

MERTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education
Monday, January 29, 2024
Immediately after the Community Forum, approximately 6:00 p.m.
Merton Intermediate School Little Theater

President Dobbertin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance followed. Dobbertin announced the meeting was properly posted. Board members in attendance were Dobbertin, Imes, Lehman, and Cotton. Andersen participated via telephone. District Administrator Russ was in attendance. There were no reporters and approximately 19 citizens in attendance.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to approve the agenda. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve board meeting minutes from Monday, December 18, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m., Open Session. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to approve board meeting minutes from Monday, December 18, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m., Open Session. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to approve board meeting minutes from Thursday, January 11, 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 December 13, 2023-January 23, 2024. Direct Deposits #900061246-900061369 in the amount of \$210,159.07, Direct Deposits #900061371-900061487 in the amount of \$167,027.18, and Direct Deposits #900061488-900061606 in the amount of \$185,067.02. Wire transfers for payroll liabilities #202300140-202300172 in the amount of \$522,903.78. Accounts Payable Checks #56249-56304 in the amount of \$256,179.84, AP Wire Transfers #202300149-202300150 in the amount of \$809.18, #202300158-202300160 in the amount of \$8,594.66 and #202300173-202300173 in the amount of \$307.73. ACH/Direct Deposit #232400054-232400062 in the amount of \$1,232.78. Total Accounts Payable \$309,052.55. Total Disbursements in the amount of \$1,394,209.60. Motion passed 5-0.

Delegations to be Heard

None.

Administrator's Report

1. Acceptance of Donations (Action)

Motion by Imes, second by Cotton to accept the \$500 donation from Bank of America and Mr. Rodden to the Merton Theater Company.

1/29/2024

Page Two

2. Personnel Actions (Action)

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to accept the resignation of Rachel Schweiger. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to approve the letter of appointment for Jordan Zuercher. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Imes to approve the letter of appointment for Therese Okray. Motion carried 5-0.

Open Records Update

Dr. Russ shared an update on Open Records requests. In the last month there has been a small number of requests fulfilled, mostly in regards to the upcoming school board elections which is fairly typical for this time of year.

Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee

Dr. Russ shared that a finance committee meeting was held on January 22, 2024 and a quarterly review was completed. Upon review, the district is right on schedule with the exception of the school supply budget due to the large number of new staff members.

Dr. Russ also discussed the Friday counts and how the number is calculated heading into the 2024-2025 school year for funding purposes from the state. Our count is 886 for the upcoming school year.

Dr. Russ highlighted that CPI has been set at 4.12% for 2023. This means that the maximum amount that can be negotiated on base wage for teacher negotiations is an increase of 4.12%. This is also used in upcoming budget projections for the 24-25 budget for supplies, materials, etc...

Additionally, Dr. Russ shared that he is currently exploring the possibility of using net metering, which is a new thing that allows districts to track food service energy usage and permit food service to be completely self-sufficient in terms of cost. It would allow the district to save energy costs that are currently pulled From fund 10 and move those to Fund 50. There would be an upfront cost for installing the meters of \$22,000 and a recurring \$300 monthly charge on the bill.

B. Policy/Personnel Committee

Dr. Russ updated the board about the last committee meeting on January 11, 2024 where there was discussion about paid time off (PTO) for staff. Dr. Russ will have a proposal based on the staff feedback ready for first reading at the February meeting.

C. Student Achievement Committee

Dr. Russ updated the board about the Student Achievement Committee meeting that was held just prior to the evening's board meeting. The 24-25 calendar was shared for feedback, Maria Kucharski presented a new curriculum adoption cycle that aligns with the state's cycle. Act 20 was discussed and there is a 73 step process shared by WASB to implement it. Finally, Mr. Newcomer updated the Intermediate School's Improvement and Innovation Plan. He asked the Committee to consider what Social Emotional Learning concepts would be acceptable for all students compared to the now parental opt in program that is currently offered.

D. Strategic Planning Committee

Dr. Russ shared there were two committee meetings held on January 2nd and January 25th to look at data that was collected from over 60 community members who participated in open sessions with Excel. Parents, community members, and staff will soon be receiving an invitation to participate in a comprehensive survey that is anticipated to take about 20 minutes. There will be two more committee meetings held in February.

New Business

A. Approve Administrative Contracts (Action)

Motion by Imes, Second by Lehman to approve the administrative contracts of Maria Kucharski, Steve Newcomer, Lori Viola-Larsen, and Jim Binney. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, Second by Imes to approve the administrative contract of Dr. Russ. Motion carried 4-1 with Andersen voting no.

B. Approve 2024-25 Open Enrollment Seat Allocation (Action)

Motion by Imes, second by Lehman to approve the Open Enrollment Seat Allocation for the 2024-2025 school year. Motion carried 3-2 with Cotton and Andersen voting no.

C. Draft 2024-25 Calendar (Discussion)

The 2024-25 tentative calendar was presented by Dr. Russ to the full board. He explained that it is very similar to the current year calendar with the exception of no half days and Thanksgiving will be a full week break for families.

D. New Policy Approval and Old Policy Deletion - 652 and 400 Policies that were first presented at the December 18, 2023, Board Meeting (Action)

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 652, Revenues from Investments. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policies 5001 and 6010, and replace those policies with the Policy 411 Equal Educational Opportunities. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policies 5001.1 and 5001.2, and Addendum C in Policy 4019 and replace policies with the Policy 411 Discrimination Complaint Procedures Rule. Motion carried 5-0

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 411.2 Education of Homeless Children and Youth. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 411.2R Education of Homeless Children and Youth Rule. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 411.3 Children in Foster Care. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 411.3R Children in Foster Care Rule. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 412 Full-Time Students. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6000.3. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6000.3R. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 6004.1, and replace policy with the Policy 423 Public School Open Enrollment. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 423R Public School Open Enrollment Rule. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policy 4020, and replace policy with the

1/29/2024
Page Five

Policy 424 Participation of Non-Public School Students in District/Programs. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to delete Policies 4001.5 and 4001.6, and replace policies with the Policy 431 Student Attendance. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 431R Student Attendance Rule. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 431 Truancy Exhibit. Motion passed 5-0.

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to approve Policy 434 Release Time for Religious Observation/Instruction. Motion passed 5-0.

Future Meeting and Agenda Items

- February 26, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m. (Open Session)
 1. Monthly Meeting w/Community Forum to begin the meeting
 2. Continuing work to build staff trust with School Board Members
 3. SEL Proposal for students in grades 6-8
- March 18, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m. (Open Session)
 1. Monthly Meeting w/Community Forum to begin the meeting
- April 29, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m. (Open Session)
 1. Monthly Meeting w/Community Forum to begin the meeting
 2. Board Reorganization

Motion by Lehman, second by Cotton to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Cotton, District Clerk