

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, JANUARY 17, 2020

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 December 30, 2019 – Legal No. 3960809

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

[*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. She welcomed those in attendance as well as those watching by live streaming. She reminded those who wished to speak during public forum, to submit a registration form.

Evaluation of General Counsel (*postponed from January 16, 2020 Special Workshop*)

Mrs. Hightower noted that each School Board Member had previously received an evaluation form to complete concerning the performance of Mrs. Waters in her role as the School Board's General Counsel. Mrs. Hightower believed that the School Board was in need of a standard process for evaluating its employees* and suggested that process begin with the evaluation of Mrs. Waters as General Counsel. Mrs. Hightower asked that each School Board Member schedule a time to meet individually with Mrs. Waters to review and discuss their individual assessment of her performance as General Counsel. After meeting individually with Mrs. Waters, Mrs. Hightower asked that each School Board Member give their completed evaluation form to the School Board's assistant, who in turn, would compile one evaluation form comprised of the responses from all Board Members. There was no objection to the suggested process. It was noted that an update on this evaluation would occur at the February 13, 2020 Special Workshop and create an evaluation of Mrs. Waters from the School Board, collectively. [**Appointed Superintendent, General Counsel, Coordinator-Board Affairs, and Director-Internal Auditing (in conjunction with the Audit Committee).*]

II. COMMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

At the request of the Superintendent, Mr. Keith Leonard, Director-Human Resource Services and Ms. Elizabeth Oakes, Director-Personnel Services, gave a brief update on staffing.

The Superintendent listed the changes made to the January 21, 2020 Regular Meeting agenda, since publication and prior to this session.

III. MINUTES

There were no questions/concerns with any items listed under *Minutes*.

IV. COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

There were no questions/concerns with any items listed under *Committee/Departmental Reports*.

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
-No items submitted

b. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Curriculum
 - B. Continuous Improvement
 1. [Contract Between the School Board of Escambia County, Florida and Children's Home Society of Florida – Western Division](#)
Mrs. Hightower advised that she had discussed this item with the Superintendent and Dr. Lisa Joyner, Coordinator-Student Services, prior to this session.
 2. Finance and Business Services
 - A. Finance
 3. [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report \(CAFR\) of the District School Board of Escambia County, Florida for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019](#)
Mr. Fetsko commended the Finance department for their efforts to meet all deadlines and requirements involved in the preparation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). Mrs. Hightower suggested this item be pulled for comment at the January 21, 2020 Regular Meeting so that the Board could publicly commend the work of the Finance department. Mr. Terry St. Cyr, Assistant Superintendent-Finance & Business Services took a moment to recognize Ms. Debbie Fussell, Director-Accounts Payable, as major contributor in the effort to prepare this document.
 3. Human Resource Services
There were no questions/concerns with any items listed under *Human Resource Services*.
 4. Operations
There were no questions/concerns with any items listed under *Operations*.

c. ITEMS FROM THE BOARD

-No items submitted

d. ITEMS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

There were no questions/concerns specific to the recommendations listed under *Items from the Superintendent*. Dr. Edler took a moment to thank Mr. Jeremy Tompkins, Coordinator-Student Engagement, for his continued willingness to listen to her concerns and to understand her passion for improving student discipline. Dr. Edler recalled that at the beginning of her term on the School Board, she had suggested the development of a plan for helping students who were transitioning from alternative placement back into their home schools. Mr. Tompkins said the School District had already implemented such a plan, whereby he would personally meet with each student transferring from an alternative school back into his/her regular zone school. He reported that the students he had met with at the beginning of the semester had responded very well and seemed to appreciate that they were being checked on through the transition process.

e. INTERNAL AUDITING

1. [School Internal Accounts Audits](#)

Mr. Fetsko commended the administrations of both [J.H. Workman Middle](#) and [Jim Allen Elementary](#), for having no audit findings during their recent school internal accounts audit.

2. [Office of Internal Auditing – External Quality Control Review](#)

Mr. David Bryant, Director-Internal Auditing, addressed the following points of information outlined in the backup documentation for this item:

-The Institute of Internal Auditors International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing require that every five years, internal auditing functions have an assessment to ascertain compliance with these Standards.

-In December 2019, an independent review team conducted a peer review of the School District's Office of Internal Auditing for the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019. The backup documentation for this item includes a report containing their recommended enhancements.

-The independent review team from the Association of Local Government Auditors consisted of team leader, Ruthe Holden, CPA, CIA, CISA, from the Internal Auditing department for the City of Pasadena and team member, Patrick Schafer, CPA, CIA, CFE, from the Auditor's Office for the City and County of Denver.

-The team reviewed the internal quality control system of the School District's Office of Internal Auditing and conducted tests in order to determine if its internal quality control system operated to provide reasonable assurance of conformance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors as part of their *Professional Practices Framework*.

-Based on the results of their review, the team's opinion was that the School District's Office of Internal Auditing's internal quality control system was suitably designed and operating effectively to provide reasonable assurance of conformance with *the Standards* for assurance and consulting engagements during the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019.

-The team offered the five (5) observations and suggestions to enhance the School District's Office of Internal Auditing's demonstrated conformance to *the Standards*.

f. ITEMS FROM GENERAL COUNSEL

-No items submitted

The Regular Workshop recessed at 10:22 a.m. and reconvened at 10:30 a.m., with all School Board Members, the Superintendent, and Mrs. Waters present.

VII. [PUBLIC FORUM](#)

-No registration forms submitted (NOTE: *Mrs. Hightower called for public forum immediately following the time certain "Search Brochure Finalist Presentations" that occurred immediately after recess.*)

VIII. [DISCUSSION ON APPOINTED SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROCESS](#)

-[Search Brochure Finalist Presentations](#) – The Workforce Education department was tasked with designing and implementing a superintendent search digital media contest for multimedia career Academy students. The students' task, either individually or as a team was to design and create digital media that would become a link that informs potential candidates of all aspects of the position that would assist them in determining whether they are qualified for and interested in applying for the position of Superintendent of Schools, which begins in November 2020. The contest drew the attention of many students resulting in sixteen (16) submissions by the deadline. The five (5) finalists selected by the judging team had an opportunity to present their digital media to the School Board and the Superintendent. School Board Members, the Superintendent, and the Florida School Board Association consultants were to record any comments and/or recommendations to help the judging team make their final decision. The top three finalists would be and invited to attend the February 18, 2020 Regular School Board Meeting where they will be presented with their cash prizes. Presentations: Escambia High School's Digital Design Academy/Program; Pine Forest High School's New Media Academy; Tate High School's Game Animation & Simulation Academy; Booker T. Washington High School's Media Academy; and Northview High School's Graphic Arts Academy. Following the completion

of the presentations, each student came forward to receive a certificate from the Superintendent and to shake hands with each School Board Member.

[-On-line Survey Results](#) – Florida School Board’s Association (FSBA) Superintendent Search Team (Andrea Messina and John Reichert) reviewed the final Superintendent Search survey results.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Regular Workshop adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair

PENDING BOARD APPROVAL