



MAURY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

Community Relations Committee Meeting
September 8, 2015
Horace O. Porter School at College Hill

Community Relations Committee Chair Kristin Parker called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Committee members present were as follows:

Kristin Parker, Denny Beaver, Carey Powers, and Jyuanna Martin (via phone).

Also present were the following Board Members: Jim Pennings, David Moore, Jim Morrison, David Bates and Tommy Dudley. Also present from Central Office were Director Chris Marczak, Scott Gaines, and Stan Breeden.

Mrs. Powers moved to approve the proposed agenda, and Mr. Beaver seconded the motion. The proposed Agenda was adopted by the Committee.

Mrs. Powers moved to approve the July Committee Minutes, and Mr. Beaver seconded the motion. The July Committee Minutes were approved.

The committee continued its discussion regarding the website proposals previously presented. Mrs. Parker indicated that she had updated Director Marczak on our current proposals and that the committee had previously indicated a desire to have all of the schools have updated websites. Director Marczak indicated that he had reviewed SharpSchool's websites based on the information provided by the district's technology department. He felt it was important to have a good digital presence to attract students and families to the area. He felt like SharpSchool checked off the necessary boxes. Mr. Bates noted that there was certainly a need to update the district as well as many school websites. He indicated he would defer to the committee. Mr. Morrison stated that he hoped the new website would be easy to use. Mr. Moore stressed the need to have continuity between the schools, a sentiment that was echoed by Mr. Dudley and Mr. Morrison. Mrs. Powers stated that moving forward with a new website would be good for public relations that the committee has been striving to improve. Mr. Morrison cautioned that the committee and Board may get negative feedback based on the cost associated with the website. Mr. Pennings stressed that the websites must be maintained with current information. Director Marczak suggested that we consider having a dedicated member of Central Office to have responsibility for maintaining all websites. Ultimately, the committee did not have a recommendation regarding how school websites would be maintained but felt further discussion may be needed regarding whether to provide a stipend or have a Central Office dedicated staff member. Mr. Beaver moved to recommend entering into a contract with SharpSchool to develop a district as well as individual school websites. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Powers and approved by the committee.

The committee then discussed the district logo and rebranding. Director Marczak provided information on VIP Branding, a company that Oak Ridge Schools had worked with to address rebranding, which was more encompassing than a new logo and included copyright considerations. He indicated that Oak Ridge discussed working with the company but ultimately did not move forward before he left. Mr. Bates indicated that he would consider that a part two in the process. He suggested considering a school competition for the logo. Mr. Morrison and Mr. Pennings indicated that route was taken a few years ago and was not fruitful. Ms. Martin noted that a new logo designed by the students would still have to be manipulated by a graphic artist to really be useful for the district. Mr. Moore cautioned that a redesign of a logo could result in other business supply costs which leads ultimately to a budget issue. Ms. Martin moved to approve a proposal to engage Robin Estep of Robin E Designs regarding the development of a new district logo. Mrs. Powers seconded, and the motion was approved.

Discussion next centered on follow up to the May Roundtable. Director Marczak updated the committee on his efforts to engage the teachers during his school tours including a Start, Stop, Continue exercise. He shared a Delicious link with the Board that collects information from the teachers who complete that activity. Mr. Moore noted that the teachers he heard

from want to continue the roundtable discussion. Director Marczak is also continuing a Teacher Advisory Council every 2 months to give teachers a chance to ask questions and receive responses. Mr. Pennings echoed how valuable the roundtable discussion was. He noted that the teachers expressed a fear of sharing under the previous administration that he hopes has been alleviated. Mr. Morrison expressed that he felt the roundtable discussion should continue and suggested scheduling 3-4 times per year. Mrs. Parker stated that she hoped the committee could follow up with the teachers who participated the last time in the roundtable and share an update with them before hosting a new one. Mrs. Powers agreed that we need to see through our discussion with the participants, but she thinks that fostering an open dialogue with the teachers may be achieved under the new administration and thus alleviate the need for hosting roundtables long term. It was ultimately agreed that we would look at scheduling a roundtable after the Board retreat.

Mrs. Parker asked for feedback from the committee regarding the development of a marketing budget and procedure for communication. She noted that we currently budget no money towards our marketing efforts. She stated that if we don't tell our story, then someone else will. Mr. Morrison indicated that he hopes as Budget Chair that the Board can begin having budgets for individual schools so that each principal understands the costs of running their school. Mr. Pennings stressed that we need to promote the good news. For example, Central High School had 3 enlisted at the Naval Academy recently, and he said he would love to see their picture on a billboard. Mr. Morrison noted that the committee did not know the cost of a billboard and must be willing to accept some negative response from the public for spending money on advertising. Mr. Dudley noted that the public schools do have competition in the area, and private schools regularly feature their successes on billboards. Mr. Bates stated that he has concerns with marketing ourselves. He believes the focus should be on providing a good product and the focus should be on education and the tools needed for that. He referenced the \$40,000 logo developed recently by the State of Tennessee. Director Marczak noted that much of the opposition to the state logo was because of the perceived excess cost. Mr. Bates suggested it may be an area that the commission dislikes. Mr. Moore suggested it could be part of a fluid budget process.

Mrs. Parker circulated a copy of the newspaper articles for the month of August. Mr. Bates noted that he felt that our system was on the cusp of greatness. He wants to turn lemons to lemonade. He thinks there are many positives from the recent events regarding Islamic teachings including the involvement of parents. Mr. Dudley stated that he was satisfied with how it was handled as a county resident without kids in the school. Mr. Moore indicated that he still has questions about how the situation was handled as a parent with kids in the schools. However, he agreed that it had led to a productive discussion thus far.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m. after a motion for adjournment was made by Mrs. Powers, seconded by Ms. Martin, and approved by the committee.

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Director of Schools



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SEPTEMBER 8, 2015 COMMUNITY RELATIONS MEETING REVIEW

A. AGENDA BUSINESS

1. The committee discussed recommendations regarding the district and school websites. Ultimately, the committee elected to recommend contracting with SharpSchool for the development of websites for the district and all individual schools.
2. The committee recommended contracting with Robin Estep of Robin E. Designs for the design of school logo.
3. Discussion continued on how to proceed with the feedback received from May 2015 Teacher Roundtable. The committee recommends the Board consider the issue at the upcoming board retreat and consider setting dates for future roundtables with teachers after that meeting.
4. The committee discussed allocating money towards marketing efforts on behalf of the district.
5. The binder containing clippings related to the school system was circulated for review by Board Members. Discussion of the recent communications from parents regarding concerns about Islamic teachings was discussed as well.

B. NEW BUSINESS - None