

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, DECEMBER 10, 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: Mr. William E. Slayton (District V)
Vice Chair: Mr. Kevin L. Adams (District I)
Board Members: Mr. Paul Fetsko (District II)
Dr. Laura Dortch Edler (District III)
Mrs. Patricia Hightower (District IV)

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Timothy A. Smith

Advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on November 13, 2020 – Legal No. [4463375](#)
General discussion occurred throughout this session amongst School Board Members, the Superintendent, and staff.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Slayton called the Special Workshop to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION:

- Calendar

Schedule of Workshops/Meetings - There were no changes to the remaining schedule for December 2020 or the current schedule for January 2021.

- Public Forum Update

-None

- General Counsel Job Description

Mr. Keith Leonard, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services, reviewed all revisions made to the General Counsel job description as a result of discussion that occurred during the School Board's [November 11, 2020 Special Workshop](#). Following a lengthy discussion, there were consensus among the School Board that the [revised job description](#) be submitted for consideration for approval at the December 15, 2020 Regular Meeting.

- Planning Board Update – Hightower

Mrs. Hightower provided an update from the December 7, 2020 Planning Board workshop during which DPZ CoDesign, the urban planning firm hired to create a master plan for the OLF-8 property in Beulah, presented four potential layouts for the area: the commerce park plan, the market plan, the greenway plan, and the village plan. Mrs. Hightower confirmed that each of the four potential layouts included space for a new school. The Planning Board would vote in February 2021 as to which plan they would recommend to the Board of County Commissioners. Mrs. Hightower suggested that Superintendent Smith consider sending an email to DPZ CoDesign specifying the amount of acreage the School District would prefer to be set aside for the purpose of constructing a new school in that area.

- Discussion of Progress on Strategic Plan – Hightower

At the suggestion of Mrs. Hightower, the School Board requested a mid-year report from Superintendent Smith, as to the progress of the School District's current strategic plan.

- FSBA Legislative Items – Adams

Mr. Adams, as the School Board's representative to the Florida School Boards Association (FSBA), gave a brief update on recent and upcoming legislative matters.

- Transportation: Recruitment & Retention – Adams
At the suggestion of Mr. Adams, the School Board requested a presentation from Superintendent Smith, as to potential strategies to address the on-going shortage of school bus operators.
- Transformation Initiative Update – Superintendent
[Summary document provided to School Board Members] Representatives from Idgroup gave a brief update on the School District’s transformation initiative. The focus for January 2021 would be on communication with internal stakeholders and the community. Idgroup recommended communicating this initiative to internal stakeholders by way of video and to the community by way of a public briefing.
- Process for Returning Remote Students to Traditional Learning Platform – Superintendent
Mr. Steve Marcanio, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, advised that the School District would be reaching out to parents/guardians of students enrolled in remote learning, who are failing to make adequate progress, and informing them that the students should return to traditional face-to-face school. Criteria utilized to determine “not making adequate academic progress” includes grades, assessments, attendance, and for high school students, GPA and graduation requirements. Parents who choose not to return their students to face-to-face learning are required to sign and return the letter to the school district. In signing the letter, parents also agree to participate in a required Child Study Team meeting to discuss the academic risks associated with remaining in a remote learning model, as well as appropriate interventions available to help students. Data shows that 82% of elementary, 89% of middle, and 70% of high school remote learners are failing to make adequate progress. Florida Department of Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran issued an executive order on November 30, 2020, requiring school districts to communicate with the parents or guardians of any student failing to make adequate academic progress as defined by the state. (see: Assurance 5 outlined in [Spring 2021 Education Plan and Assurances](#) – Item V.b.1.L.1., December 15, 2020 Regular Meeting agenda.)
- High School Exam Schedule – Superintendent
Staff reviewed the high school exam schedule for the 2020-2021 school year:
January 6, 2021 through January 15, 2021
Students in Traditional Learning Model: January 6, 8, 12, 14
Students in Remote Learning Model: January 7, 11, 13, 15

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Darzell Warren, representing Escambia Education Association, requested to address the School Board regarding the School District’s reopening procedures.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop adjourned at 5:16 p.m.