

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, AUGUST 15, 2019

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. 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 July 25, 2019 – Legal No. [3701295](#)

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

Video available at <http://escambiacountysdfi.swagit.com/play/08152019-828>

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Hightower called the Special Workshop to order at 3:00 p.m. She welcomed those in attendance as well as those watching by live streaming.

The following item was handled first on the agenda: Item IV, *Discussion on Appointed Superintendent Process*

I. OPEN DISCUSSION

Calendar - *In addition to reviewing and discussing their monthly schedules of workshops/meetings, School Board Members also reviewed and/or discussed various events posted on the School District's calendar.*

-August 2019

There were no changes to the remaining schedule of workshops/meetings for August. School Board Members discussed September 19/September 20 as possible dates for rescheduling the Florida School Boards Association Superintendent Search Team's visit originally scheduled for August 16.

-September 2019

The following changes were made the schedule of workshops/meetings for September:

Canceled: September 12 Special Workshop

Rescheduled: Regular Workshop from September 13 to September 16 (agenda to include "Open Discussion" segment)

-October 2019

There were no changes to the current schedule of workshops/meetings for October. School Board Members discussed possible dates for the final two components of the Florida School Boards Association Master Board Training: October 3 (afternoon session) and October 4 (morning session).

Public Forum Update

-None

Organizational Structure of School Board Officers in November – *Slayton*

Mr. Slayton noted that the School Board would select a new Chair and Vice Chair at their annual Organizational Meeting in November. Given that the current Chair for 2018-2019, Mrs. Hightower, had

led Escambia County's transition to appointed superintendent thus far, he suggested that if she was willing, the School Board should consider reselecting her to continue as Chair for 2019-2020. Mrs. Hightower confirmed her willingness to continue to serve as Chair should that be the pleasure of the School Board. There was no objection from any Board Member regarding Mr. Slayton's suggestion. *Final decision would be made by formal vote at the November Organizational Meeting.*

Update on Campus Security – Hightower

At the request of Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent and his staff gave a brief update on campus security. The Superintendent prefaced the update by confirming that the School District, with assistance from both the Escambia County Sheriff's Office and Pensacola Police Department, had met the state's requirement to provide bell-to-bell security coverage at 100% of its schools, including charter schools.

- Legislative Update – Adams

Mr. Adams provided a brief update on the platform proposals he had discussed with the School Board during the June 17, 2019 Regular Workshop and subsequently submitted to the Florida School Board's Association (FSBA) for consideration for the 2020 FSBA Legislative Platform:

(Status: Forwarded to Staff) Proposal: *Keeping Students Safe – Provide students, education professionals, volunteers, and parents with safe learning environments by: Providing school districts with funding support for compliance with a realistic, practical, and cost-conscious criterion regarding hazardous walking conditions while also providing them flexibility in choosing the extent to which they provide transportation service around those options.*

(Status: Forwarded to Legislative Committee) Proposal: *Public Student Equity – Elimination of EOC counting as “30 percent of a student's final course grade.”*

- Naming of New West Side Elementary School – Superintendent

The Superintendent advised that the School District was nearing the start of design work for the new West Side Elementary to be located off of Sorrento Road. Given that once constructed, this new West Side Elementary site would essentially become the replacement for the current Pleasant Grove Elementary, the Superintendent questioned whether the School Board would entertain the idea simply transferring the name Pleasant Grove to the new West Side Elementary or would they prefer to initiate the process of advertising and selecting an entirely new name. There was no objection expressed by any Board Member regarding the name transfer.

- Strategic Plan Discussion – Superintendent

The chair of each strategic plan committee took a moment to briefly review the existing strategic plan goals: Quality Pillar – chaired by Ms. Lesa Morgan, Director-High School Education; Environment Pillar – chaired by Ms. Jaleena Davis, Director-Food Services; Finance Pillar – chaired by Ms. Allison Watson, Senior Purchasing Agent; People Pillar – chaired by Ms. Elizabeth Oakes, Director-Employee Services; and Service Pillar – chaired by Brian Alaback, Director-Professional Learning. The Superintendent said the purpose of this review was just to remind School Board Members of existing strategic plan and to provide an opportunity for feedback prior to the committee meetings. It was noted that committee meeting would begin in September and would be advertised appropriately so that School Board Members could attend. An updated Strategic Plan would be reviewed with the School Board, most likely in October at the School Board's monthly special “open discussion” workshop.

II. PUBLIC FORUM

-No registration forms submitted

III. ADJOURNMENT DISCUSSION ON APPOINTED SUPERINTENDENT PROCESS

(Most recent version of policy proposals incorporates revisions from the August 1, 2019 Special Workshop.)

1.04 OFFICERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

There were no additional revisions to that which was presented.

1.05 ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE DISTRICT

There were no additional revisions to that which was presented.

1.24 SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

(3) *Employment of the Superintendent*

A. *Recruitment and Selection*

In the event that the position of Superintendent is or will be vacant, the Board shall:

2. *Adopt a procedure for selection of a new Superintendent. Such procedure may include, but is not limited to:*
- c. *Advertise the position of Superintendent to the media.*

Revised “c” as follows: *Advertise the position of Superintendent to the media and other venues.*

(3) *Employment of the Superintendent*

B. *Contract*

5. *Throughout the term of the contract, the Superintendent shall be subject to discharge for good and just causes, and shall have a right to receive written notice of charges, notice of hearing, and a fair hearing before the Board. Removal of the Superintendent for good cause will require a majority vote of the School Board. Notwithstanding the above, the Board may remove the Superintendent from the position of Superintendent of Schools for any non-disciplinary reason with a super majority vote (one vote above a simple majority), so long as it fulfills and honors the salary and fringe benefit obligations of the contract.*

Revised “5” as follows: *Termination of the Superintendent with or without cause shall be as set forth in the contract.*

1.24 SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

(5) *Incapacity of Superintendent*

In the event the Superintendent is temporarily unable to perform the duties of office, the Deputy Superintendent will assume the duties as Acting Superintendent until the Board appoints an Acting Superintendent as set forth above.

Revised “5” such that the phrase “set forth above” was replaced by “set for below” given the actual position of that information.

2.01 ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL

There were no revisions to that which was presented.

2.13 COORDINATOR OF BOARD AFFAIRS

There were no revisions to that which was presented.

3.16 SCHOOL FACILITIES

There were no revisions to that which was presented.

It was noted that the requested edits would be incorporated and submitted for the School Board’s consideration for approval on the September 17, 2019 Regular Meeting agenda.

-Job Description – Discussed in general; would discuss in more detail with the Florida School Board’s Association (FSBA) Superintendent Search Team during their next visit.

Minimum Requirements –

-Master’s degree (education related preferred) or higher required from an accredited educational institution, an earned doctorate preferred. Revised: Master’s degree or higher required from an accredited educational institution. Education related field degree preferred.

-Minimum of ten (10) years of successful administrative experience, with at least five (5) years in senior-level administration, preferably school district experience as a district-level administrator. Revised: Minimum of ten (10) years of successful administrative experience, with at least five (5) years in leadership administration in a K through 12 public school setting preferred.

-Must maintain residence in Escambia County, Florida and possess a valid Florida Driver License upon employment. Revised: Must maintain residence in Escambia County, Florida, and possess a valid driver's license.

-Qualifications may vary from the above requirements to such a degree as the Board determines is necessary and appropriate to ensure properly qualified personnel in each specialized assigned. Revised: Qualifications may vary to such a degree as he Board determines is necessary and appropriate.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjournment, there was a brief discussion about the various preparations that had been made prior to the start of school of August 12, and the typical issues that would continue to be worked out throughout the first couple of weeks, including student transportation and customer service.

There being no further business, the Special Workshop adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair