

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 5, 2002

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

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

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the minutes of January 15, 2002.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of February 5, 2002, as presented.

Add Student Case No. 02-03-X as Action Item H.6.a.; delete Consent Agenda Item 8., Use of School Buses, and change the amount of Consent Agenda Item 10, from \$85,400 to 87,500.

The question was called on the motion as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTEDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Leathers participated in the Education Rally in Tallahassee along with many teachers and educators urging the Legislature to make education the number one priority.

Mrs. Carroll noted that many administrators and several board members served as substitutes in the classrooms and offices at no cost to the Alachua County Education Association or the taxpayers in order to allow teachers and staff to attend the rally. She served as a kindergarten substitute at Wiles Elementary and thanked the children, parents, faculty and staff for their warm reception and hospitality. She pointed out that a 20/1 ratio is very important at the elementary grade level.

Mrs. Sharpe noted that she subbed for the day in the front office at

Metcalf Elementary School to allow staff to attend the rally. She thanked the principal, assistant principal and staff for their support and for all they do for the district.

Mrs. Cawthon noted that she subbed in the front office at Buchholz High School. She also commended the Eastside High School students who participated in the St. Johns Water Management District Education Program, under the direction of teacher Steve Everett. The program provides students with the opportunity to build kiosks, trails and footbridges as well as conduct scientific experiments.

Superintendent Chambers thanked the Board and staff for substituting in the schools. She subbed at Eastside High School, and it was a great day.

Condolences were extended to the families and friends of Devon Pinkleton, student at Waldo community; Hazel Lee Ellis Thomas, Food Service retiree; Janice Yrausuquin, former president of the ACCPTA; and condolences were also extended to Dawn Newell, teacher, on the recent loss of her husband.

RECOGNITION/PRESENTATION/REPORT

Character Education Student Artwork

Certificates were presented to students Lucy Smith, Littlewood Elementary; and Jerrod Giron, Newberry Elementary, for their outstanding Character Education artwork depicting the character trait, "Courage," for February.

School Improvement Highlights

Representatives from Terwilliger Elementary School and Kanapaha Middle School shared highlights of activities and programs in these schools that help contribute to higher student achievement.

BUDGETING/FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Keith Birkett, deputy superintendent, Planning/Budget/Systems Accountability, presented a budgeting/financial update on the Governor's proposed budget. The charts presented indicated estimated funding increase would be a result of an increase in local tax revenue, with less funding from state sources in 2002-03. The intent of the Governor's budget is to fund school districts at current year beginning amounts. The district has made estimated adjustments and/or cuts in the amount of \$14.8 million for 2001-02 and 2002-03, with an estimated 25.4% of the reductions in district-level expenditures, and an estimated 7.9% in expenditure reductions at the school-level. The Legislature will begin budget discussions later this month.

Mrs. Sharpe noted that the Governor's budget has not been approved by the Legislature, the figures are not concrete, and it is preliminary.

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

PROPOSED CHARTER
CONTRACT FOR
MICANOPY MIDDLE
SCHOOL

Mr. Don Lewis, director, Charter Schools, reported that the Board approved the Micanopy Middle Charter School in concept at the November 20, 2001, Board meeting.

A representative of the Micanopy Middle Charter School thanked the School Board for their support and highlighted the success of the current elementary Micanopy Area Cooperative School.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that Micanopy has done a great job with their elementary charter school and asked about the facility for the new middle school.

The Board was informed that the local Baptist Church is allowing the school to use their educational building for the first year to house sixth-grade, and plans are underway for a future facility.

Dr. Leathers stated that he has been very impressed with the success of the elementary school in Micanopy, and he pointed out that the middle school level is more complex and broader and wished them the best.

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

SCHEDULED AGENCIES

County Commissioner Rodney Long presented information to the Board regarding the development of Cone Park in the eastern part of the county, and a site plan was explained in detail. Currently a partnership involving federal, state and local interests exists, with approval from the City and County Commissions expected in the near future. The park would provide a variety of recreational opportunities for area residents, and if expanded, could also provide facilities for both Lofton and Eastside High schools. As a major stakeholder of east Gainesville, the Board was asked to consider becoming a partner in Cone Park, supporting the expansion of the track and enclosure of the basketball court through a monetary contribution.

City Commissioner Chuck Chestnut, IV, explained the benefits of the Cone Park Project and the need to establish a new relationship between the city recreation department and the School Board.

Commissioner Long requested permission to attend the School Board workshop on Facility Utilization scheduled Friday, February 8, 2002, to determine if the Board wishes to become a partner.

Dr. Leathers strongly expressed his support and proposed that the Board pursue some kind of partnership. He requested the Superintendent and facilities staff work on this issue and noted that he would be willing to represent the Board on this issue.

Mrs. Sharpe thanked the Commissioners for their presentation and noted there cannot be a recommendation at this time, but that the Board will take the proposal under consideration. She is happy to see that there is someone living on the property, which hopefully will curb any type of drug activity.

Commissioner Long informed the Board that several security measures have been proposed. The caretaker will be a law enforcement officer, and the entire facility will be fenced.

Mrs. Carroll thanked them for an excellent presentation. She suggested additional security information be provided to make sure that this is a very safe place for children.

Commissioner Long stated that Commander Tony Jones is on the steering committee and will be making recommendations as part of the security team for the project.

Chairman Cake stated that the Board fully supports the proposal and will cooperate in any way possible. He urged them to keep in contact with the district's facilities staff.

CITIZEN INPUT

The following concerns/suggestions/requests were presented:

- Citizen urged the Board to end the continuing practice of cost overruns on construction projects that have diverted money from the classroom and suggested that contractors be requested to base their bids on potential cost overruns at a not to exceed figure.
- Buchholz High School parent referred to the district's grading policy, which allows plus (+) grades. The state does not recognize plus (+) grades and only assigns whole number numerical values to grades. The Board was urged to change the district's policy and assign higher numerical value to plus grades.
- Student expressed concern that he has not been allowed to enroll at Buchholz High School and obtain a high school diploma.

Superintendent Chambers referred the student to Ms. Kathy Black, executive director, Student Support Services, for assistance.

- Citizen addressed infusion of African-American history into the

district's curriculum.

- The Board was provided with a report on the successful rally in Tallahassee, with 250 participants from Alachua County urging Legislators to make education their number one priority.
- The ACEA president thanked the Board for assistance with substituting in the classrooms and participating in the rally.
- Citizen expressed concern with the first two services listed under District Consultant Services-Attachment E being approved after the fact. Referring to the third service under Attachment E, FCAT testing for home school students, suggested that home school students be tested with public school students to save money. (Mr. Wayne Hackett, director, Purchasing, explained that the Board's policy provides that educational consultants under \$25,000 are presented to the Board as information and do not require Board approval.)

RESOLUTION No. 02-02
—STUDENT SERVICES
WEEK FEBRUARY 3-9,
2002

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt Student Services Resolution No. 02-02 declaring February 3-9, 2002, as Student Support Services Week.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

INTENT TO RENEW
CHARTER SCHOOL
CONTRACTS

The Expressions Learning Arts Academy, Inc., and the Love to Learn Educational Center, Inc., charter schools are nearing completion of their initial three-year contracts.

Florida Statute requires that the School Board declare 90 days before the ending date of the contracts whether or not it intends to renew the charter contracts. Review of the charter schools by district divisions indicates the schools are eligible for renewal. Following notification of intent to renew, a renewal contract will be negotiated with the charter schools.

Motion by Dr. Leathers

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to declare intent to renew the charter contracts for the Expressions Learning Arts Academy, Inc., and the Love to Learn Educational Center, Inc., charter schools.

Mrs. Carroll urged the district to continue the monitoring process and continue to report to the Board.

Dr. Leathers commended the leadership of the district's charter schools.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BID AWARD FOR
PROJECT SBAC CA740 –
HIGH SPRINGS
ELEMENTARY/SPRING
HILL MIDDLE
SCHOOLS ROOF
REPLACEMENT

Mr. Ed Gable, director, Facilities, reported that bids for the construction of this project were received on January 22, 2002.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to accept the low base bid of \$700,000 and additive alternate no. 1 in the amount of \$10,000 and award a contract for construction totaling \$710,000 to R.F. Lusa & Sons, Inc., Lakeland, Florida, with completion of this project to be within two hundred forty (240) consecutive calendar days from the date indicated in the Notice to Proceed.

Board members expressed concern related to roof replacements and that there is no guarantee extenuating circumstances may not require change orders for this project.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

PROPOSED POLICY
AMENDMENTS AND
PROPOSED POLICY—
SECOND READING

A public hearing was held January 15, 2002, to consider amendments to the following policies that specify and clarify requirements of law and district practices: 7.31, Purchasing and Bidding; 7.41, Payroll Procedures; 8.01, Safety of Pupils, Employees and Visitors; 8.02, Safety Program; 4.111, Graduation Exercises; 6.132, Alcohol and Drug-free Workplace; 7.13, Audits; 6.441, Sick Leave; and 7.01, School Budget System.

Motion by Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt the amendments to the above policies as submitted.

Dr. Gunnar Paulson, president, ACEA, referring to Policy 7.41, Payroll Procedures, Item (9), suggested adding the language "which fulfill all the requirements of Florida Statutes" to the proposed new language.

Superintendent Chambers stated that Dr. Scaggs, staff attorney, felt that it was already implied in the new language.

Dr. Paulson felt the need to make it clear that "other groups designated by law" must fulfill the requirements of state statutes, and he urged the Board to add the additional language as a safeguard in order to avoid any problems in the future.

Board Attorney Lang interpreted it to mean that another group that might be designated by the legislature to bargain collectively would be able to bargain if they are designated to do so by law.

Superintendent Chambers stated she was not opposed to pulling the policy for Dr. Scaggs' review prior to the next Board meeting.

Mrs. Sharpe asked Mr. Lang to confirm if this language is in compliance with Florida Statutes and requested staff to review the statutes and be prepared to report at the next meeting.

Mrs. Cawthon was not opposed to adding the additional language if it is just a safeguard.

Motion by Dr. Leathers Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to amend the motion and pull the amendment to Policy 7.41, Payroll Procedures, until the February 19, 2002, Board meeting.

The question was called on the amendment.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

The question was called on the original motion as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

POLICY 5.11, SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE
ZONES/AREAS

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt the amendment to Policy 5.11, School Attendance Zones/Areas, as presented.

Mrs. Sharpe stated for the record: *She is aware that there is some strong inclination toward neighborhood schools by some of us, but she just wants to go on record as saying that a strong expectation has been built around neighborhood schools and the idea that students will attend schools that are close to home. At the same time, the reality is that many neighborhoods remain somewhat racially segregated. Income similarities and race comfort zones and, of course, our nation's history of racial segregation leads to many persons living where racial diversity does not abound. When a school district's attendance policy is simply to paint a ring around neighborhoods and assign children accordingly, the inevitable results will be that children of the same race, income and other characteristics will often attend homogenous schools. So I would like to reiterate that the Superintendent, this Board and staff must be very careful not to allow the zoning exception rules*

and the choice assignments throw us back into a segregated school system. Alachua County district schools are presently in the unitary system status, but can be challenged if there was a good reason to do so. But as Dr. Scaggs knows from a meeting that he and I attended at the Florida School Boards Association this past November, we can be taken back to court if someone challenged a segregated school system. We must do what is right and what is right may not always be popular and what is popular may not always be right, but it is without a doubt our job to do the right thing, and I believe we will.

Dr. Leathers stated that he strongly supports Mrs. Sharpe's sentiment, but feels that after 40 years the district no longer needs to continue to do that, and he feels strongly that his proposal for neighborhood schools could be shifted slightly to choice. If the district went to a choice situation with the right kind of choice, and if enough parents wanted to go to the schools nearest to where they live, then the policy would allow that.

Dr. Mel Lucas, director, Research/Evaluation, confirmed if every parent wanted to go to the school closest to their choice, that the district would end up with neighborhood schools, with the only limitation being the size--if space is available.

Dr. Leathers stated that he does not want to establish a policy that forces parents to go to neighborhood schools if they do not wish to do so. He feels that the current policy allows for choice to take place.

Mrs. Carroll stated that staff has addressed her concerns as discussed at the Public Hearing. She sees a conflict in the policy, which deals with socio-economic diversity among the schools and limiting transportation. She feels these two things, when looking at the demographics of the city, could very much conflict with each other. She has been assured by staff that the language "to the degree practicable" within the policy will address any possible conflicts.

Following the recent facility utilization workshop, parents have provided her with input on the way neighborhoods were divided in the past, and they feel this has been cruel to children and neighborhoods. She is extremely proud of this district and Board for supporting magnet programs at the middle and high school levels, which has allowed choice based on academics, even though they may not be as cost effective as some other programs, but serve many purposes.

She pointed out that charter schools in Alachua County are very strong and they are recruiting students from public schools, particularly elementary students along with home school students, which is

evidence that the district is able to provide choices for parents and students. This is a wake-up call for the Board to ask tough questions as to why parents are leaving a particular school. The Board will need to support that particular school and bring it back to school choice for that community. Mrs. Carroll thanked the Zoning department for being more lenient with granting zoning exceptions.

Mrs. Carroll stated that this has been a long time in coming and she hopes to see less children having to take long bus rides and less parents having to take taxis to get to schools. She appreciates the work staff has put into this policy and is excited to see how schools are going to market themselves and work toward filling seats.

Mrs. Sharpe stated for the record: *I am also excited, but I will be very vigilant to be sure that the district continues the momentum that we have and that we do not regress. More than race, I feel that it should be addressed as a socio-economic diversity, which I have previously stated. It cannot be based solely on race because all white children are not rich and all black children are not poor. So we must look at the socio-economic diversity. Using Duval Elementary School as an example, we presently have clumped into four or five schools most children with the highest incidence of free and reduced lunches. Research has constantly proven that kids who are clumped in those low socio-economically challenged schools, do not do as well as when there is a healthy mix. That is where I am coming from. I am coming from the fact that we need to be sure, as a School Board, that we do the right thing, and I know that we are excited, but do not let our excitement cause us to do what we know is not right. What we need to be very concerned about is having a healthy mix in these schools, because the busing from across town to Duval is one good point that I am trying to make, and that is that the problem is compounded. The reason for that is because we took Duval, which is already a socio-economically challenged school, then we bused kids from another socio-economically challenged school to Duval. That is not helping to solve the problem. I am proud of the district and what they have done, but I want to continue to be proud and to be sure that they do the right thing. I will be very vigilant to be sure that the district does do that.*

Chairman Cake thanked Mrs. Sharpe and expressed his appreciation for her perspective on this issue.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

POLICY 7.32,
SELECTING
PROFESSIONAL
SERVICES

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt the amendment to Policy 7.32, Selecting Professional Services, as submitted.

Responding to Dr. Leathers, Mr. Hackett explained that educational consultant services on Attachment E do not exceed \$25,000 and do not require board approval as opposed to architectural and engineering services.

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

POLICY 8.72,
ACCEPTABLE USE
POLICY FOR THE
EXPLORATION AND
UTILIZATION OF THE
INTERNET AS A TOOL
FOR LEARNING

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt Policy 8.72, Acceptable use Policy for the Exploration and Utilization of the Internet as a Tool for Learning, as submitted.

Responding to questions from the Board, Mr. Lang noted that this district has never been involved in issues that this policy addresses. He felt it better for the Board to adopt a policy that is based on statutory authority and, hopefully, nothing would come before the Board.

Mr. Jim Utley, Chief, Technical and Information Services, informed the Board that the policy will be presented to all employees and they will be required to sign indicating that they fully understand the policy.

Dr. Paulson informed the Board that since this policy will affect employees, he has submitted a demand to bargain the impact of this policy.

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

AMENDMENT TO THE
PUPIL PROGRESSION
PLAN—FIRST READING

In order to allow greater flexibility and a wider selection of electives to high school student schedules, it is recommended that the credit requirement in math and science align with the required three credits.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved the administration's recommendation to schedule a public hearing 7:30 p.m., February 19, 2002, to consider amendment to the Pupil Progression Plan.

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

STUDENT CASE
NO. 01-61-HC

Mr. John Dukes, deputy superintendent, Student Support Services, reported that the student was charged with possession of a controlled substance. The parent objected to the reassignment. A hearing was held on December 10, 2001. No exceptions have been filed.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to enter a final order adopting the Hearing Agent's recommended order to confirm the assignment of the student to the alternative center.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

STUDENT CASE
NO. 02-03-X

Mr. Dukes reported that the student is charged with battery on another student. An investigation is being conducted.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to extend the student's suspension through February 19, 2002.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to approve the Consent Agenda as described in items 1-12, with the deletion of item 8 and change in amount on item 10. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

DISCUSSION ITEM--
SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Ms. Kathy Black presented a detailed report on School Discipline that included a brief history of the student discipline system and an explanation of the change in definitions for several categories. Ms. Black showed the number of reported incidents over a three-year period and explained that changes in the numbers were often a direct result of the changes in reporting categories. An effort to have both students and staff report incidents of threat and intimidation has resulted in increases in the reports in those areas, and will allow administrators to take appropriate action to deter future incidents.

Mrs. Sharpe applauded the district for doing a very good job in the discipline area and does not believe that the district's schools are crime-ridden. Many years ago if a student acted out, principals would handle the discipline, but things have changed and she believes that it is a societal program due to the baby boom and more children who are addicted, but there is better control. She does not agree with people who continually criticize the school system, but do not provide solutions. She feels very good about what is happening in the schools and thanked staff for their presentation.

Mrs. Carroll noted that school communities are dealing with disrespectful behavior and there are programs in place to help students who repeatedly misbehave. One program being offered by the School Readiness Coalition (SRC) is the Second Step program, which has been mandated for all subsidized child care centers and home providers and is a preventative program for behavioral problems among 3-4 year-olds. The program has been very successful throughout the country and prepares students to deal with their peers.

Chairman Cake noted that discipline rates are high due to the process being used and as a result of changes in the process and policy.

Ms. Black thanked staff and students for taking responsibility and reporting incidents.

Superintendent Chambers pointed out for the record that both presentations, School Discipline and College Readiness, were placed on the agenda to address the requests of a citizen, and the citizen is not present.

COLLEGE READINESS

Representatives of the district and Santa Fe Community College presented a report on College Readiness. Joyce Daniels, demonstrated a CD-ROM that will be sent home with all middle and high school students to allow for a seven-year college and career planning period. Guidance counselors Ken Mercer and Rhett Thomas highlighted information on college and career choices that is presented to high school students, and the remediation opportunities available at high schools and Santa Fe. Pat Smittle and SFCC representatives debunked myths concerning college and career options, and discussed a pilot "College and Career Readiness Day" that SFCC will host. During the event students will be able to take the College Placement Test and tour the SFCC campus. Continuous collaboration takes place between the school district and Santa Fe Community College.

Board members thanked everyone for the very informative presentation.

Chairman Cake expressed disappointment that the citizen requesting the presentation did not stay to hear it.

Superintendent Chambers commended staff and SFCC representatives for their excellent presentations.

BOARD MEMBERS/SUPER- INTENDENT REQUESTS

There were no requests.

ADJOURNMENT

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