progression continues. He said you have to plan that this school will be there a hundred years. He asked the Board to not build a school that you cannot fill in 50 years. He asked how you attract children. He said redistricting in and out does not work. He said we have to be careful that we do not respond without thinking of the long-term ramifications. Mr. Harvey said if you are concerned about a few thousand dollars on NTHS, you are talking about several million dollars here.

Mr. Scherer said information required for the 1028 hearing in December does not include the schematic

design; however, the schematic design would be needed for DLGF in January. He said there is a 180-day decision making process for DLGF. He said this can be put together once we have a financial advisor and bond counsel. He said because of the nature of the projects, it is desirable to keep Fairview in Phase I of the long-term facility plan. He added that we have to stay within the DLGF guidelines or have good reason. He said there are no guidelines for service and administration buildings. Mr. Scherer said we can meet DLGF timelines but it will be tight.

Mary Krupinski said if a restructuring plan is needed by May 1 and the goal ahead of that for internal approval is 4 to 6 weeks that puts us back into the middle of March. She said the schedule she prepared indicated that in order to bid next October – to be in Phase I – the bond issue would have to start in March with the 1028 hearing stating a certain dollar amount you will spend for a project. Mr. Harvey said as we look at projects in Phase I we know money in the bond issue and it is our intent to spend no more and preferably less. Mr. Scherer added that Fairview is the big project. He said he has been to DLGF meetings and he thinks that Fairview needs to stay in the mix.

Ms. Merriam said since it is possible for Fairview to be delayed, if the building had to be delayed a couple of years and we decided to add pre-school, what are you tied insofar as department acceptance. Mr. Harvey said it gets complicated because of where the Middle School Task Force is at this time. He said what if they recommend K-5; you could use 6th grade rooms for pre-school. He said we will need to know that before making final decisions about this. He said we will need direction from Ms. Krupinski and Mr. Scherer as to timelines.

Dr. Butler said when Ms. Krupinski is asking for direction by February or March he hopes that the Restructuring Committee will have some recommendations. Dr. Lovejoy said they hope to have some direction by January. Mr. Scherer said they will submit it in January.

In response to Dr. Butler's questions, Ms. Krupinski said schematic design is little more than a sketch. She said they will need to have discussion regarding the biggest the school would be; the square footage could be manipulated. Mr. Scherer noted that DLGF counts only instruction area. Ms. Krupinski said from teacher comments they want more Title I space than in most elementary programs.

Some discussion ensued regarding various requests for Fairview: lower and upper science labs, soundproofing in case we have a violin program, etc. Mr. Scherer said a 500-student capacity school needs about 70,000 square feet. He cautioned that we cannot get carried away with limited use space. Mr. Harvey said building cost will cap how much new instructional space is included since it does impact cost.

Ms. Krupinski said if the school design is driven by program, she would need that decision as soon as possible. She said another big question will be whether to build a new school or renovate and add onto the old one. Mr. Scherer commented that over time it will cost less for a new building. Mr. Muehling said another consideration is disruption to students and instruction which would be a necessity in renovation.

In response to Mr. Harvey's question, Ms. Krupinski said if we publicly present a schematic design to DLGF related to the 1028 hearing we would want to know by the end of October to early November about whether the building will be renovated or new. Mr. Scherer asked Dr. Lovejoy to share Restructuring Committee notes with him and with Ms. Krupinski.

Ms. Wanzer thanked the Fairview faculty and neighborhood for staying with the Board. She thanked them for their support and for sharing information. Other Board members agreed.

Mr. Harvey said the Board needs to talk about the decision-making process and asked about the Board's expectation. He said he thinks the Board is ready to make a decision and Mary Krupinski needs a decision at the next Board meeting regarding whether to build a new school or to renovate. Dr. Grossi said it is difficult if we do not know programmatic, other options or to make sure that we want an elementary school there.

Ms. Wanzer wondered if the timeline is the same for a new or renovated building and what is the cost differential. Ms. Krupinski said the timeline for new versus renovation is that renovation will probably span two school years because of having to relocate students from one site to another. She said this is the most complicated solution as far as impacting students. She said the construction of a new school could probably happen in two summers and a school year.

In response to Ms. Merriam's question, Mr. Harvey said if we were going to consider thematic programming it could not be done in three weeks. For example, he said discussions with Indiana University will take months. It would also mean writing grant proposals, etc. He said last week was the first meeting about restructuring. He said we have had a longstanding relationship with Parks & Recreation and people want to start talking about community space and if we are looking at joint use of building three weeks is not enough time to cultivate conversations with other groups. He said some of the things we have been talking about will be after the fact rather than before.

Mr. Muehling said he assumes the gym and cafeteria would be available to the community. Mr. Harvey agreed but asked what if the gym needs to be designed for ballet. Further discussion ensued regarding the importance of including Fairview in Phase I of the facility plan.

Ms. Daniels asked if the Board votes in the first meeting in November is the vote about where to put the school and whether to build or renovate? Mr. Harvey said that is the minimum needed.

Mr. Muehling said the question is configuration and if we want to include community involvement can we do that within the timeline. Mr. Harvey said people would like to see an exercise facility or weight room for the community. He said when you start programming for these things it impacts the building design. He said Parks & Recreation is interested but we cannot write a grant for a performing arts school in three weeks or to get a commitment from the city. He said we are talking about this school needs to be different and if we are doing this we may end up paying for most of it ourselves.

Dr. Butler said if we stay on the same site, she does not have a problem with whether it is a new or renovated building. Ms. Daniels said once we decide whether to renovate or build a new school it narrows the field. She understands that the Board needs to make the basic decisions of where to put the school and whether to build a new one or to renovate. She said if that is all the Board will be voting for on November 7, it seems that could be done.

Dr. Grossi asked for ballpark figures about the differences. Ms. Krupinski said she has looked at some broad numbers and approximately 70,000 square feet will cost about \$10.5 million. She said the current square footage for Fairview is 61,000. She said she would have to really look at renovation costs because it is not clear; however, she thinks that the cost of renovation will probably be fairly close to new costs. She said the DLGF cap is just under \$150 per square foot on new construction and she has seen renovation costs coming in from \$110 to \$120 per square foot.

Ms. Wanzer said she knows a part of the community would like for the school to be renovated; however,

she understands that a part of the existing old structure is not salvageable. Mr. Harvey said some of the things in the old building are cost prohibitive in today's market, such as glazed tile in the hallways.

Mr. Harvey noted that the bonds will need to be sold by December 31, 2008 in order to get a tax rate in 2009. He added that we are dealing with a fixed amount of money. Mr. Scherer said once we get the bonds sold we can have some leeway between when the bonds are sold and when we start construction. He said bids are good for 90 days. Mr. Harvey pointed out that construction would have to be started by April.

When asked his opinion, Mr. Scherer said his favorite is always new. He said remodel is a difficult process and we would need portable classrooms and he does not know where we would put them on this site. He said the struggles are with remodels. Ms. Merriam said she is concerned about allergic reactions from renovation.

Mr. Harvey said there is space at Tri-North that could be used to locate part of the students during renovation. He said it is not a lot of space but could accommodate 6 or 7 classrooms for six months or a semester. He noted that Tri-North is the neighborhood school for Fairview students. He said if there is a significant cost differential that is probably the preferable option

It was announced that the next meeting of the Board will be on Wednesday, November 7, beginning with a work session at 5:00 p.m. and a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. Work session topics will include: (1) Long-range facility plan; (2) Fairview restructuring, location, renovation, etc.

The work session adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Jim Muehling, President

Teresa Grossi, Vice President

Lois Sabo-Skelton, Secretary

Valerie Merriam, Assistant Secretary

Jeannine Butler, Member

Susan Daniels, Member

Susan P. Wanzer, Member