MERTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education
Monday, March 18, 2024
Immediately after the Community Forum, approximately 6:00 p.m.
Merton Intermediate School Little Theater

President Dobbertin called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance followed. Dobbertin announced the meeting was properly posted. Board members in attendance were Dobbertin, Imes, Lehman, Cotton and Andersen. District Administrator Russ was in attendance. There were no reporters and approximately 30 citizens in attendance.

Approval of Agenda
Motion by Lehman, second by Andersen to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Minutes
Motion by Lehman, second by Andersen to approve board meeting minutes from Monday, February 26, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m., Open Session. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Financial and Bill Listing
Motion by Imes, second by Lehman to approve the voucher listing of February 14, 2024-March 11, 2024. Direct Deposits #900061722-900061839 in the amount of $192,569.50 and #900061840-900061954 in the amount of $173,022.22. Wire transfers for payroll liabilities #202300191-202300211 in the amount of $339,328.81. Total Payroll in the amount of $704,920.53. Accounts Payable Checks #56352-56394 in the amount of $130,188.24, AP Wire Transfers #202300192-202300213 in the amount of $11,012.40. ACH/Direct Deposit #232400070-232400076 in the amount of $991.62. Total Accounts Payable $142,192.26. Total Disbursements in the amount of $847,112.79. Motion passed 5-0.

Delegations to be Heard
Sandie Talbot spoke to the board about improving the trust with all stakeholders and having more communication about programs and decisions being made.

Lindsay Kent spoke to the board about their need to communicate, inconsistencies within the board, and her feeling that the board is not listening to parents.

Megan Cole spoke to the board about defining what SEL means to Merton and the community. There are many important topics for students to be exposed to including life skills, goal setting, resiliency, and allowing teachers to teach and be trusted.

Administrator's Report

1. Acceptance of Donations

No Donations this month.

2. Personnel Actions (Action)

Motion by Imes, second by Lehman to approve the appointments of Erika Flanigan and Julie Yeko. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to approve the appointment of Katelyn Kelley. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Andersen, second by Cotton to approve the appointment of Robert Blessington. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to accept the resignations of Gena Regan, Mariah Fagan, Bekki Crowley, and Ashley Rusch. Motion carried 4-1, Andersen voting no.

Information
Dr. Russ shared an update on Open Records requests. In the last month one request has been fulfilled. Estimated staff time over this period was 30 minutes for Jim Binney and an additional 40 mins for Dr. Russ.

Committee Reports

A. Facility Committee
Dr. Russ highlighted the Committee's work on the proposed facility and technology projects for the 2024-25 fiscal year. There was discussion about the 4 opportunities the district could explore if enrollment increases and our current space no longer meets the needs.

B. Policy/Personnel Committee
Dr. Russ spoke about the meeting on March 7th where there was a first reading of some 400 Series Policies.

C. Strategic Planning Committee
Dr. Russ indicated the Strategic Planning Committee met on March 5th and worked to identify the main priorities of the four main pillars of the possible Strategic Plan.

D. Negotiations Committee
Dr. Russ highlighted the meeting on March 14th with the Negotiations Committee and the Arrowhead Unified Teacher's Organization where a tentative agreement was reached. The proposal included a 3% increase to base wages along with a one time retention bonus for returning teacher's of $1000.

E. Student Achievement Committee

Dr. Russ indicated the Committee met just prior to the Board meeting and Maria Kucharski gave the Committee an update on Act 20. She also let the Board know that they could expect an April proposal for a new ELA curriculum.

New Business

A. Continued Discussion about potential topics about 6th-8th Grade Social Emotional Learning and Academic and Career Planning (Possible Action)

Intermediate School Principal Steve Newcomer presented the information the Board requested from the February meeting. The Board asked the administration to survey our current families to see why they are opting out of the current Social Emotional Programming and what they might want to see in a new possible course. Principal Newcomer indicated there were several reasons parents identified in the survey. Motion by Andersen, second Lehman to have 6th-8th grade families option their child into the Second Step Curriculum during the registration process. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Andersen, second by Lehman to rescind the SEL motion made on August 8, 2022. Motion carried 5-0.

B. Discussion about how the District can build trust with all stakeholders (Discussion)

Rebecca Imes led a discussion on how to build trust with all stakeholders based on survey data the district received. Topics discussed included a quarterly board communication summary and board transparency. There was also discussion about bringing back whole community communication mailers. There was a consensus that to build trust with staff that the current model of meet and confer seemed to be met with positivity and perhaps there could be more of these held in the future.

C. Presentation of District's Pupil Nondiscrimination Self Evaluation Report per DPI requirement (Discussion and Action)

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to to approve the District's Pupil Nondiscrimination Self Evaluation report. Motion carried 5-0.

D. Final Reading of proposed Employee Handbook Language surrounding personal time off (Action)

Motion by Cotton, second by Imes to approve the proposed Employee Handbook Language surrounding personal time off to be effective July 1, 2024. Motion carried 5-0.

E. Approval of E-Rate (Technology) Project (Action)

Motion by Andersen, second by Cotton to approve 40 new hot spots proposed by COREBtS at the Intermediate School that would qualify for eRate reimbursement. Motion carried 5-0.

F. Approve 2024-26 66.03 Agreement with Elmbrook Schools (Special Education Services) (Action)

Motion by Imes, second by Lehman to approve the 2024-26 66.03 Agreement with Elmbrook Schools for Deaf and Hard of Hearing services. Motion carried 5-0.

G. Approval to replace Roof Top Units (Action)

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to replace four rooftop units not to exceed $85,000. Motion carried 5-0.

H. First Draft of proposed 400 Series Policies (Discussion)

The Policy/Personnel Committee reviewed proposed policies in the 400 series on March 7, 2024.

I. New Policy Approval and Old Policy Deletions - 400 Series Policies that were presented on February 26, 2024 (Action)

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6007, and replace with Policy 440 Student Rights and Responsibilities that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6017, and replace with Policy 442 Student Activism and Expression that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6002, and replace with Policy 443 Student Code of Conduct that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6015, and replace with Policy 443.4 Student Alcohol and Other Drugs that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6021, and replace with Policy 443.5 Student Use of Electronic Communication Devices that has been recommended

by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 443.5 Rule Student Use of Electronic Communication Devices that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 443.6 Student Use and Possession of Weapons that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 443.9 Academic Honesty that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6016, and replace with Policy 445 Student Interviews by Outside Agency Personnel that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6019, and replace with Policy 446 Student Searches that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6012, and replace with Policy 447 Staff Use of Physical Force that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6012.1, and replace with Policy 447.1 Rule Reporting Use of Physical Force by School Personnel that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 447 Exhibit Incident Report that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6013, and replace with Policy 448 Student Suspensions and Expulsions that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 460 Student Awards and Scholarships that has been recommended by the policy committee and provided to the full board for its consideration. Motion carried 5-0.

Future Meeting and Agenda Items

- April 29, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m. (Open Session)
    1. Monthly Meeting w/Community Forum to begin the meeting
    2. Board Reorganization
    3. District Administrator Goals
    4. Approval of some 400 series policies
    5. First Draft of new/proposed 5K-8 ELA program

- May 20, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m. (Open Session)
    1. Monthly Meeting w/Community Forum to begin the meeting
    2. Possible approval of new/proposed 5K-8 ELA program
    3. First Draft of new/proposed Strategic Plan
    4. First Draft of proposed changes to 2024-25 Employee Handbook
- June 24, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m. (Open Session)
    1. Monthly Meeting w/Community Forum to begin the meeting
    2. Possible approval of new/proposed Strategic Plan
    3. Approve 2024-25 Employee Handbook

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to adjourn at 8:42 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Cotton, District Clerk