

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, OCTOBER 30, 2001

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Special Meeting at 9:00 a.m., in the Board Room, at the Dr. Vernon McDaniel (Administration) Building, 215 West Garden Street, Pensacola, Florida, with the following present:

Chairman: Dr. John Dewitt
Vice Chairman: Mrs. Cary Stidham

Board Members:
Mr. Gary L. Bergosh (was not present)
Ms. Linda Finkelstein (entered the meeting at 9:15 a.m.)
Dr. Elmer Jenkins

School Board Attorney: Mr. Francisco M. Negron, Jr.

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Jim Paul

I. I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. DeWitt called the Special Meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Stidham, second by Dr. Jenkins, to adopt the agenda, was approved 3 to 0 with Mr. Bergosh and Ms. Finkelstein absent for vote.

III. III. DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Upon request from Dr. DeWitt, the Superintendent gave a brief update regarding concerns relating to the current year budget. He noted that the Florida Legislature and Governor would most likely hold a special session sometime during November or December, to discuss budget principles that would guide the coming year. The Superintendent stated that he would meet with his staff on November 2, 2001, to develop and discuss recommendations as to what actions would be necessary to deal with the current budget concerns. Dr. Jenkins hoped that the district would be able to deal with the budget concerns without having to lay off any personnel. Upon suggestion from Dr. DeWitt, the Superintendent requested that Board Members submit any recommendations that they might have regarding the necessary actions for dealing with budget concerns.

Ms. Finkelstein entered the Special Meeting at 9:15 a.m.

The Superintendent requested that the following legislative issues be included in the legislative platform from the Board and Superintendent, to present to the Florida Delegation for review:

1. This School District welcomes stringent accountability standards that allow greater flexibility in the allocation and spending of categorical funding, with an emphasis on fewer categories and more local control.
2. This School District encourages the Legislature to sunset any unfunded mandates placed on the district, to review the restrictions and develop equity in the 2 mill

funding, and periodically review the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) including:

Mrs. Stidham had concerns that “any unfunded mandates” was too vague and suggested that specific “unfunded mandates” (i.e., seatbelts on school buses, financial audits, etc.) be added. The Board agreed to have the Superintendent include a list of several of the more burdensome “unfunded mandates” under this item.

- a) a) Increasing the per FTE guarantee for the .25 Supplemental Discretionary Current Operations millage
- b) b) Establish a per FTE guarantee for the .51 Discretionary Current Operations millage and the 2.00 Capital Outlay and Maintenance millage
- c) c) Equalize the Supplemental Academic Instruction funding

Upon question by Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Barbara Linker, Director of Budgeting, explained that Supplemental Academic Instruction funding was actually three types of funding “rolled” together (i.e., summer school funding, dropout prevention funding and class size reduction funding). She noted that when the three types of funding were “rolled” together, calculations were applied that caused some districts to receive more funding than others. She stated that the intent of this item was to request that the Supplemental Academic Instruction funding be equalized so that all counties would receive the same amount. After discussion, the Board agreed that the verbiage in this item should be amended to place an emphasis on “eliminate” and if not eliminated, then “equalized.” The Superintendent stated that the amended verbiage would be added.

- d) d) Remove the group two cap for FTE or fund any excess over the projected FTE at the basic weight.
- e) e) Apply the District Cost Differential only to the portion of the FEFP equal to the average expenditure for salaries and benefits statewide

Upon question from Dr. Jenkins, Ms. Barbara Linker, Director of Budgeting, explained that District Cost Differential is the “cost of living” that is applied to all counties. She stated that the district currently received 95% of the Base Student Allocation. She noted that the District Cost Differential is applied to all FEFP funds and other non-salary funds. She stated that while the district is not in disagreement with the District Cost Differential, they would request that it only be applied to 80% of the district revenue.

- 3. 3. This School District recognizes the importance of measuring student performance annually and is willing to assist in any manner to improve school academic performance and the evaluation of student performance including, but not limited to, criteria which measures annual student learning gains.

Dr. DeWitt and Mrs. Stidham expressed concern that this item had no clear purpose. Mr. Paul Fetsko, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, stated that this item addresses the initiatives of measuring achievement and that while not using the actual term “FCAT” the intent is to suggest that the “FCAT” not be used. Board Members expressed concerns that the item was too vague and agreed that it should not be included.

4. 4. This School District would request consideration be given to the method of calculation of Dollars to the Classroom to make the intended results more equitable and to increase local control.
5. 5. This School District appreciates and respects the Legislature's efforts to increase salaries and benefits for the recruitment and retention of teachers and instructional personnel. The District would welcome the opportunity for increased flexibility in the implementation of Performance Pay initiatives, the Recruitment and Retention plan, and retirement options for district employees.
6. 6. This School District supports the Legislature's continuing efforts to fund school safety initiatives, such as Safe Passage and Silence Hurts, along with school health initiatives, such as the School Nurses program, in order to provide our students with a safe and healthy educational environment. This School District supports the Legislature's continuing efforts to fund school safety initiatives that are critical to student achievement.

The Board agreed that the following legislative issues should also be included in the legislative platform:

Claims Bill – Dr. DeWitt believed that a statement addressing the Claims Bill needed to be added. Mr. Negron stated that he would develop the appropriate verbiage.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA) – Mrs. Stidham believed that this legislation was passed and would be implemented next year. Dr. DeWitt believed that this issue needed to be addressed under Item Number 2, and the Superintendent stated that the appropriate verbiage would be added.

Sharpen the Pencil Legislation – Dr. DeWitt believed that a statement addressing Sharpen the Pencil Legislation needed to be added. The Superintendent noted that he did not believe this particular legislation would be going away and that he would contact the appropriate individuals for more information.

School Recognition Program Dollars – Dr. DeWitt believed that a statement addressing School Recognition Program Dollars needed to be added. He stated that schools that receive those funds currently have the ability to decide how they are spent and noted that most schools apply those funds to personnel salaries. Mrs. Stidham suggested adding verbiage to request that School Boards be able to set guidelines as to how schools can use those funds. After discussion, the Board agreed to have the Superintendent add verbiage requesting that schools not be allowed to apply those funds towards personnel salaries.

Motion was made by Mrs. Stidham, seconded by Dr. Jenkins, to approve with changes, the legislative platform submitted by the Superintendent. Motion was approved 4 to 0, with Mr. Bergosh absent for vote. The Superintendent also expressed his support of the motion.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjourning, Dr. DeWitt reminded the Board of the following meetings scheduled for November:

Escambia County Council PTA Round Table

Tuesday, November 6, 2001 at 6:30 p.m. (Hall Center)
Special Board Meeting with School Attendance Zone Advisory Committee (SAZAC)
Thursday, November 15, 2001 at 4:00 p.m. (Dr. Vernon McDaniel Building)
Special Board Meeting and Public Hearing – School Board Member Residence Areas
Thursday, November 15, 2001 at 5:30 p.m. (Dr. Vernon McDaniel Building)

Mr. Tommy Taylor, Director of Applied Technology, addressed the Board regarding issues related to Workforce Development funding. He explained that the State appropriates an allocation for support of Workforce Development that is divided between community colleges and school districts. He noted that 85% of the allocation earned the previous year is always guaranteed, but noted a discrepancy in the remaining 15%. He believed that there should be equity in the remaining 15% that is divided amongst school districts and asked that the Board and Superintendent include that request in their legislative platform. The Superintendent stated that he would work with Mr. Taylor in developing some verbiage to include in the platform regarding Workforce Development and would then submit that verbiage to the Board for approval. Dr. Jenkins believed that the Board should have the opportunity to review the completed legislative platform submitted by the Superintendent with the requested changes before final approval and made the following motion:

Motion was made by Dr. Jenkins, seconded by Ms. Finkelstein, to approve with changes, the legislative platform submitted by the Superintendent, with final approval pending Board review. Motion was approved 4 to 0, with Mr. Bergosh absent for vote. The Superintendent stated that he would submit the amended legislative platform to the Board on October 31, 2001.

There being no further business, the Special Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chairman