

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
June 20, 2000

The School Board of Alachua County, Florida, met in regular session duly called at 7 p.m. in the Boardroom, 620 East University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. Present were: Barbara Sharpe, chairman; Judy Brashear, vice-chairman; Bill Cake, Bev Carroll, and Chester Leathers, members; Lawrence L. Marazza, superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sharpe, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Brashear

Moved to approve the minutes of June 6, 2000, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of July 6, 1999, as presented.

The following changes were made to the agenda: Add Action Items B.3.e., Annual renewal for Catastrophic Sports Student Accident Insurance; and f., Annual renewal for Student Accident Insurance Program; change Consent Agenda Item 6., the total requested is \$69,217; and delete Action Item 3.b., Student Cases.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER
ANNOUNCEMENTS/
DISCUSSION

Mrs. Brashear made the following announcements:

- Attended the American Horticultural Society Children's Garden Festival at Epcot to learn how schools are using gardening to teach students.
- Invited Board members to attend a Safe Schools meeting on Wednesday, June 21, 2000, 5:30 p.m. at Williams Elementary School.

Mrs. Carroll invited the Board to attend the Annual Boys and Girls Club Auction on August 19.

Mr. Cake attended the Business Partners Breakfast, which recognized long-time business partners.

Dr. Leathers thanked everyone involved in the effort to continue the Dual Enrollment Program with Santa Fe Community College.

The Board extended condolences to the family and friends of retired teacher Annette Marie Messenger Mullis.

Chairman Sharpe previously provided each Board member with a memo dated June 19 related to the Superintendent's evaluation requesting each Board member individually evaluate the superintendent by June 30 and submit their specific concerns to her in narrative form. She informed the Board that the Superintendent's evaluation will be placed on the July 18 Board agenda as an action item and will be made available to the public.

RECOGNITION—
Loften High School Eagle
Ensemble

Dr. Ellen West, principal, Lofton High School, introduced a member of the Eagle Vocal Ensemble, which participated in the Orlando music festival and placed first in the competition.

Ohana Foundation's
Technology in Education
Leadership Award

The Alachua County school district has been recognized as one of the three most technologically advanced school districts in the state by the Ohana Foundation, a leading nonprofit organization committed to enhancing the quality of K-12 education through the application of advanced technology. Mr. Jim Moffett, director of Instructional Technology, accepted the Technology in Education Leadership Award on behalf of the district.

Bell Ringer Award

Mr. Don Lewis, director, Secondary Curriculum, was presented with the Bell Ringer Award for the month of June for his tireless efforts as the district's Strategic Planning Coordinator.

Master Board Training
Program

Over a period of several months, the School Board and Superintendent participated in a leadership program conducted by the Florida School Boards Association, Inc. Board members and the Superintendent were presented with a plaque and their Master Board Training certification.

CITIZEN INPUT

The following suggestions/recommendations were presented to the Board for consideration:

- A citizen commended the Board on the excellent budget workshop held June 14 and also commended the Board for continuing the dual enrollment program with Santa Fe Community College.
- A citizen requested the Board provide the following data for a

proposed 300 house development along SW 91st Street and SW 8th Avenue, which is zoned for Chiles Elementary, Kanapaha Middle and Buchholz High Schools, and requested staff attend the July 11 County Commission hearing:

- Capacity of each school.
- Total enrollment at each school at the end of the 99-00 school year.
- Projected enrollment for each year through 2009 based on existing developments.
- Study of projected enrollment based on planned development, such as the remaining phases of Haile Plantation, expected to be completed in the next two or three years.
- Any planned elementary schools in the area which may affect the enrollment of Chiles School.
- A determination on whether the schools in the area will be adequate to serve this proposed 300-house development when taking into account planned developments.

The regular Board meeting was recessed and a Public Hearing convened.

**PROPOSED POLICY
5.44, SCHOOL
UNIFORMS**

Parents and citizens addressed the Board and voiced their opposition to and support for school uniforms. Some of the suggestions included: making uniforms mandatory with no exceptions and not allowing an option to change schools.

Representative Casey addressed the Board in favor of mandatory school uniforms, but felt the Board had held themselves to unusually high standards by requiring an 80% approval or super majority vote, which is hard to obtain. He felt that transferring students to non-uniform schools would disrupt the system and lead to chaos and conflict. He recommended the Board restrict mandatory uniforms to the elementary level and require a dress code at schools not requiring mandatory uniforms, and also suggested some type of monetary incentive.

Chairman Sharpe stated that it is incumbent upon Board members to provide students with a safe and orderly environment and provided reasons uniforms will help students:

- Level the playing field among students--do away with competition
- Improve discipline
- Improve attendance
- Promote school pride and self-esteem
- Students cannot hide weapons
- Can easily identify students on field trips and visitors on campus
- Will bring order, structure and respect for teachers in the classroom
- Saves parents money on clothes

Chairman Sharpe stated she would continue to promote school uniforms and can provide statistics and e-mails supporting mandatory uniforms. Her initial promotion was to begin school uniforms at the kindergarten through elementary level so that when students enter middle and high school, they may want to wear them. She suggested that another alternative may be to implement mandatory uniforms at the ten level II schools.

She does not support the proposed policy with the 80% rule because she feels it is setting schools up for failure and is not a serious effort. The school district currently has an overtaxed transportation system and the proposed policy would create mass chaos by rezoning students to other schools. She noted that she was elected to represent every child within the public school system of Alachua County.

Dr. Leathers does not see that uniforms would have anything to do with a reduction in violence or better grades. He has been willing to go along with the 80% requirement as he felt this would be a strong mandate for a school and maybe some of the D schools would opt to go with uniforms. But, his e-mail has been overwhelming against uniforms.

Mrs. Carroll stated that the proposed policy would provide schools wishing to have uniforms with legal backing. She is not certain whether she will support the option for students to opt out by attending a different school.

Mrs. Brashear thanked the community for their input and pointed out that there is a strong division and strong feelings on both sides of this issue. She felt the proposed policy is well thought out and provides a compromise by allowing schools to choose. If the Board does not pass this policy, schools would be on shaky ground in enforcing uniforms, or dealing with students violating the policy. She stated that she will give additional consideration to item 4 regarding zoning exceptions.

Mr. Cake is opposed to school uniforms, but feels confident as the Board's hearing officer that he can easily deal with discipline cases for students refusing to wear uniforms when there is a policy allowing students to choose another school.

Chairman Sharpe noted that Frederick Douglass once said, "The history of human liberty shows that all concessions have been born of earnest struggle. Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will."

REVISIONS TO THE

Mrs. Gallant urged the Board to support a countywide effort for

CODE OF STUDENT
CONDUCT

prevention programs and expressed concern with the new steps that have been implemented in the Code involving notification of law enforcement.

A parent expressed concern that teachers do not know how to deal with students or with different cultures. The Board was urged to recruit new teachers and require they go through an internship at A. Quinn Jones and Sidney Lanier, and learn how to listen.

Mrs. Carroll expressed concern with the need for additional after school programs for middle-schoolers and additional lighting to accommodate additional activities. She noted the many great programs the district has recently implemented, which include the Ropes Course at Camp Crystal, the Second Step program, the Leadership Academy, the Teacher Intern Program, and Character Education program. The Code has set examples of penalties for vandalizing a school and she suggested other possible punishments that would be more meaningful, such as restitution. She preferred involving parents along with law enforcement before decisions are made and allow for restitution and even a contract situation, and preferred not kicking students out or just reporting them to law enforcement.

Dr. Leathers stated that it takes a whole community to raise a child and the district must involve parents and prevention programs.

Mrs. Brashear stated that she is concerned with the law enforcement reporting, but understands the need to make schools safe and treat offenses seriously, but it does put less flexibility in the district's hands to deal with cases that can be handled at a lower level. She preferred keeping the flexibility and still meeting the requirements of law.

She noted that training of principals, teachers, deans and parents is required, but supports the treatment of serious infractions of the Code and enforcement of responsibility.

Mr. Cake pointed out how the principals must enforce the Code of Student Conduct and will do what the Board requires them to do. Law enforcement will wait to see how tough the district will be with that student.

Representative Casey reminded the Board that there is a serious problem created by two or three percent of the student body and special prevention programs are needed. He voiced his support of the Code and reporting violations to law enforcement.

Mr. Bear Bryan, district security chief, stated that the district needs to

deal with prevention, but must also notify law enforcement and determine criminal intent.

Ms. Kathy Black, director, Student Support Services, informed the Board that there is statewide training available that will be shared with parents. She pointed out a change in the definition for serious offenses, and criminal or delinquent acts.

Mrs. Brashear hoped that flexibility and common sense are included in the training.

Mrs. Carroll stated that she does want order and not a double standard and prefers the option of working out problems with parents.

Chairman Sharpe stated that there are so many unanswered questions and so much room for error. She expressed concern that she has not seen the language as it will appear in the Code of Student Conduct book. She felt there was a need to have common sense and steps before notifying law enforcement to ensure fairness and equity. She requested further review and inclusion of clear definitions and the type of training that will be provided.

Dr. Leathers requested that prevention be addressed.

Superintendent Marazza stated that adults can empower students to become responsible for their own behavior.

The Public Hearing was adjourned and the regular board meeting reconvened.

PRESENTATIONS—
Update on Mebane Middle
School Connections
Program

Dr. Chet Sanders, principal, Mebane Middle School, presented an update on the Mebane Middle School Connections Program, which is a team teaching approach to integrated learning. Teachers lead instruction as specialists, with a commitment from the entire school. He expressed his appreciation to the Board for continued support of the program.

A Mebane parent and student voiced support of the program and urged the Board to allow this program to progress to the high school level.

Mrs. Carroll suggested that Mebane’s School Advisory Council contact Santa Fe High School to share information about the program and begin a dialogue.

Mr. Gunnar Paulson, president, ACEA, complimented the Mebane staff on the program.

Character Education Program for all Alachua County Schools: ABC (Alachua Schools Build Character)

Ms. Sharon Spreen, coordinator, Safe & Drug free Schools, shared a presentation of the ABC Character Education Program (Alachua schools Build Character), which will begin this fall. The program is a proactive effort in the school setting to teach children right from wrong and respect and responsibility.

Dr. Leathers commended all those involved with the program.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Superintendent Marazza informed the Board that he has spoken with the staff attorney and Jim Lang related to approval of the Strategic Plan. They have both recommended that the rulemaking procedure be followed and that a Public Hearing be scheduled on Tuesday, July 18, 2000, 7:30 p.m.

Superintendent Marazza recommended approval of Phase II and III training, in order to align site plans, pending Board approval of the Strategic Plan.

Chairman Sharpe stated that the Board would be out of order in approving Phase II and III without first holding a public hearing and approving the Strategic Plan.

Board Attorney Jim Lang stated that the Strategic Plan is a rule by definition and the Board has not held a public hearing for public input. He advised the Board to begin rulemaking and schedule a public hearing on July 18, 2000.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Brashear

Moved to schedule a public hearing on July 18, 2000, 7:30 p.m. on the Strategic Plan.

Mrs. Carroll stated that one of the Board's priorities is to reduce fourth and fifth grades class sizes by hiring 29 teachers and urged the Board to take action on the Strategic Plan at the Special Board meeting on July 24.

Mr. Cake informed Mrs. Carroll that the Board's priorities can also be addressed and included during the regular budget process.

Dr. Mary Chambers, assistant superintendent, Business Services, noted that Board budget priorities can also be included during the Public Hearings on August 1 and September 5.

Mrs. Brashear requested staff advise the Board in advance on items that

affect a large group of people and require rulemaking procedure.

Dr. Chambers reviewed the upcoming meetings:

- July 24, 2000, 3 p.m.—Special meeting to approve the tentative Budget and Millage for advertising; and
- August 1, 2000, 5:30 p.m. – Special meeting for a public hearing on the budget.

Chairman Sharpe requested Dr. Chambers provide two separate budgets--one that contains the Strategic Plan and one that does not but does contain the Board’s concerns related to class size.

Dr. Chambers indicated that the budget format for this year is going to include items within the budget categorized by the direct strategic plan, support for the strategic plan and operational support.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Brashear

Moved to schedule the final vote for the Strategic Plan at the Special Board meeting on the budget July 24, 2000, at 3 p.m.

Mrs. Carroll addressed looking at hiring teachers during the summer to ensure getting those with the best skills.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 3-2
 Yes: Mrs. Brashear
 Mr. Cake
 Mrs. Carroll
 No: Dr. Leathers
 Mrs. Sharpe

SCHEDULE/CANCEL
BOARD
WORKSHOP/MEETING

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mr. Cake

Moved to schedule a budget workshop for Board input and discussion 9 a.m., June 28, 2000, and cancel the July 4, 2000, Board meeting.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

REQUEST FOR
FUNDING OF
RETIREMENT FOR
FORMER BOARD
MEMBER

Mr. Lang reported that the Board requested at the last meeting an opinion from the Attorney General related to Dr. Jim Longstreth’s request for funding of retirement for the two years of 1988 and 1989..

The approval of the matter should come before the Board and would have to be done so that there would not be a lending of credit under the

constitutional provision by the Board to an individual. After review of some cases and attorney general opinions, his opinion is that there would not be a lending of the Board's credit to Dr. Longstreth conditioned on two things.

- One, the matter would have some degree of public purpose, and if the attorney general agrees that it is a public purpose, you are allowed to do this under F.S. Section 121.053(1)(b)3, which Doug Cherry of the Division of Retirement states can be done.
- Two, is that you do not expend your own funds unless it is approved by the attorney general. In this situation, Dr. Longstreth would place in escrow through me the sum of \$13,125.59 plus \$525.03 interest at the rate of 8% for six (6) months, an attorney general's opinion should be received by then. If the attorney general's opinion is that you cannot legally do this and you have gone ahead and made the payment of \$13,125.59, then the payment would be taken out of the escrow account plus interest at 8% to the date of reimbursement to the Board, with any extra being returned to Dr. Longstreth. If you decide to make payment to Dr. Longstreth it should be done in this manner.

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved that the Board approve Dr. Longstreth's request for retirement pay and that he make payment to Mr. Lang in the amount of \$13,125.59 plus \$525.03 (8% interest rate for six months) to be placed in a special escrow account pending the outcome of the Attorney General's opinion.

Mrs. Brashear stated that she cannot approve this request, but does sympathize with Dr. Longstreth. She has received information related to similar cases of individuals that petitioned previous Boards for payment and their requests were denied. Several individuals had a choice and have had to live with the consequences, but many employees did not have a choice.

Mrs. Carroll stated she could not support the motion because she would be uncomfortable holding the money for someone who is no longer an employee and is uncomfortable with the fairness issue.

Upon Vote: Motion failed 3-2

No: Mrs. Brashear

Mrs. Carroll

Mrs. Sharpe

Yes: Mr. Cake

Dr. Leathers

ANNUAL RENEWAL

Dr. Chambers, reported that this is an excess policy for injuries over

FOR CATASTROPHIC
SPORTS STUDENT
ACCIDENT INSURANCE

\$25,000 and is required by the FHSSA for schools to participate in interscholastic sports events. The policy period is July 1, 2000, to July 1, 2001. There is no increase in premium.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mr. Cake

Moved to approve the Annual Renewal for Catastrophic Sports Students Accident Insurance.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ANNUAL RENEWAL
FOR STUDENT
ACCIDENT INSURANCE
PROGRAM

Dr. Chambers reported that this is an annual policy for Student Accident Insurance that is a voluntary program, which has no cost to the district. The policy period begins on the first day of school. Formerly, the policy was with Fowinkle & Schroer School Insurance Agency. This year, CIGNA, through the Florida School Boards Insurance Trust, is recommended as CIGNA offers a better product with a lower cost for coverage.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Brashear

Moved to approve the annual renewal of the student accident insurance program.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mr. Cake

Moved to approve the consent agenda as described in items 1-8. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Responding to a question from Dr. Leathers, Mr. Lang stated that a report on the personnel investigation should be available to the Board within the next week to ten days.

Mrs. Carroll requested staff schedule an executive session the week of July 10 and possibly another one prior to the next Board meeting.

Mrs. Brashear requested staff address the request for information related to the proposed housing development near Haile Plantation.

Chairman Sharpe requested Superintendent Marazza provide her with his vacation schedule for the month of July, based on the number of workshops and meetings related to the budget, which she feels he should attend.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.