

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, AUGUST 14, 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 July 29, 2014 - Legal No. 1627288

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/08142014-675>

[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 3:01 p.m.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- IBC Retirees Benefits Program – Superintendent

(NOTE: This topic related to Item V.b.3.C.4., Florida Retired School Employee Benefit Program School District Participation Agreement and Interlocal Agreement, on the August 19, 2014 Regular Meeting agenda.) Mr. Kevin Windham, Director of Risk Management, introduced Mr. John Robinson, from Robinson-Bush, Inc., who identified himself as a consultant for the Independent Benefits Council (IBC). Mr. Robinson narrated a PowerPoint® [presentation](#) which described the Florida Retired School Employee Benefit Program and detailed specifics for the plan offering for post-65 retirees that currently participate in the District's Retiree Indemnity Medical Plan. Upon inquiry by Mr. Slayton, Mr. Windham assured the School Board that the specifics of this new retiree benefit program would be communicated to the School District's post-65 retirees by way of a document prepared by FBMC Benefits Management, Inc.

- Update from the “Community Connect for Student Success” Task Force – Superintendent

Mrs. Moultrie thanked the task force for their work. Dr. Samuel Bolden, introduced himself as a retired educator and the facilitator of the Community Connect for Student Success Task Force. Dr. Bolden introduced task force member, Ms. Tonya Gant, who narrated a brief PowerPoint® [presentation](#) which outlined the following:

- Task Force Members
- Mission – Closing the Minority Achievement Gap
- Proposal #1 – Mandatory Tutoring
- Proposal #2 – Peer to Peer Tutoring
- Proposal #3 – Mandatory Parent Participation [Parental Probation]
- Proposal #4 – Mandatory Teacher Cultural Diversity Training [Teach the Teacher]
- Proposal #5 – Mandatory School Social Worker Resource Training
- Community Partners, Stakeholders
- Community Partners Identified
- Next Steps

Mr. Bergosh thanked the members of the task force for their time. He expressed his support of the task force’s first three (3) proposals: mandatory tutoring, peer-to-peer tutoring, and mandatory parent participation. Mrs. Hightower and Mrs. Moultrie also thanked the members of the task force for their time and efforts. Mrs. Hightower said she appreciated that the task force was willing to continue working on this issue as evidenced by the “next steps” they had outlined in their presentation. Mrs. Moultrie felt it important to remind members of the task force to “draw” from the numerous resources available in the community as they embarked on the “next steps” outlined in their presentation.

- August and September Calendar – Moultrie

There were no changes to the School Board’s schedule for August or September. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent said he would provide School Board Members with a list of all elementary school “open house” dates and times.

- Turnaround Solutions Contract - Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh referred to the contract with Turnaround Solutions, Inc., that was approved by the School Board in July (*see* Item V.b.2.E.22., *Agreement: Turnaround Solutions Inc. for Warrington Middle School*, which was approved 3 to 0, with Mrs. Hightower and Mr. Bergosh absent for vote at the July 22, 2014 Regular Meeting). He noted that he had when the contract was originally presented in June but was unable to discuss those because the item was deleted from the agenda before he had an opportunity to do so; and when the contract was represented in July, he was on vacation and again unable to discuss his concerns. Though he had heard wonderful things about Turnaround Solutions, Inc., Mr. Bergosh was not convinced that their coaching approach was the “best solution” for Warrington Middle School. He was also concerned with the cost of the contract, noting that the amount of \$375,000 was quite large for only three (3) part-time Turnaround Solutions staff who would provide only 4,000 hours of service total. Mr. Slayton pointed out that although Mr. Bergosh was not present in July when the matter was discussed, the School Board Members who were present at that time had read the contract, asked the necessary questions during the July Regular Workshop, and ultimately agreed to approve the contract at the July Regular Meeting. Mr. Slayton, Mrs. Moultrie, and Mr. Boone, who were the three (3) School Board Members voting to approve the contract

in July, each said they still approved of the contract with Turnaround Solutions, Inc. despite the cost and believed that the services to be provided by that company were needed for Warrington Middle School. Each of them also pointed out that the recently appointed principal of Warrington Middle School, Dr. Regina Lipnick, had indicated that the support services to be provided by Turnaround Solutions, Inc., were essential for her school's success. Mrs. Hightower thanked Mr. Bergosh for submitting this as a topic of discussion as she too, had concerns when the contract was originally presented in June and like Mr. Bergosh, she was on vacation when the contract was resubmitted in July. Mrs. Hightower said that since she had returned from vacation, she had spent the time necessary to review the resubmitted contract, request additional information, and talked with school board members from other counties that had contracted with Turnaround Solutions, Inc. Mrs. Hightower advised that she was now in support of this endeavor for Warrington Middle School. Mr. Bergosh thanked each of his fellow School Board Members for taking the time to address the matter.

- Mandated Ethics Training for 2014 – Boone

Mr. Boone referred to the 2014 Florida School Boards Association's mandatory Ethics Training Program that was designed to meet the four (4) hours of annual ethics training required of Florida School Board members. He wanted to know if his fellow School Board Members were interested in participating in the "on-demand" webinar session rather than the "live" training session in Tampa; and if they were interested in the "on-demand" session, he wanted to know if all five (5) School Board Members could be in the same room and pay one registration fee or if all would have to attend individually and each pay the registration fee. Mrs. Hightower said she had contacted Andrea Messina, the FSBA's Director of Board Development to discuss the possibility of registering collectively as the School Board rather than each School Board Member registering individually. Once she had discussed the matter with Ms. Messina, Mrs. Hightower said she would notify Mrs. Linda West, Coordinator of Board Affairs so that the response could be relayed to the rest of the School Board. She pointed out that that if the School Board Members participated collectively in the "on-demand" training session, that session would need to be advertised to the public and Mrs. Waters, as the School Board's General Counsel, would need to present.

- 2014 Summer School Graduation Update – Slayton

(NOTE: *This topic was previously submitted by Mr. Slayton on the July 17, 2014 Regular Workshop agenda. At that time, the Superintendent advised Mr. Slayton that staff had attempted to gather the information that he had requested; however, much of the information would have to be retrieved from high school guidance counselors who were currently on summer break. The Superintendent advised that Mr. Slayton's request would be fulfilled as soon as possible.*) The Superintendent advised that staff was still working to gather the information that Mr. Slayton had requested. He hoped to have all of the information by the middle of the following week and would provide a report to all School Board Members at that time.

- Communications Between the Community and the School District – Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh initiated a discussion regarding communications between the community and the School District. He was concerned that the public was often frustrated by not being able to reach a "live" person when contacting a department and/or school by phone. He questioned the possibility of instituting a central switchboard so that at least the first contact with the School District would be a "live" person rather than an automated menu or a voice mail system. The Superintendent said he and his Executive Staff would explore the possibility of a central switchboard.

- Impact of “Smart Snacks” on Fund-raising – Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh expressed concerns regarding the impact of the Smart Snacks in School regulation on fundraising efforts of minor sports teams. (NOTE: *Starting in school year 2014-15, all foods sold at school during the school day will need to meet nutrition standards. The Smart Snacks in School regulation applies to foods sold a la carte, in the school store, and vending machines.*) Mr. Bergosh said he agreed with a number of other states such as Georgia and Tennessee that have commented that the Smart Snacks in School regulation was an “intrusion” by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). There was discussion among the School Board and Ms. Jaleena Davis, Director of Food Services, regarding the impact that this regulation would have on the School District’s fundraising efforts. Ms. Davis also responded to questions regarding the ability for school boards to request a certain number of special exemption days for fundraisers at the different school levels. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, Ms. Davis said that the Florida Department of Agriculture had not outlined any specific consequences for school boards that did not follow the Smart Snacks in School guidelines. As suggested by Mr. Bergosh, the Superintendent said he would look into how other states such as Georgia were handling this situation and determine whether similar actions were appropriate for Escambia County.

- School Supplies – Hightower

Mrs. Hightower initiated a discussion about school supplies as she had received several phone calls from parents as to why a Kindergarten student needed four (4), six (6), or even eight (8) packs of twenty-four (24) count crayons for the first day of school. Mrs. Linda Maletsidis, Director of Elementary Education, responded that it was “because they (school supplies) are much cheaper to buy at this particular time of the year; if you bought them in January, it would triple the amount of money that a parent would spend so we don’t ask for parents to replenish during the year – whatever we get covers them for the entire year.” Mrs. Maletsidis said it had been a number of years since staff had thoroughly reviewed the school supply lists so a committee would be formed to do so; and the committee would work to ensure that each grade level at each of the different schools would ask for and receive what they really needed. The Superintendent said the committee would work to standardize the supply lists for each grade level so that there would be only one list for a particular grade level for all Escambia County schools; schools would be permitted to present a “wish list” to parents during open house and orientation sessions. In response to concerns expressed by Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent said that once the school supply lists were standardized, a note could be added to the bottom of each list indicating that if providing these supplies would create a hardship for the parent, they should contact their child’s school principal. On related note, Mr. Slayton asked that in the future, the School District make local churches aware of the need for school supplies. He believed that many churches would like to help the School District by providing supplies but they should be made aware of the needs prior to the start of school so that they too can take advantage of the low cost of school supplies during that time of year.

- Purchasing Card Cardholder Request Form – Hightower

Mrs. Hightower wanted to know why, when filling out a *Purchasing Card Cardholder Request Form*, a principal or department head had to verify that the cardholder would travel three (3) or more times in a one (1) year period in order to be issued a travel card. Mr. Terry St. Cyr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Business Services, said the purpose of verification from a principal or department head was to ensure that travel cards were being requested and issued to only those individuals would actually use the cards as having unused excess cards was not considered a good business practice. He noted that the verification was more of

a reminder than verification, to the principal or department head that they should only request a card for an individual who would actually use the card.

- I.B. Middle Years Program – Moultrie

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Moultrie, the Superintendent cited a number of ways in which the School District was making elementary school students, specifically 5<sup>th</sup> graders, aware of the I.B. Middle Years Program at Workman Middle School:

-The I.B. Middle Years Program had been included in the School District’s academy showcase in November.

-The I.B. Middle Years Program Coordinator had invited parents and students to several meetings at feeder elementary schools and at Workman Middle School.

-School Messenger had been used to conduct a “call-out” to the parents of all rising 5<sup>th</sup> graders, advising them of an orientation/organization meeting at Workman Middle School.

Mr. Steve Marcanio, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, advised that Workman’s school website was another means by which the School District had promoted the program.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Mrs. Moultrie called for public forum; however, there were no speakers.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Superintendent

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Chair

PENDING BOARD APPROVAL