

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
March 6, 2001

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: Chester Leathers, chairman; Bill Cake, vice-chairman; Bev Carroll, Jeannine Cawthon and Barbara Sharpe, members; Mary L. Chambers, superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board.

Chairman Leathers called for a moment of silence on behalf of the students and families involved in the shootings in California.

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

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the minutes of February 20, 2001, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of March 6, 2001, as presented.

Add as Action Items G.4.a., Student Case No. 01-12-SB; and G.4.b., Student Case No. 01-14-X. Delete Action Item 5., Employee Case No. E-01-01; and change the final contract amount of Consent Agenda Item 8., Certificate of Final Inspection and Payment for Project SBAC CC744-Gainesville High School Food Court Plaza, to \$323,713.28.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER
ANNOUNCEMENTS/
DISCUSSION

Board members announced activities and events they attended.

Chairman Leathers pointed out that the School Board is affiliated with the Florida School Board Association (FSBA) and the Board's top priorities are in line with FSBA, the Florida Association of District School Superintendents (FADSS) and the state union. The priorities deal with supporting teachers, materials and supplies in the schools, technology, and transportation.

Chairman Leathers referred to House Bills 271 and 303 related to

vouchers. HB 271, Tuition Tax Credit Bill – Provides 100% tax credit for donations made by corporations for non-profit scholarship funding organizations. The scholarship funding organization will use these corporate donations to provide students with a \$4,000 scholarship to attend a non-public school, a \$1,000 scholarship for a home education program, or a \$500 scholarship to attend another public school outside their school district.

HB 303, School Crowding Relief Bill – Creates a statewide tuition voucher program for students in overcrowded public schools. Under this legislation students attending public schools above 120% capacity, would be eligible for a \$3,000 voucher that may be applied toward the tuition at a private school. Cost would exceed \$705 million dollars each year.

He noted that FSBA stands firm in its opposition to vouchers and is working to defeat both bills and urges citizens to contact their legislators.

RECOGNITION--
AMERICORPS—
AMERICA READS!

Ms. Donna Omer, director, Project Development, informed the Board that Alachua County is one of eleven communities participating in the Americorps Florida Reads Program, which provides tutoring for reading for over 140 children in grades K-3. The goal is to have targeted students reading at grade level by the end of the year. The Board recognized the following new Americorps members: Contelnique Goode, Felicia McCoy and Jack Saunders, Idylwild; Norine Lopez and Cheryl Myrick, Rawlings; and Jennifer Wierzbic, Lake Forest Elementary schools.

THINKING CAP QUIZ
BOWL

Mr. Jim Brandenburg, principal, Alachua Elementary School, recognized the following Alachua Elementary School students for earning First Place in the Annual Florida Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl: Ashley Nelson, Justin Sturm, Megan Raulerson, Paloma Paredes, Ryan McCoy and Sam Hart.

CITIZEN INPUT

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

- A citizen expressed concern on behalf of taxpayers that there was no public input or debate during the Board's public hearing on approval of a multi-million dollar issue. He noted that the legal ad informed the public of the proposal, but omitted information on the final cost to taxpayers. He presented the Board with the following questions and requested that a document responding to the questions be published before proceeding with the proposal.

- (1) What is the exact total amount of money being requested by this proposal?
 - (2) What will be the total amount added to the existing school debt?
 - (3) What will be the increase in the annual debt service payments?
 - (4) How many years will it take to completely amortize the school debt?
 - (5) Does the Board have any intention of putting an end to deficit spending by school administrators, or will school debt become a perpetually increasing factor, as it is with the federal government?
- A parent from Gilchrist County informed the Board that her child attends the program for the Hearing Impaired at Lake Forest Elementary School through a multi-county agreement. She praised the program as essential to the development of her child and expressed concern that the program may be discontinued due to funding. She urged the Board to visit the program at Lake Forest.

Superintendent Chambers stated that she has spoken to teachers and parents of students in the program at Lake Forest and has requested Deputy Superintendent Bill Cliett work with staff to determine if there are alternative initiatives that would reduce the costs. She also requested the staff attorney to work with other counties to see if they can come up with additional funding.

- Ms. Sande Calkins, Alachua County Education Association (ACEA), addressed the Board related to the lack of educational funding and urged the public to become involved and work together to increase funding by contacting their legislators. She expressed concern with the next phase required for the career service salary schedule to reward seniority and experience in the county.
- Dr. Gunnar Paulson, president, ACEA, addressed the Board on the duties of elected officials and urged the Board to stand up and voice their opposition to the crisis in education funding.

RESOLUTION No.01-05--
SURE

Superintendent Chambers commended the students from Students United to Reform Education (SURE) and referred to the information provided by Board Attorney Lang related to the parameters for the Board to use when working with student groups.

Chairman Leathers read Resolution No. 01-05 for the record.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mr. Cake

Moved to approve Resolution No. 01-05 as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

AUTHORIZATION TO
PROCEED WITH THE
PROCESS OF ISSUANCE
OF QUALIFIED ZONE
ACADEMY BONDS
(QZABs)

Mr. Keith Birkett, deputy superintendent, Planning/Budgeting/Systems Accountability, stated that the Board applied for and has received approval to issue Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs). Staff is requesting permission to begin the process by working with the district's financial advisor to send out RFPs to appropriate financial institutions and will present a recommendation at a future Board meeting for the sale of the QZABs.

He provided the Board with a brief overview of some of the 2 Mill Loan Options: (1) Certificates of Participation (COPs); (2) QZABs; and (3) 237.161 Loan. He stated that the School Board will pay the money back over a five-year period, with no interest.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that she supports the idea of the money working for the district and the five-year pay back, but expressed concern with the life of the computers.

Mr. Birkett informed the Board that thirty-three (33) of the district's schools were eligible for QZABs.

Mrs. Carroll pointed out for the public that the Board has discussed this issue at length at a previous workshop and is aware of the issue.

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to proceed with the process for issuance of Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs).

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

2001-2002 SCHOOL
CALENDAR

Superintendent Chambers stated that the district's main objective is to create a calendar in the best interest of students. After reviewing all the input received, a compromise was made due to the lateness of the calendar adoption.

In lieu of the earlier start date, alternative instructional initiatives will be provided for students in preparation for testing. These initiatives, in conjunction with the value-added FCAT assessment, are anticipated to compensate for any potential gain from the earlier start date.

The recommended calendar includes:

- Honoring veterans on Sunday, November 11. This date honors veterans on the actual day and provides more of an opportunity for

- instruction on the importance of Veterans Day.
- Spring break is scheduled March 25-29 to evenly distribute instructional time on task during second semester.

Mr. John Dukes, assistant superintendent, Student Support Services, reported that Public hearings were held December 5 and February 6 to consider the 2001-2002 School Calendar.

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt the 2001-2002 School Calendar as presented.

Mr. Cake requested that the calendar be distributed as soon as possible and suggested principals encourage teachers to do some type of presentation or discussions on Veteran's Day. He stated that as a Board member he is not opposed to high schools creatively ending the semester before the Christmas holidays.

Superintendent Chambers reported that Mr. Dukes is currently working on the 2002-03 school year calendar and it is anticipated to be adopted before the end of the current school year.

Mrs. Sharpe requested research be conducted before the next calendar is adopted to investigate what other counties are doing to develop a calendar. She stated that the Board must make very difficult decisions and when she votes on an issue that she has studied, she makes a decision in the best interest of students. There were several individuals against the proposed calendar, but there was also the silent group of individuals who will never come before the Board to express how they feel about the calendar, but they are out there and they do telephone board members and express how they feel. She believes that all the decisions the Board makes should be based on both sides of the issue. The Board can compromise to do what is best for students. She is not against the change, but feels the Board must make decisions with everyone included and include those individuals that do not come before the Board.

She stated that the public must be informed in advance in order to let them make preparations for the next calendar year. She does not want anyone to believe that she succumbed to pressure from one side, but does support the recommendation because it is in the best interest of students.

Chairman Leathers stated that he supports the calendar and feels that it is a good move for students and families. He thanked everyone involved in the process.

STUDENT CASE
NO. 01-10-X

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

Dr. Jim Scaggs, staff attorney, reported that the student was charged with possession of a controlled substance while at school. The parent did not request a hearing.

Motion by Mr. Cake Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to expel the student through the first semester of the 2001-02 school year, and that the Final Order in this case be approved.

STUDENT CASE
NO. 01-12-SB

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

Dr. Scaggs reported that the student is charged with persistent misconduct while riding the school bus.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation that the student's bus suspension be extended through March 20, 2001, in order to permit a hearing, if requested.

STUDENT CASE
NO. 01-14-X

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

Dr. Scaggs reported that the student is charged with a Level IV violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

Motion by Mr. Cake Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation that the student's suspension be extended through March 20, 2001.

CHANGE ORDER
NUMBER TWO FOR
PROJECT SBAC CB842—
NEWBERRY HIGH
SCHOOL SCIENCE
CLASSROOMS

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

Mr. Ed Gable, director, Facilities, reported that the change order adds \$44,115 to the contract, revising the contract to \$1,498,203.68, and represents an increase in cost for relocation of the existing site utilities, specifically underground sewer lines. This change order adds twenty-eight (28) consecutive calendar days to the contract time.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mr. Cake

Moved the administration's recommendation to authorize execution of the change order as presented.

Mr. Gable explained that the sewer lines were very close to the existing building and in looking back at records, the lines were not shown on the contract drawings or very clearly on the archive drawings.

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

CHANGE ORDER
NUMBER ONE FOR
PROJECT SBAC CB909—
EASTSIDE HIGH
SCHOOL REROOFING

Mr. Gable reported that this change order adds \$161,488.90 to the contract, revising the contract to \$1,677,291.90, and represents an increase in cost for replacing 5,959 square feet of existing metal deck and insulation found to be structurally unsound. This change order adds thirty (30) consecutive calendar days to the contract time.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to authorize execution of the change order as presented.

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

BUDGET
DEVELOPMENT/TRIM
CALENDAR

Motion by Mr. Cake Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the 2001-2002 Strategic Planning Budget and Tentative TRIM Calendar, establishing July 24, 2001, 3:00 p.m., as a special Board meeting for approval of the Tentative Budget and Millage for Advertising; August 2, 2001, 5:30 p.m., as a special Board meeting for the Public Budget Hearing and adoption of the Tentative Budget and Millage; and September 4, 2001, 7:30 p.m., for the Public Hearing and adoption of the Final Budget and Millage.

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

SCHEDULE
WORKSHOPS/CANCEL
BOARD MEETING

Superintendent Chambers reminded the Board of the March 19 curriculum overview workshop, which will provide a general overview on the status of curriculum initiatives within the district.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to schedule a reading workshop 9 a.m., March 19, 2001, and a Curriculum-related Loften/Technology workshop, 9 a.m., March 20, 2001.

Mrs. Carroll requested that the Reading workshop include reading and language development.

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

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to cancel the July 3, 2001, Board meeting due to the July 4 holiday and the other special meetings throughout July.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the consent agenda as described in items 1-13. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

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

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

The Board was reminded of the following meetings and events:

- March 14, Curriculum Workshop with lunch at Eastside High School Hungry Ram Café with Miss America to discuss character education.
- Gainesville Builders Association will be making a trip to Tallahassee to draw the Governor’s attention to the issue of school construction funding. Staff members Terry Tougaw and Keith Birkett will represent the district.

Mrs. Cawthon suggested the Board recognize the many businesses that helped schools with their donations for QZABs.

Mrs. Ann Crowell, director, Family Services Center, updated the Board with information on the Pre-K Hardship Scholarship Program, which has been established with the Alachua County Public Schools Foundation to help fund attendance for children who cannot pay their fees for the Pre-K program. Due to recent media coverage in *The Gainesville Sun*, donations have been received from individuals and community organizations. She noted that several details are still being worked out with the Foundation on how to process the money.

Mr. Bear Bryan, director, Security, updated the Board on campus safety and informed the Board that schools have been practicing their safety plans on a regular basis. The district is currently working in conjunction with the safety consultant and will be meeting in the upcoming week to review additional recommendations.

Superintendent Chambers reported that beginning next week, the safety and security consultants will be working on site with Mr. Dukes, Mr. Bryan and Mr. Hotary, as the support team and will be going around the district and will also meet with each Board member within the next few weeks.

Mrs. Carroll referred to the 800 number at the state level a student can call to report another student. She noted that she has not seen that number posted in the schools or in the media and requested a better reporting mechanism that encourages students to report other students.

Mr. Bryan stated that there are several 800 numbers currently available and he is in the process of working with GPD, ASO and local crime stoppers in developing "Junior Crime Stoppers." A poster has been developed and a phone mechanism is in the process of being completed.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that for the past two years or more she has requested a centrally located hot line number in Alachua County, not connected to Tallahassee but in Gainesville for student use. She once again requested a local 800 number that is centrally located in Alachua County aside from Tallahassee.

Mr. Bryan stated that within the next month the "Junior Crime Stoppers" will be using a local 800 number that comes into Gainesville and personnel will be available 24 hours a day.

Mrs. Grace White, Public Information Officer, updated the Board on the establishment of a flyer that will be posted at all schools advertising the local 800 number. She informed the Board that she along with Ms. Kathy Black, Mr. Bryan, and Gainesville High School Principal Charles Hall serve on a statewide safety task force initiated by Governor Bush, which has met over the past six months. Within the next two weeks a safety campaign will be unveiled entitled "Silence Hurts." The campaign promotes and urges middle and high school students to report any threats and also provides guidelines on how to deal with issues that affect them on a daily basis.

Mrs. Sharpe suggested that a process be developed for responding to citizen requests and concerns.

Following Board discussion, Chairman Leathers will meet with Superintendent Chambers to develop a process for responding to citizen concerns and requests and present a recommendation to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.