

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF INFORMAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
December 9, 2008

The School Board of Alachua County, Florida, met in informal session duly called at 1:30 p.m. in the Boardroom, 620 East University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. Present were: Tina Pinkoson, Chairman; F. Wesley Eubank, Vice-Chairman; Eileen Roy, and Barbara Sharpe, members; and W. Daniel Boyd, Jr., Superintendent. It was noted that Board member Ginger Childs was detained and would be arriving late.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pinkoson.

GENERAL DISCUSSION The following comments were made by the Board:

Mr. Eubank

- Expressed concern regarding the critical budget year ahead and suggested the District establish a hiring freeze, and also noted a need to take drastic action by closing some schools
- DROP—suggested looking at the St. Johns County model whereby employees (including teachers) are rehired at Step 0 and must work their way back up the salary schedule
- Suggested each Board member appoint one member to the One Mill Oversight Committee at the first Board meeting in January
- Supports a districtwide mandatory uniform policy

Chairman Pinkoson noted that only one Board member has indicated an interest in appointing members to the One Mill Oversight Committee.

Mrs. Roy

- Agreed that there may be a need to close some schools
- Has no problem appointing members to the Oversight Committee, but feels there may already be a sufficient number of members on the committee
- Wellness Coordinator—suggested a need for each school to have a wellness coordinator, and would like to share information and ideas she collected from the recent conference
- Suggested the Board hold a strategy session regarding energy consumption to examine what the District has done to reduce energy. Suggested looking at the Polk County model that has saved \$40 million in comparison to the \$197,000 the District has currently saved.

[Mrs. Childs arrived]

Mrs. Sharpe

- Budget crisis—reported that the lobbying effort is picking up steam in Tallahassee, whereby education groups will travel to Tallahassee to demand legislators refrain from additional cuts. Suggested all Board members should be on the “same page,” and District staff should attend

as many community meetings as possible to highlight the actual cuts in dollars, rather than percentages.

Board members expressed concern with the process that was used to hire a District Wellness Coordinator, without a job description, goals, etc. Mr. Eubank noted that Blue Cross/Blue Shield agreed to reimburse the District \$300,000 for a Wellness Coordinator.

Superintendent Boyd indicated he would provide Board members with information regarding the Wellness Coordinator position.

Mrs. Pinkoson

- Wellness Coordinator—noted that the District should be careful in hiring administrators, even if it is paid by someone else. Feels it sends the wrong message to employees, and believes only critical teacher positions should be hired
- Uniforms—does not believe that the timing is good with families experiencing hardships, and suggested the Board should consider this initiative at a later time.

Mrs. Sharpe indicated that in 1993-94 she led the movement for mandatory uniforms in Alachua County, but at that time the Superintendent was not very supportive. She feels the District should implement a mandatory District policy, because in the past the 80/20 rule did not work. She cited several reasons to impose uniforms, such as the safety issue--during field trips students can easily be spotted; and it also puts an end to competitive behavior. Suggested beginning at the elementary level and then the middle level. She also noted that many occupations require employees to wear uniforms.

Mr. Eubank noted that parents have indicated it will have a positive financial impact and should be phased in. He has also spoken to principals and they are very supportive.

Mrs. Childs

- Uniforms – supports implementing the first year elementary, second year middle, and third year high school
- Budget cuts—concerned the community will not see the benefit of the One Mill. Suggested a strategy on how to explain the cuts to the public

Superintendent Boyd stated that he will begin working on the uniform surveys and report back to the Board.

He also pointed out that many other cuts will probably have to take place in the future, but the One Mill money will be spent exactly as promised.

He also announced that several professional organizations, including the Florida Association of District School Superintendents and the Florida School Boards Association, along with parents and citizens, will converge together in Tallahassee to take a stand on the budget cuts.

Mrs. Childs urged the Board not to listen or react to rumors.

ADJOURNMENT

The Informal School Board meeting adjourned at 2:35