

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 11, 2014

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: Mrs. Linda Moultrie Vice Chair: Mrs. Patricia Hightower

Board Members: Mr. Jeff Bergosh
Mr. Gerald W. Boone
Mr. Bill Slayton

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

Meeting was advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on September 1, 2014 - Legal No. [1629121](#)

NOTE: The minutes from this session have been prepared according to *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*. The video from this session is available at <http://escambiacountysdfl.swagit.com/play/09112014-621>

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Moultrie called the Special Workshop to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- Pensacola High School's Early Childhood Education Academy – *Superintendent*

Mr. David Powell, Human Resources Director for Head Start and the Community Action Program, introduced the group and began the presentation. Mr. Powell said it was the intention of the Community Action Program to provide a pipeline for students coming out of the Early Childhood Education Academy to be offered positions as Teacher Assistants. Then, once hired as Teacher Assistants, then we would create a scholarship program where we would actually pay for them to go further as a teacher and also pay for their degree. The following students enrolled in the Early Childhood Academy at Pensacola High School commented on the positive benefits from being involved in the Escambia County Early Childhood Education Program – practical experience - their career goals for the future, and the opportunities' that this program had afforded them: Kira Cruz, Tatiana Wilker, Jada Terell, and Saviona Johnson. The Superintendent was hopeful that students in the Early Childhood Education Academy would gain practical experience while in high school and then go on to obtain a college degree and certification so that the Escambia County School District could eventually employ them as teachers.

- Action Plans to Support Struggling Schools – *Superintendent*

The Superintendent's staff presented the School Board with a brief summary of Operation 212, which outlined the action plans to support struggling schools. Following the presentations, staff responded to various questions posed by School Board Members regarding those action plans. Detailed information

regarding the actions plans was outlined in handouts provided to the School Board; a summary of the information was outlined in a PowerPoint presentation.

- Invocation protocol for regular monthly School Board meetings – Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh noted that the School Board had recently been contacted by several individuals who had asked to deliver the invocation at an upcoming School Board meeting. Mrs. Waters advised that Mr. Bergosh had asked for legal guidance on the matter based upon the recent decision in Greece vs. Galloway. Mrs. Waters had provided her opinion in writing to the School Board Members prior to this session. She reminded them that she had invoked the attorney-client work product privilege under Chapter 119 - 071D in that the information provided reflected her mental process as in a legal theory. Mrs. Waters began by pointing out that the decision in Greece vs. Galloway was only four-months old and as such, the interpretation of it was very much in flux; not yet static. At present, she did not believe it necessary for the School Board to change its past practice but she did warn School Board Members that past practice did carry some degree of risk of litigation. She advised that the only way to avoid all chance of litigation was to move to a “moment of silence” or do away with the invocation entirely. Mrs. Waters noted that she had provided the School Board several options to consider. Mr. Bergosh questioned whether his fellow School Board Members were in agreement with continuing their past practice. Mrs. Hightower, Mr. Slayton, Mr. Boone, and Mrs. Moultrie each said they were in favor of continuing their past practice.

- Establishing new sports teams at individual schools – Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh said there were a number of parents with students who wished to be part of a wrestling team. He wanted to know how those parents would go about getting such a team established at their child’s school. The Superintendent said there were a number of issues/factors that the school principal would have to consider before establishing any new sport team including: student interest, Title IX implications, funding for various expenditures and an appropriate facility. The Superintendent said parents should make their request known to the school principal and offer to assist in the development of a plan for implementation. He noted that it was certainly possible to establish a new sports team, but noted that it might take considerable time for it to become a reality.

- Timetable for New-School Construction to address Northwest corridor growth – Bergosh

- Under-utilized school sites – action strategy – Bergosh

(NOTE: Mr. Bergosh decided to combine these two topics into one discussion.) Mr. Bergosh said he need to know the timetable for new-school construction that would address the northwest corridor growth. It was his understanding that the three largest elementary schools were located in his district and parents had reported to him that the overcapacity situation at Beulah Elementary was creating problems particularly in terms of student drop-off congestion, cafeteria congestion, etc. He addressed the need for “balance” in terms of schools such as Beulah Elementary, that were “bursting at the seams” while others, such as Montclair Elementary and Lincoln Park Elementary were underutilized. As such, he wanted to know the timetable for construction of the new elementary school in the northwest area of the county, the new middle school, and the new elementary school in the southwest area of the county. He also wanted to know the plan to address underutilized school sites. The Superintendent said these issues had been discussed with the School Board in the past when he and his staff had presented their plan. The Superintendent reminded Mr. Bergosh that the plan was contingent upon approval off the one-half cent sales tax renewal by Escambia County voters. If the sales tax renewal was approved, then the School District would begin to move forward with all of the “shifts” and the construction projects that had been previously discussed.

- Balancing School Choice options with athletic transfers – Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh wanted to be sure he understood the new process concerning school choice options and athletic eligibility for high school students. The Superintendent noted that there was essentially “open choice” for parents to decide where they wanted their child to attend high school. Once enrolled at a

particular high school, the student would be eligible to participate in athletics at that high school. However, as part of the new process that began in August 2014, if a student then transferred to any other high school for any reason, they would lose their athletic eligibility and would be required to have that eligibility reinstated by a School District committee that would review the circumstance of the transfer and would validate compliance with Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) eligibility rules. (In the past, individual schools had been required to determine a student's athletic eligibility.) The committee would then send documentation to the student's new high school indicating whether or not the student's transfer was compliance with FHSAA regulations. The Superintendent noted that a student would be denied athletic eligibility at their new high school only if the transfer did not meet the criteria in the Florida High School Athletic Association rules.

- 2014 Summer School Graduation Update – *Slayton*

Mr. Slayton said he had received an email that indicated Ms. Lesa Morgan, Director of Secondary Education, would be providing him with information related to this topic; as such, he saw no need for discussion at that time.

- September and October calendar – *Moultrie*

September Schedule of Workshops/Meetings

There were no changes to the School Board's schedule of workshops/meetings for September.

October Schedule of Workshops/Meetings

There were no changes to the School Board's schedule of workshops/meetings for October. At the request of the Superintendent, the School Board agreed to schedule a Special Meeting for the purpose of considering approval of out-of-field teachers on October 9, 2014, beginning at 8:00 a.m., in the Superintendent's Conference Room, at the Dr. Vernon McDaniel Building, 75 North Pace Boulevard.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. David Suhor, speaking as an individual, registered to address the School Board regarding invocations.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair