

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF INFORMAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
March 10, 2009

The School Board of Alachua County, Florida, met in informal session duly called at 9 a.m. in the Boardroom, 620 East University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. Present were: Tina Pinkoson, Chairman; F. Wesley Eubank, Vice-Chairman; Ginger Childs, Eileen Roy, and Barbara Sharpe, members; and W. Daniel Boyd, Jr., Superintendent.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pinkoson.

EDEP PROGRAM

Mrs. Sandy Hollinger, Deputy Superintendent, provided an overview of the proposed Summer Enrichment Program for Summer 2009. She explained the program as follows:

- It will be a full-time, six-week program, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., for the period of 6/10/09 – 7/22/09.
- Parents who enroll their children will pay a \$25 non-refundable registration fee per family.
- Rates (six-week): Full pay - \$690, Reduced - \$480, and Free - \$300
- Registration fee (\$25) will be waived if family pays in full when they register.

Mr. Eubank expressed serious concerns with the proposal. He prefers a year-round program for free, and feels that a summer school has been created for a fee. He stated that parents were happy with the old program and believes that the 43% cost increase, with a bad economy, will lower the number of participants. Prefers a long-term look in making substantial changes to the program, instead of doing things at the last minute.

Mrs. Childs expressed support for the academic focus being added to the proposal, and appreciates staff responding to the Board with a compromise that meets requirements. She noted that it needs to be clarified that the EDEP is separate from the summer program. She also supports a sibling discount (5%).

She expressed concerns and suggested looking at big ways to save money and noted that the reason the District went to a four-day summer week was to save energy, but the summer program will require that schools remain open on Fridays, and requested assurance that the money would go toward paying for additional utilities, custodians and supplies.

She feels that parents have plenty of time to work out other options, if necessary. She also expressed concern with non-payers.

Mrs. Sharpe expressed support for the proposal with the educational component, which keeps the program from being eliminated and meets

Sunshine State Standards. She suggested building in safeguards to ensure payments are made on time so that the District does not lose money, and also suggested allowing parents to pay for one week at a time. She also commended staff for their efforts in developing a good summer program.

Mrs. Roy also commended staff for a comprehensive proposal. She is concerned with the number of children that will be able to participate due to the fee increase. Suggested putting this change off for another year and continuing with the current program, adding a slightly increased fee to cover custodial/utilities and the registration fee.

She has received many emails from concerned parents regarding the proposed fee increase, but prefers having the proposed program rather than none at all.

Chairman Pinkoson noted that the reason this issue is being discussed is due to budget concerns and the philosophical issue that the District is not responsible for summer care. The compromise staff developed allows the District to build in an academic component and make it fun at the same time. She does not believe that it is fair to private enterprise for the school District to offer a summer program.

She stated that if the Board chooses to reject the proposed compromise with the academic component, she will not support it. She also supports the sibling discount.

Mr. Eubank informed the Board that he has received Mr. Wittmer's legal opinion, but has also received another attorney opinion, which clearly indicates that the District can offer the current summer program. He has a problem with hiring 82 teachers, at taxpayers expense, and feels the enrollment will drop dramatically. He believed the compromise was to increase the fee to cover costs for utilities and facilities.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mrs. Roy made the following comments/requests:

- Camp Crystal Lake—received a report from a Hydrologist regarding the approved Keystone Heights airport expansion (approved by the Bradford County Commission), which indicates that there is a probability of possible contamination of Camp Crystal if this development proceeds.

She requested Chairman Pinkoson write a letter, on behalf of the School Board, expressing concern regarding the possible contamination to Camp Crystal Lake. Chairman Pinkoson stated she will speak with Mr. Wittmer regarding this issue and whether or not the school system should become involved.

- Concern from a High Springs Community School teacher regarding technology and creating google email accounts for students. Teacher suggested a districtwide parental permission form. Superintendent will work with staff to resolve issue.
- DROP—Concern regarding retired employees returning to positions at their previous high salaries. Suggested the District do something different in the future and allow younger people to move into these vacant positions.

Mr. Eubank also expressed continuing concerns with DROP employees returning at previous salaries.

Superintendent Boyd informed the Board that the DROP issue would be included on the March 24 Budget Workshop agenda.

- Requested a status report on Hoggetowne Middle School.

Mr. Eubank made the following comments/requests:

- Complaints regarding application procedures of middle school magnet programs. Expressed concern that there is not a consistent procedure used by all schools, which causes an impact on the entire system.
- Complaints regarding no transportation being provided for the BHS magnet programs due to OVMS busing.
- Requested FTE numbers and Class Size numbers for October and February.
- Loss of 400 students, where did they go? To improve customer satisfaction, suggested developing a districtwide letter for these students to track them and ascertain why they withdrew, if they moved, etc.

Mrs. Sharpe concurred that these students need to be tracked to obtain information as to why they withdrew, etc. Chairman Pinkoson suggested a District website survey. Mrs. Childs suggested parents log-in to Infinite Campus and provide input.

- Requested matrix information on zoning/choice numbers and where the students are living and which schools they attend.
- Administrative Pool update, cross-training, number in DROP, number finished DROP, number retiring.

Mrs. Childs made the following comments/requests:

- Requested projections for next year.
- Have Board members responded to the Oakmont offer? Mr. Eubank noted that he has informally met with Mr. Ken LaPointe.

Mrs. Roy expressed concerns regarding the process that was used for the summer school program, but voiced her support for the compromise, which allows the District to keep schools open and makes parents happy. Requested that in the future the Board be provided with all the facts and figures before making a decision.

Mr. Eubank also voiced his concern and felt that issues of this importance need to be discussed at a more public meeting, and Board members should be provided with the information on the issue in advance.

ADJOURNMENT

The Informal School Board meeting adjourned at 10:23 a.m.