

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARD WORKSHOP

TEACHER RECRUITMENT/HIRING

May 8, 2007

The School Board of Alachua County, Florida, met in work group session duly called at 9:30 a.m. in Conference Room E, 620 East University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. Present were: Virginia S. Childs, chairman; Janie S. Williams, vice-chairman; F. Wesley Eubank, Tina Pinkoson, and Eileen Roy, members; W. Daniel Boyd, Jr., superintendent; and staff members.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Childs.

WELCOME Superintendent Boyd thanked the Board for taking time to hear a presentation by Human Resources staff relative to opportunities and challenges regarding the need to hire more teachers due to classroom size reduction and promotion of “No Child Left Behind” legislation. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Joan Longstreth, assistant superintendent for Human Resources.

BACKGROUND Dr. Longstreth reported the problems being experienced by the shortage of teachers as a result of the “No Child Left Behind” legislation. Our mission statement is: We are committed to success and success for every child. In the past there was an abundance of teachers but this is not the case nowadays because of “No Child Left Behind” and FCAT change in standards. There are fewer people going into the teaching profession because of additional paperwork required of them, testing, standards and discipline issues, and ESE teachers are required to be certified in whatever subject they are teaching, just to mention a few.

PRESENTATION Dr. Longstreth introduced Beverly Finley, a supervisor in Personnel who is in charge of hiring instructional staff. Ms. Finley began the presentation:

- Promotion of Alachua County Public Schools as a great place to teach, and live
- Hiring statistics for 2006-2007 school year – 2,019 total teachers; 400 new hires (65% for middle/high positions were non-education majors or career changers) who need extra support; 158 not highly qualified (test missing, out of field—177 [45% were Reading Endorsement and ESOL])
- Long-term substitutes or daily substitutes – 23 (this is issue or concern)
 - Long-term substitute could mean principal not confident about teacher or teacher can manage classroom but not certified in subject teaching
 - Daily substitutes used occasionally
- Ethnicity of teachers

Category	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other
New Hires	86%	8%	5%	1%	--
Total Teachers	80%	17%	3%	0%	--
Number of Applicants (12/1/06 – 5/8/07)	78%	11%	5%	4%	2%

➤ Non-renewed Teachers 2006-2007 School Year

Category	Number
Total non-renewed	193
Non-renewed—certification issues (mostly math section)	123
Number of districts contracts issued	10

➤ Estimated Instructional Hires for 2007-2008 School Year

Category	Number
Due to attrition/retirement/resignations/non-renewals	400
Additional teachers needed due to class size reduction	60
Vacancies as of May 7, 2007 (to be filled)	450

➤ Certified and Highly Qualified Teachers Needed 2007-2008 School Year

E-mail from Beverly Gregory, Bureau Chief of Certification, Florida DOE, regarding extension of Highly Qualified in ACPS and Effect

“It is my understanding the ‘grace’ period for meeting 100% HQ teachers for core subjects extends only through June 30, 2007. After that even though the consequences have not been identified per se there could be the risk of loss of funding especially for Title I schools.”

➤ CONCERN: Hiring out-of-field and not highly qualified teachers for 2007-2008 School Year

➤ Core Academic Subjects

K-6	Math*
Music	Science* ¹
Art	Social Studies* ²
Drama	Language Arts*
Foreign Language	Reading*

*ESE teacher must be certified and highly qualified in any of core academic subjects

¹Teacher must have Biology degree or certified, highly qualified in Biology

²Teacher must be certified, highly qualified in Social Science, History or Economics; must have subject area test

➤ No Child Left Behind Update – Dr. Charles Hall

Mandate: All teachers in the state who teach core subjects must be highly qualified by the last day of the 2006 school year (extended until 2006-2007)

- Law into effect about six years – Teachers in Title I schools must have BS degree, state certificate, and have passed subject area exams
- Extended to teachers in non-Title I schools in 2006-2007; all counties in Florida given one extra year to meet mandate
- Each district must have written plan (worked with Personnel to establish this for ACPS)
 - Each year identify percentage of teachers to reduce who not highly qualified (ACPS in high 90s of meeting highly qualified mandate)
 - Used HOUSSE process
 - Principals must sign attestation verifying that no teachers in their schools not highly qualified (monitored by Federal Government/DOE)
 - Any time a not highly qualified teacher in classroom for more than four weeks, principal must send notice home to parents immediately—parents have certain rights of knowing why no highly qualified teachers and what principal doing to make sure highly qualified teachers are hired. Must be in compliance or affects Federal dollars

- If district does not meet mandate, will
 - Lose all or part of Federal funds (does not include just Title I)
 - Have to payback of Federal funds
 - Not be granted approval to reallocate (roll forward) unspent Title I funds*
 - *ACPS applied for and received permission to reallocate funds because of our high number of highly qualified teachers
 - Funds to hire highly qualified teachers
 - Five percent set aside from Title I funds (ACPS pays tests, such as subject area exams)
 - Title II funds can be used for non-Title I schools
 - Title I and Title II funds can be used for incentives to locate and draw highly qualified teachers to schools in need or to low performing schools
 - Forces that impact meeting the mandate
 - Class size reduction (ACPS Title I schools at 94-96%)
 - ❖ Needs for upcoming year – percentage will probably decrease (if decrease is significant, ACPS will be out of compliance and some sanctions could be applied, such as losing funds or paying back funds)
 - Competition from other districts
 - ❖ Salaries competitive for beginning teachers (ACPS not very competitive because beginning salary very low)
 - ❖ Incentives (such as home loans, paying off part of college fees, \$5000 sign-on bonus)
 - Restructuring sanctions (has mandates from Federal and State governments)
 - Fifteen of ACPS in corrective action (need to make AYP) or will go into restructuring
 - ❖ If don't meet sanctions next year, replace staff (either leadership or instructional); using long-term substitutes places district and school out of compliance
 - ❖ If out of compliance, district could lose funds
- Addressing Critical Shortages
- National and statewide issue
 - Statewide average – 1,900 unfilled teacher vacancies
 - Alachua County average – 10 unfilled positions at any given time (speech language pathologists, ESE teachers, vacated positions)
- Other Counties' Incentives
- Lap tops (does not retain teachers—just leave with lap tops)
 - Sign-on bonuses – very competitive with applicants (Charleston, South Carolina giving \$10,000 bonus if teach ESE)
 - District Job Fairs – these work (evens playing field for applicants); out-of-state teachers/applicants attend
 - Supplements for teaching at low-performing schools
 - Apartment fee waivers for first month—partner up with business partner for assistance (working for other counties)
 - Mortgage incentives (working for other counties)
 - Earlier date for staffing plans, transfer requests, and instructional job offers—very important (other counties are offering jobs at the present time—Marion County started offering May 1st; others started April 30th) – ACPS need to start hiring EARLIER
- Other Counties
- Offering district contracts (some students have at least four before coming to ACPS)
 - Offering differentiated pay (if position hard to fill, start on different pay scale; some counties giving supplements, especially for critical shortage areas)
 - ACPS could collaborate with UF where Masters program available
 - Intensive recruiting efforts – going out of state, going to ESE conferences but expensive at national level (\$1500)
 - Virtual recruiting – can have interview by this means but it's costly (one company offered two weeks at \$600)
 - Community networking – have community leaders or current teachers assist in moving to our county (very good for minorities)
 - Stipends for subject area tests – VERY IMPORTANT (offer tutoring sessions)
 - On-line application system – hope will be done by SBAC soon

- Increase staff to meet NCLB and recruitment initiatives (someone needs to be devoted to recruiting); currently have 30 ESE teacher openings—have 18 applicants; our ESE fair generated 12 applicants

➤ Surrounding Counties’ Salaries

County	Bachelors	Masters
Alachua	30,700	32,200
Bradford	30,500	33,000
Columbia	31,350	34,150
Clay	35,000	37,000
Gilchrist	30,413	32,522
Marion	32,670	34,970
Putnam	34,361	36,395

➤ Attraction to Alachua County – Need to focus on “Grow Your Own” and bring back those who grew up here

- University of Florida – main draw
- Cost of living – other counties may offer higher salaries, such as Broward or Dade Counties, but can young teachers afford to live there
- Support – Personnel will see applicants, talk with them, walk through application process, facilitate interviews, and sit down with Certification Analyst in order to get certified
- Cultural diversity
- Vibrant artistic community
- Magnificent natural recreational areas

➤ Successful Marketing Strategies

- Attend college fairs – 17 visited by Ms. Finley and principals (can be costly, such as Florida A&M—\$350 to register plus \$350 to be on first row)
- Participate in community job fairs
- Offer district contracts – has been very successful (at present time have 52 district contracts)
- Principals/Administrators as recruiters – works well
- Internet advertisements – currently advertising with four internet companies and also advertising on some universities/colleges web sites (some are free)
- Network with historically Black Colleges – asking for more interns (especially ones that grew up here)
- ESE fair – not as successful because not getting very many applicants
- Networking with colleges and universities – presently doing this

➤ District Focus

- Increase applicant pool – currently have only 57 minority applicants; need critical shortage areas filled
- Increase hiring of minority teachers – easier said than done (Bethune-Cookman had 24 education majors, had 40 recruiters there; Florida A&M had 80 students, had about 100 recruiters there; UF not getting as many numbers as previously; need to focus on career changers and our staff development

Mr. Eubank suggested making offers of employment at job fairs and actually giving the students (interviewees) district contracts at the fairs.

Ms. Roy asked for clarification of a “district contract” and Ms. Finley explained that the correct document is called “pre-employment contract”.

Chairman Childs referred to past practices when three HR staff members attended job fairs. Students were interviewed first by one staff member; if they showed “quality”, then they were set up with next staff member and this way all recruiters were interviewing at one time. If they came back a second time to one of staff members and they showed potential, offered contract right then.

Dr. Longstreth commented that the district focus is narrow and wanted it this way to increase applicant pool because this is where qualified teachers, especially in critical shortage areas; want to be able to hire more minority teachers; want to be able to hire highly qualified teachers. She indicated Board members and Superintendent will need to make a “philosophical” decision because we’ve been left in “limbo land” as well as all other districts in the state, probably across the nation, as to whether or not there are going to be funding implications if we hire teachers not highly qualified in non-Title I schools. Probably only way going to be able to hire teachers and guessing whether there will be financial implications. Unless Board advises differently, will hire teachers whether or not highly qualified; looking first for highly qualified teachers in non-Title I schools.

➤ Potential Solutions presented by Dr. Longstreth

- Move official hiring date back so can compete with other districts
- Enhance and expand staff development for career changers; may want to expand orientation, may want to do some type of training like that done for substitute teachers
- Collaborate with UF’s Masters program—Sandy has begun dialogue; would be nice to be able to pay stipend to put fifth year student in classroom all year long, assign to certified, qualified, excellent current teacher and allow to teach while getting Masters
- Supplements and/or signing bonuses for critical shortage areas (ESE one of biggest needs area)
- Differentiated pay for different areas of certification to be able to attract anyone
- Updating application procedure; most of other state districts have state-of-the-art application systems
- Encourage working with business partners who can offer advantages that we can’t, such as lower percentage rates for mortgages, waive apartment fees, give first month’s rent free
- Currently recruit in state but considering going out of state
- Reimbursing cost of subject area tests. Dr. Hall was able to pick up some of costs if in Title I school; assist new teachers by paying cost of test for each subject area
- Tutoring in subject area (math test is difficult for some seasoned teachers)
- Promote teaching to Alachua County students (\$400 supplement for teachers to work with students who might want to become teachers)—need to “Grow our Own”
- Cultivate substitutes and non-instructional staff by “Growing our Own” from within
- Sponsor county seminars on “How to Become a Teacher”; many people later in life decide they want to change careers (65% of middle and high school teachers are career changers)
- RECRUIT – RECRUIT – RECRUIT

Ms. Pinkoson said she felt we really needed to look at an on-line application system. When looking at beginning salaries, need to increase beginning salaries and every step thereafter so we will be more competitive. She also indicated she

felt it would be most beneficial to expand the training for “career changers” since most of them have never been in a classroom.

Ms. Williams felt it was a good idea to either pay or reimburse potential teachers and current teachers who needed to take the subject area exams. There was some discussion with Dr. Hall about hiring teachers for non-Title I schools.

Ms. Roy inquired about the cost of the test—was advised it is \$100. She suggested that we could pay for the first test but, if they needed to take it a second time, they would have to pay for it themselves.

Chairman Childs inquired if the Board needed to take some type of action to hire people for non-Title I schools that are not “highly qualified”; if need to do this, let Board know. Otherwise Board will assume it will be done if it needs to be done. Not sure how we would be penalized, but at first, willing to take the chance. She indicated there was no option – we have to move our hiring date to an earlier time. Whatever needs to be done to make this happen needs to be done – if something has to be written into the bargaining contract, then that needs to be done. Regarding “career changer” teachers, need to make sure they are assigned a mentor teacher just like with the beginning teacher program. Also, suggest bringing those teachers in two weeks before the school year starts – have them spend a week on curriculum planning and methodology, etc., and then another week on classroom management, discipline, and understanding the different needs of children. Also, would like to know which 15 schools are at risk of being in the restructuring program. Research has indicated the most important item for school change and student achievement is the leadership. This says that we will have to take our very strongest principals and put them in those schools, even if it means we have to give them an extra supplement.

Ms. Roy commented that she liked the idea of using certified teachers for mentoring “career changers” and inquired about using our National Board Certified Teachers for this.

Mr. Eubank suggested that we be careful – can be Board certified and be an excellent teacher; can be Board certified and be a poor teacher; can not be Board certified and be a poor teacher. We need the best people to be mentoring.

Chairman Childs summed up conversations by stating that we need to come up with proposals that will have a price tag on them. Unlike the State, we understand we have to fund mandates and suggested coming up with proposals, review them with Dr. Boyd, and then present to the Board.

Dr. Boyd thanked HR staff for an excellent presentation. He stated he is very committed in bringing back to the Board a price tag for our on-line application system; need to work on restructuring our non-AYP schools; need incentives for attracting new teachers to our district; opportunity to develop partnerships with our business community; mentoring of “career changers”.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.