

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, MARCH 15, 2012

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Special Workshop at 3:00 p.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 (*not present*)

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

*Meeting was advertised in the Pensacola News Journal on February 23, 2012 – Legal No. 1555559*

[General discussion took place among Board Members, the Superintendent, and staff throughout this meeting.]

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Slayton called the Special Workshop to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- Hall Center Room 160 Board Meeting Seating and Podium Layout - Bergosh

[*Handouts provided to School Board Members and the Superintendent*]

Mr. Bergosh requested that the Superintendent have his staff look into the possibility of an alternative room setup for the School Board's regular meetings held each month in Room 160, at the J.E. Hall Educational Services Center. His desire was that the podium and audience seating was situated such that individuals at the podium could face both the School Board and the audience simultaneously.

- Eighth Grade Promotion Requirements/Eighth Grade Gate - Bergosh

[*Handouts provided to School Board Members*]

NOTE: *This issue was previously addressed at the February 16, 2012 Special Workshop.* Mr. Bergosh again discussed his belief that the School Board should consider raising the bar in terms of requirements for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to move into high school. He presented information on other school districts in Florida, New York, Georgia, and Wisconsin that have more rigorous advancement requirements for 8<sup>th</sup> graders than does the Escambia County School District. He requested that School Board Members review the information he had provided so that when the School District's Student Progression Plan came up for review in the next few months, everyone would be prepared, if they as a School Board felt it was prudent, to increase the requirements for students to progress from middle to high school.

- School Board Member Networking Statewide (and Nationwide) for Best Practices/Idea Sharing - Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh said he would postpone this item until the April 12, 2012 Special Workshop at which time Mrs. Donna Waters, General Counsel would be present for discussion on the topic.

- Second Chance Program at the Judy Andrews Center - Boone

Mr. Boone initiated a discussion regarding the plan to move the adult education program to the George Stone Center, leaving only the Second Chance Program at the Judy Andrews Center. After finding out that there were only a small number of students (currently 55) enrolled in the Second Chance Program, he was having a hard time accepting that the Judy Andrews Center would only be occupied by a small number of Second Chance students. In an effort to save money, he wondered if it would be possible to relocate the Second Chance Program somewhere else in the School District, perhaps the George Stone Center; thereby, saving the costs of operating the Judy Andrews Center and also saving the money by eliminating the need for the recently established Coordinator III position for the Second Chance Program. Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education, said that the Second Chance Program could not be relocated to the George Stone Center because George Stone actually shared a facility with West Florida High School so there were already capacity issues with having a regular high school on that campus. She also stressed the importance of the newly established Coordinator III position which in her opinion would be the “heart” of the Second Chance Program in that, the individual selected for that position would provide the leadership necessary to support the incredible needs of the students enrolled in that program. The Superintendent added that the facility situation for the Second Chance Program would be improving because with the adult education program being relocated to George Stone Center, the Second Chance Program would now be able to move into the main building at the Judy Andrews Center. The Superintendent reminded School Board Members that the students enrolled in the Second Chance Program were students who had previously been expelled from regular public school. He noted that the Second Chance Program was offered as an alternative education opportunity for expelled students, as was Camelot Academy and staff had considered moving Second Chance students to the Camelot program however, doing so would cost more to the District. Staff had also looked at trying to blend the Second Chance program into another location, but was unable to work that out so for at least the next school year, the Second Chance Program would remain at the Judy Andrews Center.

- Director of Middle School Education Position - Hightower

Mrs. Hightower initiated a discussion regarding the position of Director of Middle School Education, noting that she had began to think about the necessity of the position once Mr. Steve Marcanio, former Director of Middle School Education was promoted Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum. She recalled when the School District went from having only a Director of Secondary Education to having both a Director of Middle School Education and Director of High School Education. She suggested that this might be the appropriate time to discuss whether both director positions, Director of Elementary School Education and Director of High School Education, were still necessary or whether those positions could be combined into one position of Director of Secondary Education. In her opinion, it seemed that “one person overseeing the whole articulation from middle to high school would make more sense at this particular juncture” especially with “more of the high school being pushed down into middle school with the coursework and all.” Mrs. Moultrie favored having both a Director of Middle School Education and Director of High School Education as she did not agree with “putting all the oversight responsibility” for both middle and high school requirements on only one person. Mr. Boone noted that the argument for having two separate positions was because one person could not handle the responsibilities of both middle and high school education, but he noted that was now occurring with Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education also handling the responsibilities of the Director of Middle School Education position. The Superintendent clarified that Mrs. Spooner had assumed those responsibilities only temporarily until such time as the Director of Middle School Education position could be filled. He noted that the decision for Mrs. Spooner to temporarily assume those responsibilities was made because he did not want to put a school in the position of changing principals in the middle of the current school year, noting that it was very likely that the Director of Middle School Education would be filled by a school principal. The Superintendent believed that part of the School District’s success over the last several years was attributable to having a separate director for middle school education and high school education to focus on their respective area. Mr. Bergosh did not want to say whether or not the School District could manage with only one director until he had looked how other similar-sized schools districts were

structured. The Superintendent said he would pull data to show that Escambia County was “not real top heavy” compared to other school districts in Florida. Mr. Slayton said he was skeptical when the position of Director of Middle School Education was initially created but over time, he began to see a marked difference in that middle schools began to take on an identity they had never had before. He noted that when there was only one position (Director of Secondary Education) to oversee both middle and high school education, the majority of that person’s time was spent on high school matters. So while at one time, he would have said that one person could handle both, he no longer believed that was the case.

- School Nurses - Hightower

Mrs. Hightower initiated a discussion regarding the impact of cuts to the school nursing program. NOTE: *An estimated budget deficit of \$3.18 million has lead to the cuts by the Escambia County Health Department totaling about \$1.8 million in the school nursing program. Across Escambia County, there would be 42 nurses and 24 health support technicians cut from the payroll. Currently there is at least a two-person health care team in each Escambia County public school comprised of a full-time school nurse and a health technician. Beginning next year, there would only be 15 school nurses, seven of which will serve a regional cluster of schools. There will be 54 health support technicians remaining, with one in every school.* The Superintendent noted that even with the changes to the school nursing program, Escambia County would still be staffed far above that of school districts in the surrounding area (i.e., Okaloosa and Santa Rosa). He noted that Escambia County has had the “absolute best practice for a long time” and he said “to be truthful, in some of our schools we were probably overstaffed in that we did not need two people (school nurse and health technician) all the time.” He said the plan for next year would put one health technician at each school campus to handle those tasks that generally did not require a nurse. In addition, seven school nurses would serve a regional cluster of schools. He noted that perhaps the biggest hit to the current situation was that the new plan would diminish the ability of a school nurse to provide health education lessons in the classrooms; but in terms of servicing the needs of students, Escambia County would still be able to do that at a level far above that of school districts in the surrounding area.

- Purchasing of Tablets - Slayton

Mr. Slayton said he would postpone this item to the April 12, 2012 Special Workshop.

- March and April Calendar/Events - Slayton

This item was not addressed.

- Presentation on Natural Gas School Buses - Superintendent

Mr. Robert Doss, Director of Transportation, narrated a PowerPoint® presentation on the idea of converting the School District’s fleet of school buses from diesel to natural gas. NOTE: *Copies of documents outlining the information provided in the PowerPoint® presentation were provided to School Board Members prior to this meeting.* Following the presentation, there was much discussion on the pros and cons of converting to natural gas school buses. The Superintendent and Mr. Doss said their recommendation was that the School District should maintain the fleet of diesel-operated school buses until infrastructure was in place such that the return on investment to replace the fleet with natural gas buses could be justified by overall cost savings. Mr. Doss said that at present, moving to natural gas did not seem to make sense economically.

- Comprehensive Drug Plan - Superintendent

Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education, Mr. Steve Sharp, Manager-Protection Services, and Mr. Darriel While, Court Liaison, gave a brief presentation on the effectiveness of the

School District's Comprehensive Drug Plan that included the following information for the 2011-2012 school year:

- There had been no complaints from parents about drug testing or canine drug searches
- 61% of all high school students and 36% of all middle school students were in the pool for random drug screenings
- Through February 14, 2012, a total of 248 canine drug searches had been conducted in middle and high schools, resulting in 41 alerts by the canines (17% of all searches), with small quantities of drugs found 2 times, drug residue/paraphernalia found 3 times, and with the remaining 35 alerts being for drug odor only
- Students have taken "ownership" of the drug awareness campaign and students are reporting fellow students who bring drugs on campus via Crime Stoppers and/or directly to the deans, administrators, or school-based Law Enforcement Officer (School Resource Officer)
- There has been a decline in the number of drug-related expulsions, from 85 during the 2009-2010 school year, to 49 during 2010-2011, and thus far only 19 for 2011-2012.

- School Wellness Update - Superintendent

Ms. Sue Kennedy, United Healthcare Wellness Coordinator, gave a brief update on school wellness that included information about the following:

Grants received:

- National Association of School Nurses (NASN) [Funded by United Health Foundation]
  - Bellview Elementary pedometers (\$2100)
  - N.B. Cook Elementary raised bed gardens and fruit trees (\$2500)
  - Cordova Park Elementary activity tracking devices for lap run in PE (\$2500)
- United Heroes Grants [Funded through United Health Care]
  - McArthur Elementary raised bed gardens (\$500)
  - Oakcrest Elementary raised bed gardens (\$500)
  - Cordova Park Elementary fruit trees (\$500)
- United Health Foundation
  - Florida Extension Services through 4-H Culinary/Nutrition Education (\$25,000)
- Share Our Strength/Shopping Matters - O.J. Semmes Elementary (\$500)

Other Activities/Programs

- Case Management/Nurse Referrals
- JOIN for Me Childhood Obesity Intervention Program (United Health Care)
- After School Care Nutrition Education
- Kid Power Presentation
- Health Fairs/Wellness Nights
- We Believe in Children 5K
- Oakcrest Healthy Family Night
- Weis Healthy Family Night
- School Health Fairs

- Adjustments to Schedule of School Board Meetings for June and July 2012

The following adjustments were made to the School Board's schedule for June and July 2012:

- The date of the June Regular Meeting was changed from June 19<sup>th</sup> to June 26<sup>th</sup>
- The date of the June Regular Workshop was changed from June 15<sup>th</sup> to June 21<sup>st</sup> beginning at 8:00 a.m.
- The June Special "Open Discussion" Workshop originally scheduled for June 14<sup>th</sup> was canceled; however, the agenda for the June Regular Workshop would include an "open discussion" segment
- The date of the July Regular Workshop was changed from July 13<sup>th</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8:00 a.m.
- The July Special "Open Discussion" Workshop that was originally scheduled for July 12<sup>th</sup> was canceled; however, the agenda for the July Regular Workshop would include an "open discussion" segment

III. PUBLIC FORUM

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

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Superintendent

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Chair

PENDING BOARD APPROVAL