

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, APRIL 12, 2019

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: Mrs. Patricia Hightower (District IV)
Vice Chair: Mr. Bill Slayton (District V)
Board Members: Mr. Kevin L. Adams (District I)
Mr. Paul Fetsko (District II)
Dr. Laura Dortch Edler (District III)

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

School Board General Counsel, Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Meeting advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on March 26, 2019 – Legal No. [3453508](#)

Minutes prepared according to *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*

Video available at <http://escambiacountysdfl.swagit.com/play/04122019-645>

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Hightower called the Regular Workshop to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. COMMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent reported no changes to the agenda for the April 16, 2019 Regular Meeting. At the request of the Superintendent, Mr. Terry St. Cyr, Assistant Superintendent – Finance & Business Services, gave a brief update on the budget by reviewing information outlined in a PowerPoint® [presentation](#) entitled *2019-20 Budget Overview Legislative Session: District Outlook for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.*

III. MINUTES

-No items discussed

IV. COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

-No items discussed

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](#)

There was much discussion regarding the order of content in the “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs) section.

FAQ #2, *When can I use my cell phone?*

FAQ #3, *What should not be done with my cell phone/device at any time?*

FAQ #5, *Can my cell phone, Chromebook or other electronic device be searched?*

Given that cell phones in the classroom was a primary concern for teachers, especially at the high school level, several School Board Members suggested that all FAQs related to cell phones should be addressed at the beginning of the FAQ list such that FAQ#3 would become FAQ #1, FAQ#5 would become FAQ #2, and FAQ #2 would become FAQ #3.

FAQ #5, *Can my cell phone, Chromebook or other electronic device be searched?*

Answer: Yes, a student’s cell phone, Chromebook or electronic device can be searched if there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated the Student Responsible Use Guidelines for Technology and/or the student possesses a prohibited or illegally possessed item. WARNING: The taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd, illegal images or photographs of oneself or others, whether by electronic data transfer or otherwise (commonly called texting, sexting, e-mailing, etc.) will result in discipline as indicated in the Discipline Intervention Matrix. In addition, such activity may constitute a CRIME and/or invasion of privacy under state and/or federal law. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, pornographic, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs will be reported to law enforcement and/or other appropriate state or federal agencies, which may result in arrest, criminal prosecution, and LIFETIME inclusion on sexual offender registries.

Mrs. Hightower suggested bolding the warning outlined in the answer to FAQ #5 in order to draw a reader’s attention to the fact that certain electronic device activity is considered a crime.

FAQ #16, *When can I use headphones or ear buds?*

Answer: Students can use headphones or ear buds in class when directed by a teacher for instructional purposes. It is not permissible to use headphones or ear buds at any other time in common areas or hallways because you may not be able to hear announcements or alarms.

In light of the suggestion that all FAQs related to cell phones should be addressed at the beginning of the FAQ list, Ms. Vicki Gibowski, Director – Middle Schools, suggested also moving FAQ #16 to become FAQ #4 given that it related to the use of headphones/ear buds which was mentioned several times throughout the handbook. Given the potential safety hazard of students using headphones/ear buds in common areas or hallways, Mr. Slayton suggested flipping the order of this answer such that the safety hazard would be addressed in the very first statement. It was noted that a similar change would be made to the other instances where this topic appears throughout the handbook. In order to stress the issue of safety to students, Mrs.

Hightower suggested that “for safety purposes” be added to each line referencing headphones/ear buds.

FAQ #12, *What is bullying?*

FAQ #13, *What do I do if I am being bullied?*

It was noted that the two FAQs related to bullying would be grouped together and rearranged to appear after FAQs related to cell phones and headphones/ear buds, such that FAQ #12 would become FAQ #5 and FAQ #13 would become FAQ #6.

FAQ #1, *What do I do if I realize I brought something to school that I should not have at school like a knife or prescription medication?*

Both Mr. Slayton and Mrs. Hightower felt that FAQ #1 should remain in the top 10 of the FAQ list. Given that the FAQs related to cell phones, headphones/ear buds, and bullying would now occupy FAQs #1 through #6, FAQ #1 would become FAQ #7.

Dr. Edler reported on several matters discussed in her presence during some of the Rights & Responsibilities Committee meetings, including the handbook being too wordy and the handbook not having enough color and/or photos. ~~Dr. Edler questioned whether the name of the handbook could be changed and the Superintendent responded that Florida Statutes actually required every school district in Florida to create a “rights and responsibilities” handbook. As such, he did not believe the name of the handbook could be changed, but said perhaps the School Board could add to that name.~~ Dr. Edler questioned the relationship between the students’ Rights and Responsibility and the Cost per FTE document included on the back cover. She stated the information was inappropriately place and it appeared as an afterthought. Here are your rights and responsibilities, and oh, by the way, here is how much it cost to educate you. Dr. Edler recommended that the cost per FTE be removed from the R/R or change the name of the handbook.

b. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Curriculum

A. Alternative Education

1. [Amendment to the Contract for Educational Services Between the School Board of Escambia County, Florida and Camelot Schools of Florida, LLC](#)

(NOTE: *Representatives of Camelot Schools of Florida, LLC were present for this session.*) Mr. Slayton and Mr. Fetsko each commented that Camelot had exceeded their expectations and they very much appreciated the difference that Camelot’s faculty and staff were making with students who had been removed from their regular home school. Upon inquiry by Dr. Edler, the Superintendent confirmed that data had been collected regarding the number of Camelot students who return to their regular home school and successfully complete their studies and/or graduate. He noted the objective was not just to have them return to their regular home school, but to do so because they had truly changed their behavior such that they would not return to Camelot in the future. The Superintendent was to obtain and provide to the School Board, data from Camelot regarding the percent of

elementary and secondary students who were able to return to their regular home school; and the percentage who completed their studies at Camelot.

B. Continuous Improvement

1. [School Choice Student Transfers](#)

Mrs. Hightower said she had asked for the number of students outside the Workman Middle School zone who had applied for a transfer to attend Workman Middle School. The Superintendent said staff had already sent that information to Mrs. Hightower, but would do so again, this time sending to all School Board Members.

2. [Contract for External Operator for Ensley Elementary School Between the School Board of Escambia County, Florida and the Rensselaerville Institute](#)

3. [Contract for External Operator for Holm Elementary School Between the School Board of Escambia County, Florida and the Rensselaerville Institute](#)

4. [Contract for External Operator for Global Learning Academy Between the School Board of Escambia County, Florida and the Rensselaerville Institute](#)

5. [Contract for External Operator for Warrington Elementary School Between the School Board of Escambia County, Florida and the Rensselaerville Institute](#)

Mr. Steve Marcanio, Assistant Superintendent – Curriculum, said these four contracts were identical with exception of school served and any one of these contracts could be terminated immediately if the school earned a “C” or better. Mrs. Hightower felt it important to mention that the School Board was certainly looking forward to these schools achieving a grade of “C” or better on the 2018-2019 Florida State Accountability System, but regardless of whether they did or not, support for them would still be available if needed.

2. Finance and Business Services

A. Finance

4. [2018-2019 Miscellaneous Salary Schedule](#)

Mr. Fetsko indicated his desire for the School Board to consider the possibility of increasing substitute teacher pay. He was to submit this matter as a topic for a future “open discussion” workshop. The Superintendent was to see if state-wide data on substitute teacher pay was available from the Department of Education.

Upon closer look at the backup documentation for this item, the Superintendent realized the rate of pay for a Bus Driver Trainee was incorrectly listed as only \$11.52 per hour. The Superintendent advised that an amendment to correct that error was forthcoming.

3. Human Resource Services

-No items discussed

4. Operations

A. Facilities Planning

2. Miscellaneous

a. [Spot Survey - George Stone Technical College/West Florida High School](#)

b. [Spot Survey - Judy Andrews Center](#)

c. [Spot Survey - McMillan Pre-K Center](#)

d. [Spot Survey - Pleasant Grove Elementary School](#)

There were no questions/concerns regarding these items, but at the request of Mr. Fetsko, Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent – Operation, took a moment to explain the purpose of a spot survey and how capacity of school facilities can impact closures and new construction.

e. [Sales Agreement between the School Board of Escambia County, Florida and Adoor Development Company LLC](#)

Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent – Operations, explained that this item was an agreement to sell four (4) vacant residential parcels adjacent to the site of the former A.A. Dixon Elementary School. The parcels were originally purchased by the School District with the intent of building a media center.

c. ITEMS FROM THE BOARD

-No items submitted

d. ITEMS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

-No items submitted

e. INTERNAL AUDITING

1. [Inventory Adjustment Reports twenty-one cost centers](#)

There were no questions/concerns regarding this item, just a brief “thank you” from Mrs. Hightower to school principals/department heads for safeguarding the School District’s assets.

f. ITEMS FROM GENERAL COUNSEL

-No items submitted

VII. [PUBLIC FORUM](#)

-No registration forms submitted

The Regular Workshop was recessed at 11:00 a.m. and reconvened at 11:10 a.m. with all School Board Members, the Superintendent, and General Counsel present.

VIII. DISCUSSION ON APPOINTED SUPERINTENDENT PROCESS

The remainder of this session was devoted to discussion on the appointed superintendent search process. The School Board heard from Andrea Messina, Executive Director of the Florida School Board Association (FSBA), who would lead the FSBA’s search team in helping the School Board through the process of transitioning to an appointed superintendent. Ms. Messina began by thanking the School Board for entrusting the FSBA to assist them in their search. She then provided a brief background on herself and the two other team members, Dr. Bill Vogel and Mr. John Reichert. At the request of Ms. Messina and as suggested by Mrs. Hightower, School Board Members had no objection to allowing the Coordinator of Board Affairs to serve as their contact for any business related to the superintendent search process. Ms. Messina noted the importance of establishing a timeline of when the School Board would be willing to meet with the FSBA’s

search team. In establishing that timeline, she suggested the School Board consider how much overlap, if any, they wanted the new superintendent to have with the departing superintendent as this would certainly impact the starting date for the new superintendent. Ms. Messina said this search process would actually begin with a “pre-search conversation” with the departing superintendent so that the FSBA’s search team and the School Board would have a common understanding of the School District’s guiding principles, strategic plan priorities, emerging issues/trends, internal/external relationships, communication/chain of command protocols, emergency/crisis protocols, etc. Ms. Messina talked about having the School District’s Information Technology (IT) Department create a portal on the School District’s website so the public would have easy access to information on activities related to the superintendent search process (i.e., links to School Board meeting videos, community surveys, schedules/timelines). There being no objection, the School Board agreed to schedule a Special Workshop to further discuss the superintendent search process on May 22, 2019, beginning at 8:00 a.m., in Room 160, at the J.E. Hall Educational Services Center.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Regular Workshop adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair