

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, OCTOBER 9, 2012

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Regular Workshop at 8:00 a.m., in Room 160, at the J.E. Hall Educational Services Center, 30 East Texar Drive, Pensacola, Florida, with the following present:

Chair: Mr. Bill Slayton Vice Chair: Mr. Jeff Bergosh

Board Members: Mr. Gerald W. Boone
Mrs. Linda Moultrie
Mrs. Patricia Hightower

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

Meeting was advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on September 28, 2012 - Legal No. 1577940

[General discussion among Board Members, the Superintendent, and staff occurred throughout this workshop.]

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Slayton called the Regular Workshop to order at 8:00 a.m. The School Board, Superintendent, and staff joined together in wishing a “happy birthday” to Mr. Boone.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- October and November Calendar including Establishing Time for Installation and Organizational Meeting in November – Slayton

School Board Members reviewed their workshop and meeting schedules for October and November. No changes were made to the schedule for October. School Board Members confirmed the following schedule for November:

November 15th - Special “Open Discussion” Workshop, 3:00 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center
November 16th - Regular Monthly Workshop, 9:00 a.m., Room 160, Hall Center
November 20th - Regular Monthly Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

At the request of Mrs. Hightower, Mrs. Waters confirmed the recent change that was made to Section 1001.371, Florida Statutes, with regard to the annual organization of district school boards. Mrs. Waters advised that this year’s Organizational Meeting would need to be held no earlier than November 20th and no later than November 30th. The School Board decided to schedule their Organizational Meeting for November 20, 2012, beginning at 5:00 p.m., in Room 160, at the Hall Center (followed by the Regular Monthly Meeting at 5:30 p.m.). Board Members expressed their desire to have a discussion about the School Board’s organization and various committee assignments at the November 15, 2012 Special “Open Discussion” Workshop.

During this discussion, Mr. Bergosh pointed out that the comments made by several individuals would not be recorded on the video of this meeting because those individuals were not speaking into their “shared” microphone. He pointed out that this would not be an issue if there were enough microphones for each person sitting at the table. For purposes of recording, he suggested that additional microphones were needed for everyone who intended to speak or each person would need to ensure that they were speaking into their “shared” microphone.

At the request of the Superintendent, School Board Members confirmed the following schedule for December:

- December 14th – Special “Open Discussion” Workshop, 3:00 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center
- December 15th – Regular Monthly Workshop, 9:00 a.m., Room 160, Hall Center
- December 18th – Regular Monthly Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

- ECARE Program – *Moultrie*

Mrs. Moultrie introduced Ms. Ashley Bodmer, Executive Director of Every Child A Reader in Escambia (ECARE), who narrated a brief PowerPoint® [presentation](#) that provided a brief overview of the ECARE program. Ms. Bodmer also reviewed data from the Florida Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Assessment which indicated that ECARE early childhood interventions, such as Wee Read and Reading Pals, had clearly contributed to student growth in the areas of oral language/vocabulary, print knowledge, phonological awareness, and mathematics. It was noted that the goal of the ECARE program was to build a strong foundation of kindergarten students entering the education system ready to learn.

- Status of Spencer Bibbs Property – *Moultrie*

At the request of Mrs. Moultrie, the Superintendent gave a brief update on the status of the Spencer Bibbs property. The Superintendent said that staff was developing a plan to renovate the Spencer Bibbs facility for use as a professional development center for training and staff development. He said that money from the sale of District properties would be used to fund the renovation project. It was noted that the following departments currently located at the Hall Center would most likely be relocated to the Spencer Bibbs facility: Staff Development, Title I, and Media Services. The Superintendent said that the plan for renovation would eventually be presented to the School Board for discussion. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, the Superintendent explained that the Spencer Bibbs property was an “attractive” location for a professional learning center primarily because of its central location in the county, accessibility from the Interstate, and its close proximity to the Hall Center. Board Members expressed no objections to moving forward with the renovation of the Spencer Bibbs facility for use as a professional development center.

- Procedures for Changing High School Schedules – *Hightower*

(NOTE: *This topic was postponed from the September 13, 2012 Special Workshop.*) Mrs. Hightower said there had been several students and/or parents who had requested a high school schedule change and the response from guidance staff was simply, “we don’t make changes.” She suggested that guidance staff should be reminded about the importance of good customer service and that they could be more helpful by explaining to students and/or parents the reasons why a high school schedule could not be changed after a certain date. Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education, clarified that the only schedule changes that would not be accommodated were those that were requested based on a student’s “want” rather than a student’s need.

- Escambia Educator Evaluation (E-3) Presentation – *Superintendent*

Mr. Keith Leonard, Director of Human Resource Services, gave a brief PowerPoint® [presentation](#) on the Escambia Educator Evaluation (E-3) system. Mr. Leonard then responded to questions posed by School Board Members regarding the various information outlined in the presentation.

At this time, the following items were handled:

Dixon Charter Report (Item VIII.1)

[\[Handouts provided to School Board Members prior to this workshop\]](#)

Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, Dr. Wendy Bennett, Principal of Dixon School of the Arts, confirmed that the school had submitted a “Request for Waiver” to the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE). [NOTE: *If approved by the FLDOE, the waiver would allow Dixon to remain open for at least one more*

year.] The Superintendent said it could be as late as January before the school receives a decision from the state. Ms. Vicki Mathis, Director of Alternative Education, mentioned that Dixon's school improvement plan would be submitted for the School Board's consideration in November. The Superintendent commented that there had been many improvements at Dixon this school year and he was pleased with the direction in which the school was now headed. *There was no discussion with regard to the information outlined in the written report provided by Dixon.*

Newpoint Academy Report (Item VIII.2)

[Handouts provided to School Board Members prior to this workshop]

Mr. John Graham, Director of Newpoint Academy, outlined the various types of information that were provided in his written report. He said the school was working to improve student achievement, parental involvement, student attendance, and discipline procedures. Mr. Graham then responded to several questions from School Board Members regarding the school's current student enrollment, in-school suspension program, tracking of students who withdraw or are dismissed from the school, and the school's new location. Mr. Bergosh was concerned that the report from Newpoint did not mention anything about the school's finances.

- Honors, AP Class Scheduling and Access – Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh referred to an editorial viewpoint written by Alice Sohn that was published in the *Pensacola News Journal* on October 3, 2012. Mr. Bergosh wanted to know if there was any truth to the claims made by Ms. Sohn in that article, specifically the claim that honor students are assigned textbooks to take home but regular students may or may not be assigned a textbook, depending on the supply. Mr. Slayton said he had read the editorial but "had a hard time believing" any of the claims made by Ms. Sohn. Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education, said that there were a number of claims in that article that were simply not accurate. In response to the claim about textbooks, Mrs. Spooner said that the School District did sometimes use the same textbook for regular and honors classes because "it is not the content that is different, it is the approach that is different" for an honors class. But she said that the School District does not "make a choice" and assign textbooks to honors students but not to regular students. Mrs. Spooner said the School District "takes a great deal of pride in the fact that we put a textbook in the hand of every student for every course." Mrs. Spooner said she would be happy to further discuss this matter "off-line" with Mr. Bergosh at a later time.

Mr. Bergosh said that a parent had expressed some concern about too many of the honors classes being scheduled during the same period so that a student was limited in the number of honors classes that he/she could take. Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education, explained that a high school schedule was built using a "conflict matrix" for the purpose of trying to accommodate the largest number of students; however, because there were only six periods in a school day and because there were so many courses that could fill those six slots, there would be situations where a student would have to make a choice because a high school schedule could not accommodate every student's individual needs. The Superintendent said that a "virtual" option (i.e., Florida Virtual School) could really help to resolve that type of situation with an online course offering.

The Regular Workshop recessed at 10:00 a.m. and reconvened at 10:12 a.m. with all School Board Members, the Superintendent, and Mrs. Waters present.

- Idea Sharing, Website Update and Presentation – Bergosh

[NOTE: *This topic was previously addressed at the May 10, 2012 Special Workshop under "School Board Member Networking Statewide (and Nationwide) for Best Practices/Idea Sharing.*] Mr. Bergosh gave a demonstration of MEYONTI, the website he had developed that would allow for online networking and information sharing for those interested and involved in public education policymaking. [MEYONTI is an acronym for "Many Eyes on These Issues"] Mr. Bergosh said that this networking website, while operating within the constraints of open meeting laws, would allow for online collaboration and best-practice dissemination for those in public education. Mr. Bergosh said he had approached the Florida School Boards Association (FSBA) and that they had expressed a willingness to help him "beta-test" this

concept in Florida. With regard to postings by school board members, Mr. Bergosh said that in order to not violate open meeting laws, only one school board member from any one district school board could post and reply to topics in the forum section of MEYONTI. Other board members from the same district could have read-only access to the forum section so that they could follow posts and topics in real-time. All other districts' board members and other interested members of the public could access the forum section, but only one member from each individual board could have two-way discourse. There was some general discussion amongst School Board Members and Mrs. Waters as to how an elected official could participate in this type of online networking without violating the Florida Sunshine Law. Mrs. Waters believed that the website "could be made to work" under the current law.

- Special Education Issues – Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh said he had concerns with the School District's Response to Instruction (RTI) process [now known as the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process] in that he believed there were students with legitimate disabilities who "may be falling through the cracks" and not receiving their prescribed interventions. He said he would appreciate an audit, conducted by the Internal Auditing department, of the School District's RTI (MTSS) process simply to ensure the fidelity of the process with regard to student interventions. Mr. Steve Marcanio, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, reminded Mr. Bergosh that Ms. Lisa Joyner had recently assumed the position of Coordinator-Student Services and was currently working with her leadership team of guidance counselors to review the School District's current practices and to determine if any improvements were necessary. Ms. Joyner said she intended to conduct a "needs assessment" that would identify any "disconnect" between the district and school levels. Ms. Terri Szafran, Director of Exceptional Student Education (ESE), questioned whether the Internal Auditing department was even qualified to audit the RTI (MTSS) process. Mr. David Bryant, Director of Internal Auditing, clarified that the Internal Auditing department would not be qualified to prescribe interventions for a student, but was certainly qualified to determine whether or not those interventions had occurred. Mr. Slayton believed that before there was any audit conducted by the Internal Auditing department, Ms. Joyner and her new leadership team should first be given an opportunity to identify and correct any weaknesses in the process. The Superintendent reminded Mr. Bergosh that the newly created Student Services department had only been in operation for a little over a month; he asked that the department be given the opportunity to conduct a "needs assessment" and make any necessary improvements in the process prior to an audit by the Internal Auditing department. Mrs. Hightower did not disagree with Mr. Bergosh's suggestion for an audit of the process, but said she was willing to let the Student Services department "do their work" first and then if need be, the Internal Auditing department could be asked to conduct an audit. Mrs. Hightower also mentioned that she felt "woefully uneducated on the process" and asked that the Superintendent have his staff give School Board Members a presentation on RTI (MTSS).

- HS Booster Clubs/Inconsistency between School District Rule and State Law – Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh initiated a discussion about the legality of school raffles. Mr. Bergosh said a booster club parent had been incorrectly told by a principal that fundraising raffles were against Florida law. Mrs. Waters clarified that in general, Florida's gaming law did prohibit raffles; however, if an entity qualified as a 501(c)(3) organization, with all paperwork current, and that entity followed the very strict statutory requirements, it was permissible to conduct a fundraising raffle. She noted however, that she had never seen a legal raffle conducted by any charitable organization that she had ever been involved with. Mrs. Waters commented that to hold a legal raffle, one would have to "walk between the rain drops" and that there was "no way to follow that statute without getting soaked." Mr. David Bryant, Director of Internal Auditing, said that the Florida Department of Education had issued guidance on this topic which clearly stated the following:

The principal shall control the fund-raising activities conducted in the name of the school, and assure that the purposes are worthwhile.

Raffles and other activities of chance shall not be conducted for school connected activities.

Mr. Bergosh's primary concern was that principals needed to relay the correct information to parents and in this particular instance he said the principal was "technically" wrong in their response.

III. COMMENTS FROM SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent listed the changes that had been made to the October 16, 2012 Regular Meeting agenda since its initial publication.

IV. PROPOSED ADDITIONS OR REVISIONS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT RULES

Notice of Intent to Adopt Amendments to the School District of Escambia County, Florida Student Progression Plan

Section 2: Elementary School Education

- 2.5 Acceleration/Assessment/Resource Allocation/Retention/Promotion/Student Progression for Grade 3
2.5.4 Student Progression for Retained Grade 1 and Grade 3 Readers

Any Grade 1 remediated student who is not reading on grade level by the end of the year MUST be retained and placed in a program that is different from the previous year's program and takes into account the student's learning style. Retained Grade 1 students must be provided with intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate specific reading deficiencies, as identified by a valid and reliable diagnostic assessment. Intensive intervention must include effective instructional strategies and appropriate teaching methodologies necessary to assist these students in becoming successful readers. These interventions will help students read at or above grade level and be ready for promotion to the next grade.

Each school must conduct a review of each Grade 1 student who is not reading at grade level and who does not meet the criteria for a Good Cause Exemption for Promotion. The review will address additional support and services needed to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency.

Mr. Bergosh expressed his support of the increased promotion requirements for first grade students but mentioned once again, that it was his belief that increased promotion requirements were needed for eighth students as well.

- 4.11 Diploma Types
4.11.1 Standard Diploma (Includes Diploma Options 1, 2, and 3)
4.11.2 Adult Diploma
4.11.3 State of Florida High School Diploma (General Educational Development-GED)
4.11.4 Certificate of Completion
4.11.5 Special Certificate of Completion

At the request of Mr. Bergosh, Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education, gave a brief review of the various diploma types. *No additional information was requested and no changes to this section were suggested.*

Section 4: High School Education

- 4.9 Accelerated High School Graduation Options

Diploma Option 2 (College Preparatory) and Diploma Option 3 (Career Preparatory) require fewer credits, but the focus is more on academic courses with fewer electives required. These programs are designed for students who are clear on their future goals. Diploma Options 2 and 3 require an FCAT 2.0 score of ~~Level 3 in mathematics~~, Level 3 in reading, and Level 4 in writing on the most recent assessment. Students may select one of the graduation options at any time during Grades 9-12. Students selecting Diploma Option 2 ~~or 3~~ must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.05 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent, in the courses required for the college preparatory ~~or career preparatory~~ option. Students selecting Diploma Option 3 must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on

a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the courses required for the career preparatory program. Students must earn a passing score on the FCAT 2.0 or a score that is concordant with passing scores on a standardized test as defined in 1008.22, F.S. The student and the parent must be notified at the end of each grade if a student is not on track to meet the credit, assessment, or grade-point average requirements of the accelerated option.

Mrs. Hightower referred to the following statement in Section 4.9: *Student selecting Diploma Option 3 must achieve a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the courses required for the career preparatory program.* Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education, confirmed that the 3.0 grade point average was not a state requirement. Mrs. Hightower said that requiring a 3.0 grade point average for Diploma Option 3 (Career Preparatory) seemed arbitrary. She knew a lot of students who had tested gifted, yet had less than a 3.0 grade point average; and said those student probably would benefit from the accelerated graduation option. Mrs. Spooner said that the committee that worked on this verbiage felt that a 3.0 grade point average was an appropriate measure for the student who had the maturity, commitment, and motivation to exit early and move on to a college curriculum or some type of post-secondary training. She said a student with less than a 3.0 grade point average would benefit from the additional time in high school by taking advantage of the multitude of academic programs offered by the School District. The Superintendent did not believe that the 3.0 grade point average requirement was unreasonable. He believed that the accelerated graduation option should be seen as an incentive; and if a student wanted the “prize” of exiting early, then they would need to meet the “goal” of the required 3.0 grade point average.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Curriculum and Instruction

-No items discussed

B. Finance

-No items discussed

C. Human Resource Services

-No items discussed

D. Purchasing

5. School Bus Routing Software (Transfinder) for Transportation

Amount of Purchase: \$58,995.00 (First Year), \$17,000.00 (Second Year)

Mr. Bergosh questioned the reason for this costly purchase of school bus routing software as it was his understanding that the School District had purchased bus routing software only a few years ago. Mr. Robert Doss, Director of Transportation, clarified that the product Mr. Bergosh was referring to was the Everyday Wireless GPS tracking system for school buses; whereas, this particular product was the Transfinder school bus routing software. He said that the current routing software was “severely antiquated” and had been used by the School District for well over a decade. Mr. Doss mentioned that the Transfinder software included a satellite photography layer to enable route managers to “drive” routes to detect route and bus stop hazards at street level as they perform their routing functions.

6. Self-Insurer Assessment Fee

Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, Mr. Kevin Windham, Director of Risk Management, confirmed that the self-insurer assessment fee was a recurring annual fee set by the Florida Department of Labor, Division of Workers’ Compensation, Department of Employment Security.

11. Parents K-12 Software for Title I

Mrs. Hightower noted that the description of this purchase mentioned that the Parents K-12 software could be used by parents of Title I students to access practice activities for New Generation Florida Standards in core subject areas at all grade levels. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, Mrs. Marcia Nowlin, Director of Title I, confirmed that the Parents K-12 software resources were aligned with New Generation State Standards, as well as Common Core Standards. Mrs. Nowlin mentioned that Parents K-12 had recently announced that they would now offer mobile access, meaning that all content would be available from any device connected to the Internet, including cellular phones. Mrs. Hightower requested a report that showed the amount of times that parents had actually accessed these web-based resources.

17. Change Notice #1 to Purchase Order #5511300020 – Protection Services

At the request of Mr. Bergosh, Mr. John Dombroskie, Director of Purchasing and Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, provided an explanation for this change notice that would increase the amount of original purchase order by \$200,000 for a new total expenditure of \$232,000. Mr. Dennis said the additional \$200,000 was simply the fee paid to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for fingerprint processing and record retention of all active full-time and part-time employees, not-for-profits, and vendors. He also mentioned that the fees charged by the School District to both employees and vendors for credentialing would be sufficient enough to cover the cost of the fee paid to the FDLE plus administrative costs and other overhead. He said the reason for the change notice was because at the onset of the credentialing process being in-house for the first time, there was no realistic estimate as to what the volume would be; therefore, staff started with an initial purchase order and then asked for an expansion. Mrs. Hightower requested a report on the cost-savings that was achieved after the first year since bringing the employee and vendor credentialing service in-house.

E. Operations

-No items discussed

F. Student Transfers

-No items discussed

G. Internal Auditing

1. Inventory Adjustment Reports for sixteen (16) cost centers

Mr. Bergosh commented that the lack of findings in the annual inventory of fixed assets was “phenomenal” and said that the various schools and departments that were audited should be praised for their stewardship over those assets.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

-None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Items from the Board

-No items submitted

B. Items from the Superintendent

-No items discussed

C. Items from the General Counsel

-No items submitted

VIII. COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

1. Dixon Charter Report

This item was handled earlier in the meeting.

2. Newpoint Academy Report

This item was handled earlier in the meeting.

IX. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. Slayton called for public forum; however, there were no speakers.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair