

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, APRIL 13, 2018

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Regular Workshop at 9:00 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. Gerald W. Boone (District II)  
Vice Chair: Mrs. Patricia Hightower (District IV)  
Board Members: Mr. Kevin L. Adams (District I)  
Ms. Lee H. C. Hansen (District III)

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

*Absent: Board Member Bill Slayton (District V)*

Meeting advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on April 2, 2018 – Legal No. [2825030](#)

NOTE: Minutes from this session have been prepared according to *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.  
Video from this session is available at <http://escambiacycountysdfl.swagit.com/play/05112018-598>

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Boone called the Regular Workshop to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. COMMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Display of State Motto, “In God We Trust” – To meet a new Legislative requirement to display the state motto in a “conspicuous place” at all public schools, the School District would simply mount in all entryways, a laminate board displaying the Great Seal of Florida, already encircled with those words.

III. MINUTES

-No items discussed

IV. COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

**ADD** - Jacqueline Harris Preparatory Academy Transportation Corrective Action Plan

Mr. David Alexander, representing Jacqueline Harris Preparatory Academy (JHPA), advised that the JHPA Board of Directors had decided not to outsource student transportation; instead, they would continue providing their own transportation and would be looking to purchase new buses. (JHPA’s remedy of the situation that led to a Transportation Corrective Action Plan was to be noted on the next Charter School Quarterly Report in June 2018).

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

-No items submitted

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. PROPOSED ADDITIONS OR REVISIONS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT RULES

1. Rule(s) Adoption

-No items submitted

2. Permission to Advertise

A. [Approval to Advertise Notice of Intent to Adopt Amendments to the School District of Escambia County, Florida Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#)

After much discussion regarding a number of the proposed amendments to the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, the Superintendent agreed to the following changes:

Page 3 – *Revise dates to reflect the 2018-19 school year*

Page 29 – *Revise ten-(10) point reduction to ten percent (10%) reduction*

Page 30 – *Modify third paragraph in Section B*

Page 58 – *Rename Section D “Trespass on School Property” and modify verbiage to include school buses as school property*

Page 60 – *Section I: Delete the term secondary*

Page 83 – *Add Safety/Security Violation to glossary*

b. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Curriculum

No specific items discussed; however, at the request of Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent and Mr. Chris McFarland, Coordinator of School Choice, gave a brief update on school choice.

2. Finance and Business Services

A. Finance

4. [2017-2018 Educational Support Personnel Salary Schedule](#)

The Superintendent expressed his appreciation for the collaborative effort by the bargaining teams for both the School District and the Union of Escambia ESP that led to an agreement on the ESP salary schedule and ESP master contract.

E. Purchasing

19. [Annual Agreement: Professional Building Commissioning Services](#)

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, explained that building commissioning would occur at the onset of a new system, and would ensure that all essential systems were functioning properly and operating efficiently.

3. Human Resource Services

A. Instructional/Professional

**ADD**

7. Special Requests
  - a. [Approve the 2018-2019 Department Personnel Planning Document](#)

Mrs. Hightower referred to a number of positions the Superintendent was recommending to remain vacant for a second year. While she understood that departments might be apprehensive to give up a position, she also wondered if a position was even necessary to the School District's mission if it could remain vacant for another year. The Superintendent said each of those positions were essential, but he was recommending those positions remain vacant for a second year because the School District was in no better position financially this year, then it was last year. He believed that leaving a position vacant rather than deleting it on the Personnel Planning Document served to "highlight" the reality that essential positions could not be filled due to insufficient funding from the State. Ms. Hansen agreed with the Superintendent; she also believed it important to "spread the word" regarding the impact of not being able to fill those positions.

4. Operations
  - No items submitted
- c. ITEMS FROM THE BOARD
  - No items submitted
- d. ITEMS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT
  4. Other Items
    - A. [Memorandum of Understanding Between the School Board of Escambia County, Florida and the Escambia County Public School Foundation, Inc.](#)

The Superintendent gave a brief explanation regarding this first ever Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the School Board and the Escambia County Public School Foundation, Inc. He then clarified a few details in response to inquiry by Mrs. Hightower.

- B. [Resolution – Escambia County School District Referendum \(Appoint or Elect Superintendent of Schools of Escambia County\)](#)

The Superintendent recommended that the School Board approve this resolution requesting that the Board of County Commissioners place on the November 2018 Florida general election ballot, the question of whether the superintendent of schools in Escambia County, Florida should be appointed by the School Board. The Superintendent believed this an ideal time to again question to the community on this matter, given that he did not intend to seek reelection in 2020. The Superintendent clarified that his recommendation to pose the question was not an endorsement for either method. Mr. Slayton said he would not support the approval of this resolution, as he did not believe that an appointed superintendent was good for school districts and because he had not heard from any constituents who wished to see this matter on the next general election ballot. Mrs. Hightower requested that Mrs. Waters research the School Board limitations with regard to advocating for or against the matter of an appointed or elected superintendent of schools.

e. INTERNAL AUDITING

1. [Inventory Adjustment Reports for thirty-one \(31\) cost centers](#)

Mrs. Hightower thanked the Internal Auditing staff for such a thorough report. She also commented on how well schools and departments continued to safeguard School District assets.

f. ITEMS FROM GENERAL COUNSEL

1. [Final Order: DOAH Case No. 17-5600, Escambia County School Board vs. Deborah Peterson](#)

It was noted that both Mr. Joseph L. Hammons, attorney to the Superintendent, and Mr. Ronald G. Stowers, attorney for Deborah Peterson, would present at the May 15, 2018 Regular Meeting. After reviewing the Recommended Order of the Administrative Law Judge and the Respondent's Exceptions thereto, Mrs. Waters advised the School Board to adopt the Recommended Order as is.

VII. [PUBLIC FORUM](#)

-No registration forms submitted

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Regular Workshop adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Attest:

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair