

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, OCTOBER 12, 2007

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Workshop Meeting at 10:00 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 Vice Chair: Mr. Pete Gindl, Sr.

Board Members: Mr. Jeff Bergosh (*not present*)
Mr. Gerald Boone
Mrs. Claudia Brown-Curry

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Jim Paul

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Hightower called the Regular Workshop to order at 10:08 a.m.

A. Open Discussion

1. November 2007 School Board Meeting Dates

The Board agreed to the schedule the following meetings for November 2007:

Regular Workshop

November 16, 2007, at 9:00 a.m., in Room 160, at the J.E. Hall Educational Services Center

Organizational Meeting

November 20, 2007, at 9:00 a.m., in the Board Room, at the Dr. Vernon McDaniel Building

Regular Meeting

November 27, 2007, at 5:30 p.m., in Room 160, at the J.E. Hall Educational Services Center

2. Overview of Services Rendered and Fees Paid/Owed to the Staubach Company and Scoggins III, Inc.

This item was addressed later in the meeting.

3. Report on Status of Plans for D & F Schools

Staff members addressed the Board regarding the various District initiatives that had been or would be implemented in an effort to improve student scores at D and F schools.

4. Update on Status of District and Southern Management Custodial Positions

Mr. Chuck Peterson, Director of Maintenance, gave a brief update on the status of District and Southern Management custodial positions. He advised that there were currently 14 vacant custodial positions, that each school was fully staffed with either a permanent employee or a substitute employee, and that there were also plenty of substitute employees to cover any absenteeism. The following speaker requested to address the Board regarding this issue: Willie Carson. Mr. Carson was not present during Mr. Peterson's update; therefore, Mrs. Hightower asked that he meet with Mr. Peterson after the meeting as she believed that the information that had been provided would address Mr. Carson's concerns.

5. Briefing on New Directives Governing Athletic Events

At the request of Mrs. Brown-Curry, Mr. Steve Sharp, Division Chief, briefly advised Board Members of the new directives governing athletic events. He explained that the purpose of these directives was to address a growing concern among District staff, school staff, and law enforcement with regard to the increased number of fights and other major disruptions occurring at school athletic events. The new directives are as follows:

- *Limit ticket sales to the capacity of the stadium bleachers*
- *Do not allow groups to congregate within the stadium or allow spectators to stand around the track/field*
- *Have announcer make regular safety announcements regarding the above throughout the game*
- *Provide adequate staff to enforce crowd control*
- *Utilize law enforcement for individuals who do not comply*
- *Enforce dress code, specifically focusing on gang attire*
- *Do not allow backpacks, book bags, etc.*
- *Do not allow spectators to bring in portable/folding chairs (stadium seats are allowable)*
- *Do not allow free entry toward end of game – either continue to sell tickets until end of game, or stop entry at certain point (i.e., at end of third quarter)*

Mrs. Hightower requested that Mr. Sharp provide Board Members with a listing of the new directives. She also requested that the Superintendent ensure that these new directives were communicated to all school personnel, students, and parents.

6. Budget Process

Due to time constraints, Board Members decided to defer any discussion on this particular item until the November Regular Workshop.

7. School Board Members' Representation of District Schools

This issue was addressed later in the meeting.

The following issues were also addressed during *Open Discussion*:

Budget Update

Mrs. Barbara Linker, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Business Services, gave a brief update on the budget by reviewing a handout entitled: *School District of Escambia County - Impact of Funding Changes - FY 2007-08 2nd FEFP Calculation Compared to 2007-2008 Revised 2nd FEFP Calculation*.

October FTE Count

Mrs. Hightower requested information regarding the October FTE count. Staff members indicated that information would be provided to Board Members as it became available.

II. COMMENTS FROM SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent listed the additions, deletions, amendments, and/or corrections to the October 16, 2007 Regular Meeting agenda.

III. TIME CERTAIN ITEMS

1. Realty Assessment & Marketing Plan Presentation (11:00 a.m.)

A brief presentation was given regarding the realty assessment and marketing plan provided by Staubach Company and Scoggins III, Inc. It was noted that a total of \$2,857.00 had been expended on the services rendered by these two companies thus far.

ADD

2. Escambia Community Collaborative (11:15 a.m.)

A brief presentation was given regarding the Escambia Community Collaborative, a community-wide partnership working for improvement of the community's physical, mental, economic, environmental and social health.

The Regular Workshop recessed at 11:33 a.m. and reconvened at 11:45 a.m., with the following present: Mrs. Hightower, Mr. Gindl, Mr. Boone, Mrs. Brown-Curry, Mrs. Waters, and the Superintendent. (Mr. Bergosh was not present.)

IV. PROPOSED ADDITIONS OR REVISIONS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT RULES

Revisions to School District Chapter 6 – Student Transportation

6.07 RESPONSIBILITIES

(4) The School Principal

(c) Transported Students

3. *Suspend any transported student from the privilege of riding on a school bus notwithstanding, in some cases a student's privilege of riding the school bus may be suspended for the remainder of the year for a period of not more than ten (10) days for willful disobedience, for use of profane or obscene language, or for other misconduct and report such suspension in writing to the Assistant Superintendent – Curriculum and Instruction and to the student's parents.*

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Brown-Curry, Mr. Eric Fritz, Director of Transportation, explained that this revision would provide for incremental discipline of 1 day, 3 days, 5 days, 10 days, or ultimately permanent suspension from riding on a school bus.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Curriculum and Instruction

No discussion was held.

B. Finance

No discussion was held.

C. Human Resource Services

1. Instructional/Professional

c. Transfers

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Brown-Curry, Dr. Alan Scott, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services, stated that many of the transfers listed under this section were due to staffing whereby certain schools had lost positions as a result of the 8-day count.

g. Special Requests

8. Permission to advertise the 2008-2009 student calendar.

The following speakers requested to address the Board regarding this item: David Pittman (Union representative) and Gail Husbands (Union representative). Mr. Pittman addressed concerns specific to ESP employees such as paid days off and Mrs. Husbands addressed concerns specific to instructional employees such as teacher learning/planning days. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, Dr. Alan Scott, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services, advised that a Calendar Committee meeting had occurred, yet only one Union representative, Gail Husbands, was in attendance. Mrs. Hightower stated that although she recognized the importance of calendar issues involving employees, her primary concern was whether or not the calendar as presented, was the best possible calendar with regard to student instruction. Ultimately, it was determined that another meeting of the Calendar Committee was necessary.

NOTE: The Superintendent left the meeting at 1:15 p.m.; Mr. Ross represented him for the remainder of the meeting.

D. Purchasing

19. Change Notice #2 to Purchase Order #289398

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Brown-Curry, Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, explained that this item was a request for authorization to issue Change Notice #2 to Purchase Order #289398 to increase the contract amount for security services (i.e., on-site security, traffic management) needed at Lipscomb Elementary, McArthur Elementary, Ferry Pass Middle and Escambia Westgate.

E. Operations

No discussion was held.

F. Student Transfers

No discussion was held.

G. Internal Auditing

4. Other

b. District Code of Ethics Review

Excerpt from the backup documentation for this item: *“We recommend the District re-establish a hotline for reporting violations. Ideally, the number should be independent of any District operating department, such as an outside service provider. With an independent resource for reporting violations, employees may feel empowered to report concerns without fear of retaliation or lack of action. The estimated cost of an outside ethics line is \$5,000-\$10,000 annually. District management could still determine which complaints merit investigation. The District could also consider having violations reported to the General Counsel’s office or the Office of Internal Auditing.”*

Referring to excerpt above, Mrs. Hightower questioned whether there was “some mechanism short of \$5,000-\$10,000 annually” whereby employees could report violations and/or concerns. Dr. Alan Scott, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services, explained that the phone number listed in the “Reporting Improper Conduct” section of the Code of Ethics was previously non-functioning; however, at the time of the issuance of this review, the violation hotline phone number had been changed to that of the Administrative Secretary in the Human Resource Services department. He noted that should an employee wish to have anonymity, they could call during non-working hours and simply leave a voice message. Mrs. Hightower’s concern with the hotline ringing into the Human Resource Services department, was that employees may fear retaliation or inaction. She suggested that Dr. Scott continue his discussions with Mr. David Bryant, Director of Internal Auditing, with regard to other options for reporting violations.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Bus Radio

[NOTE: *“Bus Radio” is a free program designed specifically to improve bus safety while providing students with both age-appropriate content and an entertaining ride to and from school. The issue of “Bus Radio” was previously postponed at the September 18, 2007 Regular Meeting (see Item V.E.4.1, September 18, 2007 Regular Meeting agenda). The purpose of postponing was to allow Board Members additional time to review all aspects of the issue.*]

Mrs. Hightower advised that she not been contacted by any parents in opposition to “Bus Radio” therefore, she would support its implementation.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Items from the Board

-No items submitted

B. Items from the Superintendent

No discussion was held.

C. Items from the General Counsel

-No items submitted

VIII. COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

-No items submitted

IX. PUBLIC FORUM

Mrs. Hightower called for public forum; however, there were no speakers.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The following issue was addressed prior to adjournment:

School Board Members' Representation of District Schools

Mr. Boone requested that the Superintendent make it clear to all school personnel that each Board Member, although elected by the constituents of a particular geographic area (i.e., District I, District, II, etc.) was in fact, a representative of all schools in Escambia County. He noted several instances where either he or another Board Member had visited schools outside of their geographic area and were not well received by school staff. Mr. Norm Ross, Deputy Superintendent, apologized on behalf of school personnel and assured Board Members that he had personally addressed that issue at the last principal's meeting.

There being no further business, the Regular Workshop adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair