

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
March 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 Dr. Leathers

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the minutes of February 19, 2002, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

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

Add as Action Item G.2., Student Cases 02-06-X and 02-07-X.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Carroll announced that a proposal is being considered by the Senate Appropriations Committee related to the elimination of sales tax exemptions on such items as stadium sky boxes, consultant and lobbying services, professional sports club promoters and racing dogs by breeders, etc. The \$798 million generated by eliminating these sales tax exemptions are specifically allocated to state education programs. She urged the public to contact their senators and encourage them to support the repeal of these tax exemptions.

She attended the Rawlings Elementary School Read-In and thanked the teachers, students and principal, and also commended the Eastside High School Key Club for painting and cleaning Rawlings Elementary School. She requested that the EHS Key Club be recognized at an upcoming Board meeting for all their hard work.

Dr. Leathers referred to a recent *Gainesville Sun* editorial regarding the loss of experienced teachers seeking higher pay in Georgia. He also encouraged everyone to work together to improve the quality of

schools in Florida.

Superintendent Chambers recognized the Boardroom artwork and also extended the Board’s condolences to the family and friends of former Buchholz High School student Matthew Lee Hibbits. She thanked everyone for their get well wishes during her recent illness.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that she was also scheduled to read at Rawlings Elementary School, but unfortunately was admitted to the hospital. She also thanked everyone who came to see her and for their get well wishes.

RECOGNITION/PRESENTATION/REPORT

Character Education Student Artwork

Depicting this month’s character trait, “Perseverance,” Sara Austin, Jennifer Haguewood and Erin Dickerson, Mebane Middle School, and Michael Brooker, Westwood Middle School, were presented with certificates for their artwork.

National Accreditation for the Academy for Construction Technology at Loften

Mr. Kurt Morauer, director, Training Program Development, and chairman, Loften Academy of Construction Trades, recognized Loften High School as the first high school in Florida to receive the National Centers for Construction Education and Research recognition as an accredited training and education facility.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that many of the programs offered at Loften are very unique because it is a school of choice, and she commended the faculty and staff for doing a great job.

Second Annual ESE Conference—Tools for Success

Dr. Rene Speisman, director, ESE, reported that the Second Annual ESE Conference was held at Littlewood Elementary School on February 9. Parents, students, and the community were invited to share information on strategies that can be used in the classroom and at home in order for students to succeed.

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

PUBLIC HEARING—
SCHOOL HOURS FOR
2002-03 SCHOOL YEAR

Chairman Cake announced that a public hearing has been scheduled to hear public input on School Hours for the 2002-03 School Year.

Dr. Jim Scaggs, staff attorney, informed the Board that the starting school hours that are being suggested include a shortened Wednesday for elementary, middle and center schools. The subject of early dismissal in middle schools is one that is being discussed at bargaining

and staff does not recommend changing that until the conclusion of bargaining and there is further opportunity to discuss it through the bargaining process. He made it clear to the Board that what is being presented does not do away with the shortened Wednesday.

Dr. Gunnar Paulson, president, ACEA, was pleased that the staff attorney made it clear that the proposed hours would not eliminate early Wednesday.

He stated that the proposed school starting times do not represent input from teachers, school staff or the community. He pointed out that due to the elimination of the seventh-period day in the high schools, it has forced the issue of starting times to be discussed. He stated that he would provide the board with suggestions to keep the early Wednesday and look out for the safety of children and an optimal atmosphere for academic improvements. He noted that there are several concerned teachers present to address the Board about this issue and encouraged the Board to vigorously solicit input from not only middle, but from elementary, high schools and other stakeholders to allow for open debate.

He presented the following questions/concerns:

1. Has the Board and/or district personnel actively solicited advice from teachers and school employees?
[He noted that there was a subcommittee that went through many possible solutions to early Wednesday. There also was a committee during the year where 92% of teachers and administrators overwhelmingly were in favor of early Wednesday. He recently visited seven of the eight middle schools and has talked to staff and employees and has received tremendous feedback.]
2. Has the Board and/or district personnel tried to explain in detail what they are trying to accomplish and why?
[The newspaper articles give the impression that the reason for the revision of school starting times was for the purpose of saving money because early Wednesday is expensive.]
3. Have district personnel attended faculty meetings, has the Board heard safety concerns from teachers and employees, or is this solely for cost savings?
[Teachers have expressed concern with students being on campus two hours early without supervision if middle school begins at 9:20 a.m.]
4. Has the Board looked at all the options? Possibly combining middle and elementary schools and keeping early Wednesday?

He presented the following proposal:

7:30 a.m.	Middle	1:55 p.m.
7:45 a.m.	Elementary	1:45 p.m.
8:15 a.m.	Middle	2:15 p.m.
8:15 a.m.	Elementary	2:40 p.m.
9:00 a.m.	High	3:20 p.m.

He strongly suggested that the Board look at all options that may be brought forward in the near future and urged the Board not to vote prior to bargaining this issue.

Responding to a question from Mrs. Cawthon, Dr. Bill Cliett, Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instructional Services, reported that at a recent Board workshop there was discussion regarding before school programs for middle school students if they had a later starting time. He has met with representatives from the City Recreation department and they have expressed a willingness to work with the district to begin some type of before school morning programs from 8-9 a.m.

He noted that there are a number of grants that are currently providing after school programs for middle school students and those could be changed into morning time activities, or an extended school day type of program that can be done in the morning on a fee basis. There are also a number of programs the district could provide that would give homework help to chess clubs, etc., that would be supervised before the school day began.

The following concerns/suggestions/requests were presented by teachers and parents:

- Support elementary and middle school students starting school earlier and high school students later
- Safety concerns with middle school students waiting at bus stops if middle school begins at 9:30 a.m.
- Late buses and staff having to wait for buses at the end of the day
- Stagger times in order to get students to and from school
- Calculate the cost savings of eliminating early Wednesday vs. the benefits
- Urged the Board to keep block scheduling
- Explore alternatives of rezoning and try to maximize neighborhood schools
- Support before school fee-based programs
- Support early Wednesday
- Students riding buses longer

- Middle school students will not have time for after school activities
- Encouraged the Board to consider ACEA school hours proposal and share with the public before a Board vote
- Dangerous to have kids on campus unsupervised
- Impact of longer bus rides on magnet program students

SPOT REZONING OF
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS

The Board took a break and reconvened the Public Hearing.

Chairman Cake announced that a public hearing has been scheduled to hear public input on Spot Rezoning of Elementary Schools for the following areas:

Rezoning to Idylwild from Wiles

Rezoning to Littlewood from Idylwild and Littlewood

Rezoning to Duval from Terwilliger and Littlewood

He announced that two additional public hearings will be held for Spot Rezoning of Elementary Schools on Wednesday, March 6, 2002 – 7 p.m. for the following areas:

Rezoning to Terwilliger from Hidden Oak

Rezoning to Prairie View from Hidden Oak

And

Thursday, March 7, 2002 – 7 p.m. for the following areas:

Rezoning to Williams from Norton, Glen Springs, and Prairie View

Rezoning to Irby and Alachua from Talbot

Rezoning to Foster, Norton and Glen Springs from Talbot

Dr. Mel Lucas, director, Research/Evaluation, stated that staff presented to the board at a February workshop, in light of the economic crisis, a way for the district to save money is to better utilize school facilities. There are substantial savings that can be achieved by moving students from crowded schools to schools that have space for them.

The savings will come from:

- return of leased portable classrooms
- reduced transportation costs
- avoidance of expenditures for upgrading portable classrooms

The board has a new table showing school capacity figures, current student enrollment at the elementary schools, and projected enrollment under the proposed spot rezoning. This table is also available to the public.

The capacity figures in this table are slightly different than those presented to the board on February 19th, when the spot rezoning proposal was first presented. Most of the capacities are a little lower, a few remained the same, and a few increased. The changes in the capacities reported at the February meeting are the result of additional

meetings the Facilities and Curriculum staff had with principals to refine the determination of school capacity.

Because these small changes in capacity had little impact on the proposed spot rezoning, it is not necessary to alter the original proposal.

While it did not affect any school zone line, the original proposal included the relocation of the ESOL Program from Finley to Littlewood. This proposal has been rescinded due to the projected cost of training the faculty at Littlewood, training that has already occurred for Finley teachers.

The numbers presented in the table reflect these changes. It was noted that Finley shows a projected crowding of approximately 30 students for next year, which does not warrant the need to alter the original zone lines proposal. The declining enrollment of this area, coupled with stricter control of future zoning exceptions for children wishing to enter Finley for the first time, should reduce this number quickly. The permanent facilities at Finley can accommodate this temporary crowding.

The same is true of the slight crowding at Williams and Chiles. It does not warrant the alteration of the proposed zone line plan to accommodate this temporary crowding. Stricter control of future zoning exceptions and the introduction of school choice year after next, should help alleviate the slight over crowding.

Also, while not affecting the zone line proposal, the public should be aware of allowing current 5th graders at Waldo Community School to remain at Waldo for the 6th grade. The district will allow each successive cohort of students to remain at Waldo and to eventually complete the 8th grade: next year (2002-03) add the 6th grade, the year after (2003-04) the 7th grade and in 2004-05, add the 8th grade. Students in the Waldo zone will be eligible for zoning exceptions to Hawthorne or other county middle schools under existing school board policy.

The map is intended to depict the proposed changes in zone lines. Written descriptions published earlier are intended to help clarify this map. In those descriptions street names were used, which are generally easier for the public to understand than the sometimes more precise Range, Township, Section specifications. There is one specific area where additional clarification is warranted. The Northwood Oaks area depicted on the map is correct. He read for the record a more accurate description of this area:

The area currently zoned for Talbot Elementary School known as Northwood Oaks is proposed for change to Foster Elementary School. Because of the complex shape of this area, it will be described in three separate segments. The first segment is bordered on the west by the western boundary of Section 13, Range 19 E, Township 9 S, on the south by the southern boundary of Section 13 (which is also NW 53 Avenue), on the east by a north/south line midway between NW 31 Terrace and NW 30 Terrace and on the north by the northern boundary of Section 13. The next segment is bordered on the west by segment 1, on the south by a line parallel to, but south of NW 68 Avenue midway between NW 68 Avenue and NW 67 Place, on the east by Hwy. 441 and on the north by the northern boundary of Section 13. The last segment is bordered on the west by the first segment, on the south by the southern boundary of Section 13 (which is also NW 53 Avenue), on the east by NW 34 Street Extension and on the north by a line parallel to, but midway between NW 55 Blvd. and NW 54 Avenue.

At the request of a Board member, the zoning office calculated the impact on Hidden Oak and Terwilliger if the Majestic Oaks area were substituted for the Hamilton Heights area, *The area currently zoned for Hidden Oak bordered on the west by SW 122 Street, on the south by SW 8 Avenue, on the east by SW 75 Street and on the north by Newberry Road including, but not limited to, Hamilton Heights, Fort Clarke Forest, Tomoka Hills, Sunningdale, Buckingham, West Chester Manor, Saw Buck.*

The Majestic Oaks area is the area currently zoned for Hidden Oak bordered on the west by a north/south line parallel to, and 100 feet west of SW 64 Terrace, on the south by SW 20 Avenue, and on the east and north by Interstate 75 including but not limited to Majestic Oaks, Sugarfoot Oaks, Sugarlane, Woodland Villas and Sugarfoot Village Apts.

The Majestic Oaks area has approximately the same number of students as the Hamilton Heights area so the substitution of this area for the other has no real impact on the proposed enrollments at Hidden Oak or Terwilliger. The percentage of students on free/reduced lunch is much higher in the Majestic Oaks area than it is in the Hamilton Heights area. Currently Terwilliger has approximately 50% of its student population qualified for free/reduced lunch. Under the original proposal, with the Hamilton Heights area moving from Hidden Oak to Terwilliger, this percentage would drop to approximately 42%. With the substitution of Majestic Oaks for the Hamilton Heights area, the percentage of students on free/reduced lunch in Terwilliger is projected to be approximately 55%.

Currently Hidden Oak has approximately 36% of students qualified for free/reduced lunch. Under the original proposal with the Hamilton Heights area moving to Terwilliger, Hidden Oak's percentage was projected to drop to 34%. With the substitution of the Majestic Oaks area for the Hamilton Heights area, the percentage on free/reduced lunch at Hidden Oak is projected to be approximately 19%.

Terwilliger Free/Reduced Lunch Percentages		
Current	Hamilton Heights area To Terwilliger	Majestic Oaks area to Terwilliger
50%	42%	55%

Hidden Oak Free/Reduced Lunch Percentages		
Current	Hamilton Heights area To Terwilliger	Majestic Oaks area to Terwilliger
36%	34%	19%

From the staff's point of view, a substitution of the Majestic Oaks area would constitute a major change, which would require public notice and hearings. He suggested input from Mr. Lang to elaborate on the procedure to follow if the Board chooses to consider this, or other changes.

He reminded the board and public that, if parents request, his office will grant zoning exceptions to this year's 4th graders who are affected by any zone line changes so that they may remain in their current school for the 5th grade.

Mr. Lang explained that if the plan presented at the last meeting is amended to do something different from what was expressed previously, the board would have to hold another public hearing. He also pointed out that board members can individually express their feelings at the upcoming public hearings, but the hearings are strictly for public comment.

Mrs. Carroll submitted 200 emails and letters she has received to go on the record in order for it to be used to amend or make motions.

Mrs. Sharpe believes that if the board is going to do rezoning, it should not be done piecemeal, or it should not be done until it is done right and all together, and not vote on part of a plan March 19. She is not making a statement to say she is for the plan, but does not want it to be done piecemeal.

Chairman Cake stated that on March 19 each Board member will have the opportunity to amend the proposal and go through the

parliamentary process.

Mrs. Sharpe requested a roll call rather than a vote when the Board goes through the process.

The following concerns/suggestions/requests were presented:

- Devaluation of property values in the Finley zone
- Loss of volunteers at Finley
- Support the rezoning of Finley
- Support the retention of the ESOL program at Finley
- Support the removal of the portables at Finley
- Oppose proposal to move Finley students to Littlewood
- Not enough time to study the proposal
- Detrimental to the Sugarfoot neighborhood
- Support diverse school community
- Reconsider plan that breakups Finley family
- Sugarfoot submitted a petition from 143 neighbors to stay in the Finley zone
- There is no overcrowding at Finley
- Grandfather the current Finley families on zoning exceptions
- Propose the Board table the whole process and convene a commission to provide a rationale solution to the current budget crisis and create a plan in a stable atmosphere
- Sugarfoot and Anglewood neighborhoods submitted petitions urging the board to allow them to remain in the Finley zone, and to make sure that if there is not a substantial savings, do not break up the school.
- Grandfather families that bought homes in the Finley zone
- Support zoning exceptions
- Direct staff to look at the definition of functional vs. capacity
- Consider options before making any zoning decisions
- Support Title I program at Littlewood
- Littlewood is not overpopulated
- Continue to zone Lincoln Estates to Littlewood not Lake Forest
- Continue to keep schools integrated
- Allow students already attending their schools to continue through their elementary school years
- Do not support rezoning students from Wiles to Idylwild
- Suggested as one solution to the budget crunch, possible fundraising efforts at Finley for parking during football games
- Keep the student diversity at Littlewood
- Strongly support reduction of overcrowded schools.
- Make decisions with long-term goals in mind.
- Stop the rezoning plan and rezone the entire district and close underutilized schools.

- Continue to retain Monteocha area in Talbot
- Set aside funds to begin building a new elementary school
- Sell property of underutilized schools on the eastside
- Concerned that rezoning will affect the programs at Finley

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

BUDGETING/
 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mr. Keith Birkett, Deputy Superintendent, Planning, Budget, and Systems Accountability, provided a budget and financial update that included information about the Senate and House budgets. The house took up its budget on March 1, 2002. The Senate is scheduled to vote on its budget Thursday, March 7, 2002. The Senate budget proposal is approximately \$400 million dollars more than the proposed House budget. Also included in the report was an overview of district FTE counts for the year compared to beginning 2001-02 projections.

CITIZEN INPUT

- A Ft. Clarke Middle School teacher expressed concern that magnet programs, which have the highest achieving students, are receiving more services and resources than other programs in the district. Feels strongly that each child is important.

AMENDMENTS TO THE
 PUPIL PROGRESSION
 PLAN—SECOND
 READING

A public hearing was held February 19, 2002, to consider an amendment to the Pupil Progression Plan that would align math and science credits with the state’s required three (3) credits.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration’s recommendation to approve the amendments to the Pupil Progression Plan as presented.

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

STUDENT CASE
 NO. 02-06-X

Dr. Scaggs reported that the student is charged with possession, use and transfer of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the superintendent’s recommendation to extend the student’s suspension through March 19, 2002.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

STUDENT CASE
 NO. 02-07-X

Dr. Scaggs reported that the student is charged with possession of a controlled substance.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to extend the student's suspension through March 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 1-7. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mrs. Cawthon felt that it was unfortunate that zoning has not been addressed for a number of years and requested staff look into developing a new policy that would require the district to revisit and address the zoning issue on a regular basis.

Dr. Cliett reminded the Board that staff is trying to schedule a reading workshop.

Mrs. Cawthon stated that she did not see a need to have a workshop since it is the textbook committee's role to make a recommendation to the Board, and she does not see the need for the board to review the process. She suggested that a two-page executive summary would be sufficient.

Mrs. Sharpe also noted that she did not understand the need for a workshop.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 p.m.