The February 8, 2012 meeting of the Board of Education began with a presentation by Dave McDonald who presented information about his firm, McDonald & Montrose Architects and the projects that they have been involved in within and outside of the district. He expressed interest in working on the proposed project in the district.

Superintendent Ehresman provided information regarding the proposed budget for the 2012-2013 school year. She reviewed that the district has lost $3.2 million in aid in the last two years and that districts that are less wealthy like Williamson have lost more state aid than wealthier districts. Wealthy districts spend on average $30,978 per student while Williamson spends $17,437 per student. The district has kept a flat budget for the last four years. This has been accomplished by significant cuts to staff, materials and supplies. In planning for the 2012-13 school year, the district will see a $478,000 cut in federal money and has already used a significant amount of money from the district reserves. In planning for next year’s budget, the district must deal with an 18% increase in health care costs which totals over $400,000, significant increases in contributions to the state retirement systems and projected salary increases. There will be a survey on the district website for community members to complete to give input in the budget development process. Proposed cuts will be brought back to the next Board of Education meeting.

Under Reports from District Administrators, Ellen Saxby recognized and congratulated Mary Thomas who successfully performed the Heimlich maneuver on a child and saved her life. Students at the Elementary School raised over $7,000 for Jump Rope for Heart. Wendy Havens recognized administrators and teachers for a positive Superintendent’s Conference Day and she highlighted Nicole LeDuc who presented an engaging and lively lesson for her students. Doug Lauf reported that 160 students attended the Semi-Formal Snow Ball dance, a record attendance. The Inter-Generational Dance also had more attendees this year than in prior years. He recognized the Jazz Band and thanked them for their participation. Shannon Sabin, Carrie Newby and Julie Hillegeer were recognized by John Fulmer for the work that they did on the Inter-Generational Dance. He also stated that students were completing mid-year assessments and he commented that 89 students in the building received test modifications. He thanked the staff members for their assistance. Wanda Miller recognized the high school Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) team for their work. Gary Barno reported that interest rates for the proposed building project will be low but interest rates on district deposits will also be low. Superintendent Ehresman reported that she nominated Karen Hoody and Amy Vandergrift for the Leadership Institute. She also thanked John Fulmer, Ellen Saxby and Wanda Miller and the co-taught teams for the recent meetings that they held reviewing case histories of particular students.

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Doug Lauf, Jessica Craft, Gabrielle Sears and Andrew Wahl presented information on the Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) program at the high school. A team of teachers and administrators at the high school have been working on the development of the program. Included in the discussion was a description of the program which is a systems change program focused on behavioral expectations that are positively stated and easy to remember. The team has attended training sessions and examined high school data to determine what has worked in the school in order to develop the strategies that would be implemented. In the first year of the program, there has been a 47% decrease in student behavior referrals as compared to last year for the same time period (September-January). Mr. Lauf recognized the students in the building for their work in the PBIS process.

The Board approved several CSE case summaries and reviewed the Treasurer’s Report. Under the Consent Agenda, several substitutes were approved. Under New Business the Board approved the Comprehensive Education Plan, 2010-2011 Extra Classroom Activities Fund Audit Corrective Action Plan and unpaid Child Rearing Leave through August 31, 2012 for Kerry Cornwell, Bus Driver.