

BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF THE VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
IN THE COUNTY OF MERCER, NEW JERSEY

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2014

(Rescheduled from February 18, 2014 due to inclement weather)

The Board Meeting of February 25, 2014 was called to order by President Albert Pitman at 5:00 pm. The meeting took place at the Mercer County Vocational-Technical Schools, 1085 Old Trenton Road, Trenton, New Jersey. The President read the following Sunshine Statement:

"In accordance with the State's Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was provided.

This meeting was originally scheduled for February 18, 2014 and advertised in the Trenton Times newspaper on February 13, 2014.

Due to inclement weather, the meeting was cancelled, rescheduled for February 25, 2014 and advertised in the Trenton Times newspaper on February 21, 2014. This notice was also posted in the Board Office and a copy has been filed with the County Clerk of Mercer".

Roll Call:	Mrs. Iszard - Yes	Ms. Stinger - Yes	Dr. Morana - Yes
	Mr. Zoller - Yes	Mr. Murphy - Yes	Mr. Pitman - Yes

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Ms. Rossano, parent of graduating student, asked when will make up days be known to parents.

Dr. Schneider stated that a decision will be made in March.

Ms. Stinger asked what is the number of days?

Dr. Schneider said eight (8). Dr. Schneider further stated that she was waiting for Hamilton Board of Education to make a decision due to transportation.

Ms. Iszard asked what about the full time students.

Dr. Schneider stated that she will make the decision.

Ms. Rossano asked how does that affect the graduating students.

Dr. Schneider said the graduating students should be okay, but she would need to discuss the situation with Ms. Jones, Principal. Dr. Schneider further stated that MCTS will accommodate students.

Mr. Frascella, Adult Evening Principal asked will Governor waive some of the snow days.

Ms. Stinger noted some Districts are having Saturday classes.

Dr. Schneider said, no and MCTS doesn't expect any Saturday classes.

Mrs. Iszard noted that Robbinsville School District is having school on Easter Monday.

Ms. Rossano said she commended the decision to close but she has concerns because she is moving on June 21.

Ms. Rapport asked about the Spring break plans should she cancel her travel.

Ms. Rossano asked about the teachers and Dr. Schneider explained that they have to make up the days also.

Dr. Schneider noted that she's considering being open on April 14, 15 and 21 but she didn't want to impact Passover and Easter, but we are going to be open to June 30th.

Ms. Rossano asked about graduation.

Ms. Jones said that the graduation is still the 20th, but we will have to mail the diplomas.

Dr. Schneider said there is still the ceremony but the diploma will be blank.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The regular session meeting minutes of January 31, 2014 were brought before the Board for approval. Upon reviewing the regular session meeting minutes of January 31, 2014, Mr. Murphy introduced a motion for the Board to approve the minutes. Mrs. Iszard seconded the motion and it was carried by roll call vote.

Roll Call:	Mrs. Iszard - Yes	Ms. Stinger - Yes	Dr. Morana - Yes
	Mr. Zoller - Abstain	Mr. Murphy - Yes	Mr. Pitman - Yes

BILLS TO BE APPROVED/TRANSFERS

Bills totaling \$777,627.74 for February 2014 and budget transfers to date, were brought before the Board. Upon reviewing the bills and budget transfers presented, Mr. Murphy introduced a motion for the Board to approve the bill list totaling \$777,627.74. Mr. Zoller seconded the motion and it was carried by roll call vote. The bills list and budget transfers report shall be attached to the original minutes filed in the Board Office as an official document of the Board.

Roll Call:	Mrs. Iszard - Yes	Ms. Stinger - Yes	Dr. Morana - Yes
	Mr. Zoller - Yes	Mr. Murphy - Yes	Mr. Pitman - Yes

BOARD SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT

Upon review of the financial reports for the period ending January 2014, Ms. Stinger introduced a motion the Board approve the reports as presented, whereby, that major accounts and fund balances have not been over-expended and sufficient funds are available to meet the District's financial obligations. Dr. Morana seconded the motion and it was carried by roll call vote. Said reports shall be attached to the original minutes filed in the Board Office as official documents of the Board.

Roll Call:	Mrs. Iszard - Yes	Ms. Stinger - Yes	Dr. Morana - Yes
	Mr. Zoller - Yes	Mr. Murphy - Yes	Mr. Pitman - Yes

CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Schneider noted a Thank You note from Connie Mercer for a "Tree of Warm" for hats and gloves that were donated by Rachel Hendrickson, Instructor at Assunpink Center. Also, on February 21 an article in the Trenton Times with State Senate President Sweeney and Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto launched NJ Employer Coalition on Career and Technical Education month. Dr. Schneider stated that MCTS is competing this month in CTE for State and National competitions.

Ms. Swirsky presented the Proposed Annual School District Budget for 2014-15 (handout). She noted the increases in enrollment and stated the students at the Rubino Academy are no longer included in our enrollment numbers. The total expenditures for 2014/2015 have increased by \$95,984 which is less than 1% and we expect that the State Aid will be flat with maybe a small increase.

Dr. Schneider asked if the students will be calculated at 1 FTE or .5.

Ms. Swirsky noted the shared time students are still at .5. On the District Funding Sources, Ms. Swirsky pointed out that the Fund balance for 2012/2013 is zero, because at the end of the school year the auditors adjust it to zero and the amounts listed for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 are the required minimum amounts of excess that have to be budgeted. We are planning to increase the minimum by about \$220K but the final number will depend on the State Aid.

Mr. Pitman asked why the 2014/2015 miscellaneous income is lower.

Ms. Swirsky stated that we budget that amount conservatively and in the prior year we received some Sandy aid.

Ms. Swirsky pointed out on the History of the County Tax Levy page that the District is still receiving less than the amount in 2008/2009 by about \$208K.

Mr. Murphy commented that was a major amount; over the next 10 years it's more than \$2M and now that money is lost. Do we have any plans if we had those funds?

Dr. Schneider explained that we do have plans in our 5 year Strategic Plan for other full time programs and that is why the recent support by the (NJ) Coalition to support CTE is a big event.

Mr. Murphy felt we should invite some legislature representative to our meetings.

Dr. Schneider noted that at the CTE luncheon last week, Ms. Dana Hice DePugh, Assistant Superintendent invited Freeholder Anthony Carabelli to attend and he wants to plan a Freeholder Board meeting at the Sypek Center to support the Culinary students since that is the next Academy we are working on. Dr. Schneider explained that working with MCCC President Pat Donahue and Ms. Jones, who is a Trustee at Brookdale College, we have the staff to support grades 9 – 12. Student admissions right now are over 780.

Ms. Stinger asked why the increase.

Ms. Hice DePugh explained that MCTS commercials, produced by a former student, changed our image, it is now cool to say “see you at the tech school.” Dr. Schneider noted that whenever Lori Perlow has an info session, MCTS has an increase of on line applications and State wide there is an increase of 30% in CTE.

Mr. Pitman noted that there is an article every week in the newspaper.

Dr. Schneider said there is an expected increase over the next 10 years that 40% of the jobs will be in CTE and that is why the Coalition was formed and it is noted in Melanie Willoughby's article (handout).

Ms. Swirsky ended her presentation by pointing out that the County has supported the District with Capital Project funding for roofing, parking lots and now for the building upgrades.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT NEW PROGRAMS/SPECIAL PROJECTS

1. Application for Funds to Support Implementation of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 in the amount of \$680 to the Executive County School Business Administrator for consideration by the New Jersey Department of Education (attached) (Special Revenue)

PERSONNEL & ADDENDUM

Dr. Schneider recommended Board approve the following personnel in the job categories, salary/wage rates, time periods specified:

1. Tanya Dawson, Assistant Business Administrator/Board Secretary, to be paid an additional \$100 per day for performing additional responsibilities effective March 15, 2014 through June 30, 2014 (11-000-251-104-07-00-2510)
2. Rachel Matushoneck, Half-time Math Instructor for the Health Science Academy, for the following leave of absence:

Start	End	Type
February 18, 2014	February 27, 2014	Paid Medical Leave – Using 8 Sick Days
February 28, 2014	March 5, 2014	Paid Medical Leave – Using 4 Personal/Bus Days
March 6, 2014	June 30, 2014	Unpaid Maternity Leave

Ms. Matushoneck would like to return to work for the 2014-2015 school year

3. Seth Knoll as a temporary Half-time Leave-replacement Math Instructor for the Assunpink Center, pending completion of the criminal history background check, at a per diem rate of \$132.15 (calculated from half of Step 1 of current 10-month Teacher guide), replacing Rachel Matushoneck, effective February 18, 2014 through June 30, 2014 (11-310-100-101-01-00-1900)
4. Seth Knoll as a Substitute Academic Instructor for the district, pending completion of the criminal history background check, on an as needed basis and not to exceed 29 hours per week, at a per diem rate of \$90 February 19, 2014 through June 30, 2014 (11-310-100-101-01-01-1701)

3. District Reports of Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS) for the 2013-2014 Report Period 1, September 1, 2013 through December 31, 2013 (attached)
4. District Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying Report for September 1, 2013 through February 12, 2014 (attached)
5. Emergency Preparedness Drill Reports for the month of January 2014 (attached)
6. Health Careers Center calendar revision due to emergency closing days February 3, 4, 5, 13, 14, & 18, 2014 will be as follows:
 - Health Careers Center will be open April 14 through 18, 2014
 - The remainder of the days will be made up in hours. Beginning March 3 through March 31, 2014, class will be in session from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm. (One additional hour each day for 21 days)
7. The following Board Regulation for first reading:
 - a. 8220 School Closings (attached)

Mr. Murphy asked about Policy 3221 listed as item 9C.1e on the agenda and the language “managerial prerogatives”, what does that mean. Mr. Walter Bliss explained that it has to do with the acts of the educational mission of the district but any terms of a contract must yield to the educational mission.

Mr. Murphy said he had heard that explanation before, but did not necessarily agree.

Mr. Murphy introduced a motion for the Board to approve the aforementioned. Mr. Zoller seconded the motion and it was carried by roll call vote. A copy of 0000.02, 1240, 3142, 3144, 3221, 3222, 3223, 3224, 4146, 8420, R8420, R8420.1, R8420.2, R8420.7, R8420.10, EOP, EVVRS, HIB, EPD, 8220 shall be attached to the original minutes filed in the Board Office as official documents of the Board.

Roll Call:	Mrs. Iszard – Yes	Ms. Stinger – Yes	Dr. Morana - Yes
	Mr. Zoller – Yes	Mr. Murphy - Yes	Mr. Pitman - Yes

NEW BUSINESS & ADDENDUM

Mrs. Swirsky recommended the Board approve the following:

- 11A. Travel requests (attached)
- 11B. Field trip requests (attached)
- 11C. Audit services of Wiss & Company, LLP (with a Peer Review Rating of Pass) for the school year ending June 30, 2014 per engagement letter dated January 30, 2014 for \$25,000 (11-000-230-332-07-00-2301/7048) (attached)
- 11D. Acceptance of the Deutsche Bank report for January 2014 disbursements on behalf of PNC ESIP lease (attached)
- 11E. Contract with Comcast Spotlight for a two (2) week cable schedule, multi-media promotion for Health Careers Center in the amount of \$1,620 (11-330-200-590-05-00-2400/7423) (attached)
- 11F. Accept payment of \$300 from the Rutgers Eagleton Institute of Politics awarded on behalf of David Lugo, MCTS Social Studies teacher, to defray the cost of transporting students for a tour of the State House on February 14, 2014 (attached)
- 11G. Contract with Easycoast Productions, Brad Shutack, for professional services to edit the Health Careers Center video per attached project proposal 2014-1 not to exceed \$860 (13-330-200-590-05-00-2400) (attached)
- 11H. Contract with Easycoast Productions, Brad Shutack, for professional services produce an Alumni video series per attached project proposal 2014-4 not to exceed \$4,680 (13-310-100-320-09-00-1760) (attached)
- 11I. Revised Budget Planning Schedule for 2014-2015 (attached)
- 11J. First Amendment to the Electric Service Generation agreement with Direct Energy in our PSE&G utility territory (attached)

- IIK. Accept \$1,000 from the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey (BIANJ) U Got Brains on behalf of the Health Science Academy student project "No Texting and Driving" (attached)
- III. Revise tuition payable to Camelot Education Resources, LLC of \$114,737.50 for increased enrollment from September 2013 through January 2014 over base enrollment of 125 students (attached)
- IIIM. Recording of AIA Document G704-2000; Certificates of Substantial Completion of the following: (attached)
 - Partial Roofing Replacement at Sypek and Assunpink and Skylight at Sypek
 - Photovoltaic Systems at MCVSD – Assunpink
 - Photovoltaic Systems at MCVSD – Sypek
 - Mechanical and Controls Upgrades at Sypek and Assunpink
 - Lighting Retrofits at Sypek and Assunpink
- IIIN. Recording of AIA Document G704-2000; Certificate of Substantial Completion of Energy Savings Improvement Programs at Sypek and Assunpink (attached)
- IIIO. Record of sale of 712 SREC's dated January through August 2013 on February 19, 2014; 100 at \$165, 303 at \$160.25 and 309 at \$165.25 for a total of \$116,118 on the spot market through the Flett Exchange
- IIIP. Renewal of subscription with My Learning Plan to provide a web-based online educator observation and appraisal management system for the period February 21, 2014 to February 20, 2015 for \$1824 (11-310-100-320-09-00-1760/7202) (attached)
- IIIQ. Services of Center for Occupational Research and Development for the curriculum course revisions and alignment for Landscaping, Cosmetology and Baking and Dining vocational programs for \$10,500, to be paid by Perkins Grant FY 2014 (20-361-200-320-14-00-361/7500) (attached)

Ms. Swirsky noted that item IIIO above reflected the sale of the SREC's that she and Ms. Dawson completed last week. Ms. Swirsky read the sale prices and noted it is a significant increase over the last sale prices.

Mr. Pitman noted that it was double the amount.

Mr. Zoller introduced a motion for the Board to approve the aforementioned. Ms. Stinger seconded the motion and it was carried by roll call vote. A copy of travel, field trips, Wiss & Co, LLP, Deutsche Bank report, Comcast Spotlight, Rutgers Eagleton check, Easycoast HCC, Easycoast Alumni, revised budget schedule, First Amendment, BIANJ check, revised Camelot payment, AIA G704-2000, My Learning Plan, Center for Occ Research & Dev, shall be attached to the original minutes filed in the Board Office as official documents of the Board.

Roll Call:	Mrs. Iszard – Yes	Ms. Stinger – Yes	Dr. Morana - Absent
	Mr. Zoller – Yes	Mr. Murphy - Yes	Mr. Pitman - Yes

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Ms. Stinger announced that the Hamilton rotary had a very successful "Soup Off" and noted that one of the chef's was a graduate of the Sypek culinary program and that the baked goods were very good and suggested that next year the students attend so they can be recognized and praised.

Mr. Bliss provided the Board with handouts from NJSBA and the District's own By-Laws on the Code of Ethics to have the yearly required discussion and training on School Ethics. He explained how the culture of School boards is very different than local municipal boards and it is unique to have this Code of Ethics, because it is a way to develop a level of trust and to enhance the institution's oversight that Board members are trustees as professionals. Mr. Bliss asked the Board members to each read a section of the Code of Ethics in turn and also the School Ethics Act. Mr. Bliss noted that advisory opinions are available if Board members have specific questions.

Ms. Stinger said that as a parent and as a Board member she is often in conversations where she tells people that something is her personal opinion and not as a Board member, but sometimes finds it difficult to be in that role. Mr. Bliss suggested she can explain the process that things need to be brought to the attention of the Superintendent. The Board can collaborate and some decisions can be resolved at that level, but an individual cannot make those decisions.

Mr. Murphy noted that personnel items cannot be discussed in public.

Ms. Stinger said as a parent it is sometimes difficult to step back.

Dr. Schnieder noted that at MCSSSD we have parents on the Board and they know they cannot comment on teachers or students and they have to bring issues to the Superintendent.

Mr. Bliss went on to explain what it means to recuse oneself from voting and discussing items in certain situations. He also went over the Doctrine of Necessary when there are so many conflicts that a quorum cannot otherwise be reached. He said it is most important for Board members to plan ahead and ask questions.

Dr. Schneider said it is a process and it may be new to some of the Board members but you can bring questions to the Administration and we will reach out to Mr. Bliss if he's needed.

Board members were asked to sign the Acknowledgement Receipt. Ms. Swirsky collected the signed forms from the Board members.

Mr. Bliss said that more often a question is not right or wrong since the Code is objective, such as receiving a gift. Someone might think a paid lunch of \$15 will not be an influence on their decisions, but it is the appearance that could be the problem. Mr. Bliss recommended that Board members stay away from accepting items and try to avoid hospitality type group meetings.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mrs. Iszard introduced a motion the meeting be adjourned at 6:20 pm. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion and it was carried by roll call vote.

Roll Call:	Mrs. Iszard - Yes	Ms. Stinger - Yes	Dr. Morana - Yes
	Mr. Zoller - Yes	Mr. Murphy - Yes	Mr. Pitman - Yes

The next meeting of the Board shall be Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 5:00 pm at the Assunpink Center.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy R. Swirsky
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary