

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, JANUARY 16, 2020

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)
Dr. Laura Dortch Edler (District III)

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Mr. Paul Fetsko, District II, was not present.

Meeting advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on December 30, 2019 – Legal No. [3960809](#)
Minutes prepared according to *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*

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.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- Beulah Middle School Information Technology Academy – *Superintendent*

Students enrolled in the Information Technology Academy at Beulah Middle School addressed the School Board regarding their experiences in this program.

- 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.*

-January 2020

At the request of the Superintendent, the School Board agreed to schedule a Special Meeting for January 30, beginning at 8:30 a.m., in the Superintendent's Conference Room, at the Dr. Vernon McDaniel Building, 75 North Pace Boulevard. The purpose of this session would be to consider approval of out-of-field teachers.

-February 2020

There were no changes to the schedule of School Board Workshops/Meetings for February.

-March 2020

Due to Spring Break (March 16-20), the School Board agreed to reschedule the March 17 Regular Meeting to March 24.

- Public Forum Update

The Superintendent advised there were no public speakers that required follow-up for the month of December.

- Evaluation of General Counsel

This topic was postponed to the January 17, 2020 Regular Workshop when all School Board Members were expected to be present.

- Legislative Update – Adams

Mr. Adams addressed the following matters as part of his legislative update:

- Senate Bill 1088 (2020) – filed by Senator Manny Diaz – *Teacher Salary Enhancement; Establishing a teacher salary enhancement allocation in the General Appropriations Act; requiring each school district to use the allocated funds to increase teacher salaries; authorizing school districts that meet the teacher salary requirements specified in the appropriations act to use any additional funds provided in the allocation for any lawful operating expenditure, etc.*
- Second Interim Report of the Twentieth Statewide Grand Jury in the Supreme Court of the State of Florida – issued/released December 11, 2019. (NOTE: *This is the second report put out by this grand jury since Governor Ron DeSantis impaneled it to ensure school districts are meeting safety requirements passed by the Legislature after the February 14, 2018 massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High school.*)

The Superintendent took this opportunity to advise the School Board of two bills concerning Medicaid school-based services: House Bill 81 (2020) - *Revises provisions relating to reimbursement of school-based services by AHCA to certain school districts & private & charter schools; specifies that U.S. Department of Health & Human Services is authorized to waive certain school-based provider qualifications.* Senate Bill 190 (2020) - *Medicaid School-based Services; Revising applicable provisions for the reimbursement of school-based services by the Agency for Health Care Administration to certain school districts; deleting a requirement specifying the use of certified state and local education funds for school-based services; revising a requirement for the agency's reimbursement of school-based services to certain charter and private schools; specifying the federal agency that may waive certain school-based provider qualifications, etc.*

- Looking Back; Moving Forward – Edler

Dr. Edler felt it important that the School Board take a critical look at their performance, both collectively and individually, to ensure their own business was in order, as they moved forward in serving this community by way of hiring the first appointed superintendent. Reading from a prepared document, Dr. Edler noted several agreed upon matters where she believed the School Board had shown inconsistent implementation. Mrs. Hightower requested that Dr. Edler provide that document to the School Board's assistant to share with each School Board Member, the Superintendent, and General Counsel. Mrs. Hightower also suggested that Dr. Edler readdress each of these matters at a future session once everyone had an opportunity to review her concerns and could then engage in meaningful discussion.

- Pleasant Grove Elementary School Design Progress Update – Superintendent

Staff members, including Mr. Anthony Noles, Director-Facilities Planning, and Keith Wasdin, Project Manager, gave a brief update on the Pleasant Grove Elementary School replacement project, specifically addressing matters related to the design and planning process. Mr. Noles advised that at the January 21, 2020 Regular Meeting, the School Board would be asked to approve the Early Site Package Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) [see: Item V.b.2.E.3., [Change Notice #1 to Purchase Order #5421800084 – Pleasant Grove Elementary Replacement School.](#)]

- Gulf Power Foundation Career Pathway Initiative – *Superintendent*
 Dr. Michelle Taylor, Director-Workforce Education, narrated a brief presentation regarding the Gulf Power Foundation Career Pathway initiative, focusing on funding, goals, and key activities. [see: www.EscambiaCareerPathways.com]

- Escambia County School District Top Five Teachers of the Year – *Superintendent*
 The Superintendent and School Board Members took a moment to recognize the top five Teacher of the Year finalists: Kadee Barnett – First Grade teacher, Beulah Elementary; Jacqueline Chabot – Third Grade teacher, Montclair Elementary; Maureen Harden – Sixth Grade Math teacher, Bailey Middle; Cheyenna Novotny – Chemistry and other Science topics teacher, West Florida High; Jodi Wood* – Sixth Grade Math teacher, Ransom Middle. The Superintendent asked that each finalist answer two questions: *Why are you a teacher? What do you like best about teaching in Escambia County?* It was noted that a video of today’s responses would be aired during the Golden Apple Awards on January 31. (*Jodi Wood was unable to attend this session; therefore, her response was provided via video.)

III. PUBLIC FORUM

-No registration forms submitted

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair