MOORESVILLE GRADED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION
Board Work Session Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

The Board of Education of the Mooresville Graded School District met in a Board Business Meeting on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at the Mooresville Town Hall, 413 N. Main St., Mooresville, NC 28115.

Board Members Present: Greg Whitfield, Board Chair; Rakeem Brawley, Vice Chair; Monica Bender; Dr. Debbie Marsh; and, Kerry Pennell.

Also Present: Dr. Jason Gardner, Superintendent; Angela Davis, Chief Financial Officer; April Kuhn, Chief Human Resource Officer; Tanae McLean, Chief Communications Officer and Title IX Coordinator; Jonathan Ribbeck, Chief of Schools; Dr. Michael Royal, Chief Operations Officer; Kevin Donaldson, Board Attorney; and, Lisa Neckameyer, Board Clerk.

Media Present: Debbie Page, Iredell Free News

Mr. Whitfield, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and called for a moment of silence before recognizing National Reading Month. Mr. Whitfield thanked the educators and families, and all who encourage literacy; and in honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday, stated, "the more that you read, the more you will know." Dr. Gardner then invited Charbel Awad, February 2026 Student of the Month, and Kiyan Witherspoon, March 2026 Student of the Month, to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Agenda: On a motion by Kerry Pennell, seconded by Rakeem Brawley, the board voted 5-0 to approve the meeting agenda as presented.

Approval of the Minutes: On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Monica Bender, the board voted 5-0 to approve the minutes from the January 6, 2026, January 27, 2026 and February 17, 2026 meetings as presented.

Student of the Month: The School Board recognized and presented the Student of the Month Award for February 2026 to Charbel Awad, a student at Rocky River Elementary School. Dr. Gardner shared the reasons the student was selected as listed on the nomination form. The School Board then recognized and presented the Student of the Month Award for March 2026 to Kiyan Witherspoon, a student at Park View Elementary School. Dr. Gardner shared the reasons the student was selected as listed on the nomination form.

Artist of the Month: The School Board recognized and presented the Artist of the Month Award for February 2026 to Ms. Evernham's first grade class. Dr. Gardner shared the reasons the class was selected as listed on the nomination form, and the class performed for the Board. The School Board then recognized and presented the Artist of the Month Award for March 2026 to Mary Umberger. Dr. Gardner shared the reasons the student was selected as listed on the nomination form.

ABCD Award: The School Board recognized and presented the February 2026 Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award to Ms. Ella Donahue, Instructional Assistant at Rocky River Elementary School. Ms. Donahue was nominated by Kaylor Kaemba, Principal and Lani Earnhart, Assistant Principal for demonstrating the MGSD Core Values. The School Board also recognized and presented the March 2026 Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award to Ms. Keyona Foye, TSC Teacher Assistant at Park View Elementary School. Ms. Foye was nominated by Dr. Misha Rogers, Principal and Jennifer Marshall, Assistant Principal for demonstrating the MGSD Core Values.

Spotlight on People: The School Board recognized the the MGSD educators who either attained

or renewed their National Board Certification in 2025. NBCT Renewals: Angela Johnson, SBMS; Tonya Kepley, EMIS; and Deborah Welborn, PVES; NBCT First Time Recipients: Jessy DeFrancisco, PVES; Cynthia Hamilton, SBMS; Alison Joy, MHS; and Lindsay Stowers, SES.

The School Board also recognized the MHS Cheer Team, NCHSAA Invitational Champions. The team includes: Hailey Brant, Sadie Brown, Lyla Cherry, Stella Cina, Ailey Coulter, Reese Coulter, Hadley Decker, Leah Dempsey, Mallory Edwards, Mary Elkin, Avery Hildreth, Sage Hoots, Mia Lambert, Zola Lambert, Jada Leslie, Addie Major, Ashlyn Mattingly, Lilli Meyers, Kayden Pelphrey, Ella Popp, Carrington Simmers, Brooklynn Tomczak, Madison Walston, Piper White, Camryn Wilson, Coach Keri Hamilton, and Coach Leslye Long.

School Highlights: Rocky River Elementary School Principal, Kayor Kaemba, and Assistant Principal, Lani Earnhardt presented highlights around oral reading fluency, writing and comprehension. They shared that students are thriving with this rigorous literacy focus, instructional staff support the growth and instruction of building a strong literacy foundation, and that data and student samples show growth in fluency and comprehension just from BOY to MOY.

Park View Elementary School Principal, Dr. Misha Rogers, accompanied by PVES Teachers Brittany Starnes and Jessy DeFrancisco, showcased how the school is taking a data-driven approach to results, turning i-Ready data into math growth that matters.

Schedule Next Meeting: The next regular school board meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Mooresville Town Hall, 413 N. Main St., Mooresville, NC 28115.

Public Comment: There was 1 individual signed up for public comment. The public comment period began at 6:54 p.m. Ms. Anyah Jones of Mooresville spoke on the topic of student conduct. **Public comments concluded at 6:57 p.m.**

Items for Information:

A. **Skills for the Future Update:** Chief of Schools, Jonathan Ribbick, along with Dr. Tracey Waid, Director of Secondary Instruction, and Rob Orrill, Director of Accountability presented an update on the Skills for the Future pilot. Mooresville Graded School District is one of 3 pilot districts in North Carolina to be part of the “Skills for the Future” project. This project is a collaborative effort aimed at strengthening integration of durable skills into classroom practice and assessment, with the goal of preparing students for a wide range of post-secondary options. Ms. Pennell inquired about the type of response we’ve had from the community. Dr. Waid shared that the Iredell EDC has been a great partner, and that we are always looking for additional support from the community in terms of guest speakers, mentors, and job shadow opportunities as well. Dr. Marsh asked if we are looking at ways of incorporating this with younger students. Dr. Waid shared that the district is focusing on these durable skills at the elementary level as well, specifically with work being done on the Gateway projects. Mr. Brawley shared that another opportunity for community involvement would be to invite our alumni to come back and share their stories.

B. **2026 Summer Programming:** Mr. Ribbeck and Dr. Waid were then joined by Director of Elementary Instruction, Jemma Conley, to share the summer programming opportunities to address students needing additional academic support. This includes: YReaders, Read to Achieve, Summer School at MHS for Credit Recovery, and Summer School at NFW for New & Credit Recovery. In addition to academic programming, the district will offer transitional support for students moving to new secondary schools through WEB Leaders at MMS & SBMS and LINK Leaders at MHS.

Items for Approval:

A. **2026-27 MGSD Budget:** On January 27 2026, at the Board of Education work session, MGSD presented the proposed budget for the 2026-2027 school year. To comply with the FY26 budget

calendar set by Iredell County, we are submitting our proposed budget for the 2026-2027 school year, so we are seeking approval at this time. **On a motion by Rakeem Brawley, seconded by Debbie Marsh, the board voted 5-0 to approve the 2026-27 MGSD Budget.**

B. **BASP & STARS Rate Increase:** The Before and After School Program (BASP) is requesting an additional pricing component to cover full day care on teacher workdays. The proposed fee for full day care on these days is $20 and will help ensure that care is utilized by parents after staffing commitments are made. The STARS program is requesting a rate increase to keep up with the rise in operating costs. The current monthly rate is $575 per month and the proposed rate is $650 per month. Both new rate structures, if approved, would go into effect beginning with the 2026/2027 school year. **On a motion by Monica Bender, seconded by Kerry Pennell, the board voted 5-0 to approve the BASP & STARS Rate Increases.**

C. **MGSD Policies:** MGSD works with the North Carolina School Board Association (NCSBA) to ensure we complete timely revisions of our BOE policies. All of the updates have been recommended by the NCSBA with revisions made specific to Mooresville Graded School District policies and procedures. The policy update recommendations were shared at the January 6, 2026 BOE meeting for review:

Policy Number(s):	**Name(s):**
1740/4010	Student and Parent Grievance Procedure
1750/7220	Grievance Procedure for Employees
2125/7315	Confidential Information
2127	Board Member Technology Use
3101	Dual Enrollment
3220	Technology in the Educational Program
3225/4312/7320	Technology Responsible Use
3226/4205	Internet Safety
3227/7322	Web Page Development
3400	Evaluation of Student Progress
3460	Graduation Requirements
4050	Children of Military Families
4120	Domicile or Residence Requirements
4240/7312	Child Abuse and Related Threats to Child Safety
4270/6145	Concussion and Head Injury
5150/7313	Reporting to External Agencies
6310	Organization of Student Transportation Services
7910	Retirement
1600	Governing Principle – Professional Development
2302	Remote Participation in Board Meetings
4130	Discretionary Admission
4150	School Assignment
4152	Unsafe School Choice Transfer
7425	School Administrator Contracts

On a motion by Rakeem Brawley, seconded by Debbie Marsh, the board voted 5-0 to approve the revised policies as presented.

D. **NCSBA Legislative Committee Representative:** NCSBA encourages each local school board to nominate one of its members to serve as an at-large member on the NCSBA Legislative Committee. This Committee's primary tasks are to develop the survey that is distributed to every school board member statewide and to then create the Draft 2027-28 NCSBA Legislative Agenda for consideration and adoption by the Delegate Assembly at November's Annual Conference. Ms. Bender expressed interest in participating. **On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Kerry Pennell, the board voted 5-0 to nominate Monica Bender for the NCSBA Legislative Committee.**

E. **Budget Amendments:** Ms. Angie Davis, Chief Financial Officer, shared plans to reallocate funds since the 2025-2026 budget was adopted. **On a motion by Monica Bender, seconded by Rakeem Brawley, the board voted 5-0 to approve the Budget Amendments as presented.**

Closed Session: According to **NC G.S. §143-318.11 subsections (a)(1), (a)(3) & (a)(6)**, Mr. Whitfield, Board Chair, requested the board go into a closed session to prevent the disclosure of information that is not considered public record, review personnel and consult with the board attorney. **On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Rakeem Brawley, the board voted 5-0 to go into closed session.**

New Employees:
Jennifer Miller, K-2 AIG Tutor, C & I, 03/12/2026
Brock Harriman, Visual Arts Teacher, SBMS, 04/07/2026
Elijah Baker, Grounds Tech., Maintenance, 03/02/2026
Imara Harrell, JV Softball Coach, MHS, 02/24/2026
Benjamin Ramos, Asst. Boys Soccer Coach, SBMS, 2/16/2026

Role/Location Change:
Erin Trahan, Instructional Coach, MHS, 03/02/2026
Michael Fulton, PE Teacher, MMS, 07/30/2026
Anthony Buffo, Maintenance Tech., Maintenance, 03/02/2026
Christian Farmer, ISS Coordinator, MHS, 02/23/2026
Anyah Jones, Asst. Soccer Coach, MMS, 02/25/2026
Ryan Weiss, Jr., Custodian, MMS, 03/04/2026

Retiring:
Paul Kikta, PE Teacher, MHS, 05/26/2026, 7 years of service to MGSD
Anthony Sharpe, Core & Sustainable Construction Teacher, MHS, 05/26/2026, 12 yrs of service to MGSD
Jennifer Hughes, EC Teacher, MMS, 06/01/2026, 20 years of service to MGSD
Maria Heilman, DI Teacher Assistant, PVES, 05/31/2026, 4 years of service to MGSD
Tiffany Webb, Kindergarten Teacher, SES, 06/01/2026, 29 years of service to MGSD

Non-Continuing:
Michael Lynch, ISS Coordinator, MHS, 01/23/2026
Alejandro Hernandez, Custodian, MHS, 01/23/2026
Tyler Threatt, Social Studies Teacher, MHS, 03/02/2026
Taylor Hunt, TA/Bus Driver, PVES, 03/06/2026
Jose Salazar, Technology, 03/09/2026
Rachael Murray Gracey, Bus Driver, Transportation, 03/02/2026

On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Rakeem Brawley, the board voted 5-0 to adjourn from closed session.

On a motion by Debbie Marsh, seconded by Rakeem Brawley, the board voted 5-0 to approve the personnel list as recommended by the Superintendent.

There being no further business, on a motion by Kerry Pennell, seconded by Monica Bender, the board voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jason D. Gardner, Secretary
Board of Education