

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
April 2, 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 The Minutes for March 19 will be brought to the Board for approval on April 16.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of April 2, 2002, as presented.

Delete E.3., "STAR" Recognition. Add under Scheduled Agencies as item 3., ACEA, and delete Action item 5., Student Cases.

The question was called on the motion as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTEDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS Mrs. Sharpe was pleased to announce that Arthur J. Gallagher & Company of Boca Raton, Florida, is donating a \$1,000 scholarship to the foundation to benefit needy and deserving students.

Mrs. Carroll announced that the Alachua County Honor Bands and All County Chorus will present free concerts for the community the week of April 1 at the Performing Arts Center.

Condolences were extended to the families and friends of Warren "Mac" McDonald, retired teacher at Metcalfe Elementary School; to Joan McMillan, supervisor, Title I, on the recent loss of her husband, John McMillan; and to Dr. Gladys Wright, principal, Shell Elementary School, on the recent loss of her uncle, Charlie Presley.

RECOGNITION/PRESEN
TATION/REPORT Character Education Student Artwork
Certificates were presented to students James Lapointe, Irby Elementary, and Keri Simpson, Lake Forest Elementary, for their outstanding Character Education artwork depicting the April character trait, "Courtesy."

School Improvement Highlights

Representatives from Talbot and Rawlings Elementary Schools and Fort Clarke 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, discussed the proposed School Code changes as they relate to public schools and reported on the latest budget figures.

SCHEDULED AGENCIES

Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT)

SWAT, a youth anti-tobacco advocacy group, addressed the Board regarding middle and high school activities and invited the Board to attend National Kick Butts Day on April 3, at the Downtown Community Plaza, 4-8 p.m.

Al-Anon/Alateen

Al-Anon Family Groups requested the Board's support to allow them to post information about nightly meeting locations and school fairs for youth that need support at the middle and high school level.

ACEA

Dr. Gunnar Paulson, president, ACEA, expressed concern with the lack of communication between the Board, ACEA and the community. He suggested the Board conduct Town Hall meetings to begin an open dialogue with the community.

CITIZEN INPUT

The following concerns/suggestions/requests were presented:

- Citizen expressed concern with students being promoted to the high school level when they are reading at the elementary level due to the lack of remedial assistance.
- Citizen expressed concern with cost overruns on a roof contract and recommended an investigation.
- A middle school teacher expressed concern with the proposed change in middle school hours to 9:10 a.m. Suggested switching the middle schoolers to begin at 8:25 a.m. and high schoolers to begin at 9:10 a.m., due to safety issues with middle school students being on campus unsupervised hours before school begins.
- Several middle school parents expressed their opposition to the proposed middle school starting time of 9:10 a.m.
- An attorney representing the Glen Springs Neighborhood Association informed the Board of problems associated with the master plan and proposed expansion project at Glen Springs Elementary School. The Board was urged to postpone approval of the plan and meet with the school community to make the plan functional for the neighborhood and the school, and minimize the

negative impact the proposed plans will have on the neighborhood.

Chairman Cake requested staff meet with the Glen Springs Neighborhood Association to discuss the master plan.

Mrs. Carroll also suggested that staff and the architects meet with the Glen Springs community to discuss the process.

Superintendent Chambers informed the Board that after meeting with staff on Monday, the Glen Springs Master Plan item was pulled from the agenda and staff will be scheduling a meeting with the neighborhood association.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that she would like the Board to be informed of the results of any and all future meetings on the proposed Glen Springs plan before it is presented to the Board for vote.

- Several Eastside High School students addressed the Board about the possibility of terminating teachers without tenure.

At the request of the Board, Dr. Jim Scaggs, staff attorney, informed the Eastside High School students that due to the district moving from a six to seven-period day, vacancies will be created through resignations, retirements and leaves, which will avoid the district from having to reduce the work force.

Superintendent Chambers also informed the Eastside High School students that a rumor has been circulating regarding potential cuts in I.B. funding, and she assured them that the district has not received any type of notification about cutting I.B. locally.

- A University of Florida student encouraged the board to ensure that American History is taught in its entirety and all experiences are reported.

PROCLAMATION—
CHESS WEEK APRIL 15-
19, 2002

Dr. Barbara Buys, principal, Wiles Elementary School, announced that the third annual Chess Challenge event will be held at Wiles Elementary School beginning the week of April 15. The 2002 Chess Challenge tournament will take place on April 19 from 8:30 a.m. – noon.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the Proclamation proclaiming the week of April 15-19, 2002, as Chess Week in Alachua County schools.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that shortly after she became a board member there were only a few students in the district interested in chess, and she

contacted the chess association and wrote letters for funding and initiated and promoted chess in as many of the district's schools as possible. She is proud to see that there are currently 1,400 students involved in chess. She noted that at one time everyone thought that only the brightest students could learn chess, but it has been proven in Alachua County that the kids that were not expected to excel have risen to the top.

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

REAPPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPALS AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS 2002-2003

Deputy Superintendent Birkett presented the Board with a list of school-based administrators for reappointment for the 2002-03 school year. This list includes only principals and assistant principals. The reappointment list for the instructional personnel and district-level administrators will be presented to the Board at the May 7, 2002, School Board meeting.

In accordance with Florida Statute 230.23, the School Board must act not later than three (3) weeks after the end of the regular legislative session on the nominations by the Superintendent of supervisors, principals, and members of the instructional staff. However, the Collective Bargaining Agreement for Instructional Personnel was never amended to reflect this change. Article VI, Section 6 of the Instructional Collective Bargaining Agreement allows the Superintendent to reappoint instructional personnel six (6) calendar weeks prior to the last day of post-planning. Therefore, instructional personnel will not be presented for reappointment until May 7, 2002. This will allow additional time to analyze the legislative budgetary recommendations in efforts to minimize the impact on instructional personnel. The reappointment of district-level administrative personnel will also be submitted for Board approval on May 7, 2002.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to approve the reappointment of principals and assistant principals for the 2002-2003 school year.

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

APPLICATION FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING ACADEMY, INC. CHARTER SCHOOL

An application for a new charter school to serve 60-80 first through fifth grade students beginning with the 2003-2004 school year has been submitted.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to (1) approve the

application in concept, (2) authorize the staff to develop a proposed charter contract, and (3) schedule a public hearing on the proposed charter contract for April 16, 2002.

The Board commended One Room School House principal Mr. Neil Drake for his efforts.

Responding to Mrs. Sharpe’s concern that the Alachua County’s role be included in the charter, Mr. Don Lewis, director, Charter Schools, explained that all the roles will be explained in the charter contract presented to the Board on April 16.

It was noted that this would be the eleventh charter school for Alachua County, with four additional applications pending.

Mrs. Cawthon commended Mr. Lewis for allowing School Board members to sit in on the informative discussions with the charter school evaluation team.

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

SCHOOL HOURS 2002-2003—SECOND READING

A public hearing was held March 5, 2002, to consider proposed school hours for the 2002-2003 school year.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration’s recommendation to approve the modified school hours for the 2002-2003 school year as presented.

Discussion was held on the possibility of delaying school hours until the next Board meeting pending completion of negotiations regarding early release on Wednesday within the next two weeks, and the Board was informed by staff that it could not be accomplished.

Mrs. Carroll stated that this is not an easy decision, but there is simply not enough money and the Board must make a decision. She understands the issues of high schools and middle schools switching, but is not incumbent upon the Board to parent children, but it is incumbent upon the Board to be family friendly. The Board sets school times and that is the time for parents to drop their children off at school. She does not agree that the school system is responsible for providing childcare, or changing school times to accommodate parents’ schedules because it is not fair to the school system or teachers. Parents need to make adjustments or put students on school buses, but some students are choosing to arrive at school two hours earlier.

She noted that there are many issues that cannot be settled, but she

requested that the staff attorney and ACEA work to conclude bargaining in two weeks. She also suggested that the Superintendent research outsourcing, work with local city transportation, and possibly provide before-school programs.

Dr. Leathers suggested switching high school and middle school hours.

Dr. Bill Cliett, deputy superintendent, Curriculum, informed the Board that three city high school principals provided information as to what the switch would mean, and all three are in total agreement that there would be a tremendous effect on their after-school programs. They feel that the extra-curricular programs offered at the high school level are a very vital and important part of the learning process, and they would be tremendously damaged by a later starting time.

He noted that there are many after-school programs, fee-based programs/activities and after-school tutoring provided at the middle school level that are funded by grants, and those could be changed to the morning time and still be paid through grant funds.

Mrs. Cawthon explained that it is a no win situation. An elementary route takes thirty minutes to run and middle and high schools each take one hour and that is why the schedules cannot be compressed any more. You must allow for the transporting time, with a limited number of buses.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that this is not an easy job, but she thinks that the process has hindered the Board because even though a workshop was held, the people that are affected the most are the ones that do not attend the workshops.

She stated that the Board scheduled a public hearing on March 5 to consider the school hours and now is the time for the Board to vote. She feels that part of the problem is that the Board has not fully explained to the general public the rationale for this change, the impact of transportation, or explained Florida statutes relating to dropping students off at school and picking them up. There is a distinct responsibility that parents have and the Board has, and she feels it needs to be communicated to the general public that it is not the Board's responsibility to be a baby-sitting agency, but that is the mode the Board is currently in. For several years the Board has been in this mode and when you begin to change, there will be discord.

She stated that she is not criticizing staff because they have done a great job, and it is not an easy job and no matter which way you go, someone is not going to be happy. She thinks that the public needs to know the rationale, how much money it will cost, the impact, and

Florida statutes as it relates to drop-off. The Board does not know what the budget is going to be and is facing a dilemma, and she will do what is best for the students and the district.

Mrs. Carroll addressed the issue of possibly switching middle and high times, and felt the Board would be remiss in doing that without notifying high school parents and allowing them the opportunity to provide input. She is also concerned with the issue of high school athletic events, and noted that there are a number of high school students that would have to leave school early and miss academic classes.

Mrs. Cawthon stated that the elimination of the 7th-period day at the high school level is the reason for the transportation issue. If the Board is willing to try and provide some before-school activities (grant-based and fee-based) for students, then that would give parents a better feeling of dropping them off at 7 a.m.

Chairman Cake pointed out that other counties would also be impacted by switching middle and high school hours due to after-school activities.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that she is always a little cautious about fee-based programs because there are some parents who cannot come up with the fees and some students could be left behind. She felt that it is the Board's responsibility to look out for all children, whether they are able to pay the fees or not.

Mr. Cake pointed out that some of the middle school programs that are grant-based in the afternoon could be moved to the morning.

Superintendent Chambers stated that the Board is experiencing some of the same frustrations as previous boards and none of the options are attractive, but this is the best option. The elimination of the 7th-period day at the high school level is forcing the Board to change school hours and she knows that change is difficult, but everyone has had an opportunity to express their concerns. She noted that the one thing that has not been done is pursuing outsourcing or privatizing options in the future.

Dr. Leathers reiterated his preference in switching the middle and high school hours.

Chairman Cake stated that the Board cannot switch the hours without advertising that change for public input, but it does not preclude Dr. Leathers from voting against it.

Responding to Mrs. Cawthon's question related to privatizing

transportation as opposed to in-house, Superintendent Chambers stated that it is in the OPPAGA best practices that districts evaluate transportation needs, but to her knowledge she believes that at this point it is not up for consideration any longer. She feels that it is a long shot, but is not opposed to researching the issue.

Responding to Board concerns, Superintendent Chambers recommended the Board not postpone voting on school hours.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1
Yes: Mr. Cake
Mrs. Carroll
Mrs. Cawthon
Mrs. Sharpe
No: Dr. Leathers

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the superintendent’s recommendation to approve the Consent Agenda as described in items 1-9. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

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

DISCUSSION ITEM—
AFRICAN/AMERICAN
CURRICULUM IN THE
SCHOOLS

Members of the community addressed the Board on African-American curriculum and history and made the following requests:

- Focus on providing the most up-to-date textbooks on African American history
- Accurately present African-American history in all grades
- The content taught should include ancient African history and current African-American history
- Teachers need to read and research the history
- Plan and implement a “campaign” to inservice K-12 teachers on the new African-American History Resource Guide
- Implement an accountability system
- Infuse African-American history into all subject areas and all grades

Many citizens felt that the district was moving in the right direction, but they also understand that it is not an easy task for the Board to correct something that has been going on for many years.

Staff reported that many of the concerns presented are being addressed in many ways, including the writing of the guide, the adoption of new textbooks in several areas, the purchase of supplemental materials, and inservice for teachers and staff. However, as in all areas of curriculum, there is more to be done and changes to be made.

Staff also indicated that input from the community regarding the teaching of African-American history has always been encouraged.

Staff members provided a brief overview of the curriculum plan and resource guide that have been developed to align with the Sunshine State Standards, which will be the vehicle to accomplish the task of integrating more African-American history into the curriculum.

Information on the curriculum currently being provided was presented and it was noted that one of the goals of the Curriculum division this year is to provide staff development opportunities to support teachers as they work toward meeting the Social Studies mandate, as well as applicable Sunshine State Standards. Two inservice sessions have resulted: (1) December 12, 2001, teachers in grades 4-8 were invited to attend the Florida Heritage Education Program inservice, which featured six lessons on African American Heritage in Florida. The consultant also distributed additional resources on African American history to participants. (2) April 10, 2002, for secondary teachers and April 17, 2002, for elementary will focus on African Studies. The Center for African Studies at the University of Florida has been collaborating with the Curriculum division in designing these workshops to support Alachua County schools.

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mrs. Sharpe requested the following:

- Follow-up to her earlier request for staff to research the multicultural policies in the state of Florida and have the information presented to Board members individually.
- In the near future Superintendent Chambers and Chairman Cake dedicate a spot on the agenda under Scheduled Agencies for James D. Smith, Director, Risk Services for Arthur J. Gallagher and Company, to address worker's compensation injuries.

Mrs. Carroll requested the following:

- Staff meet with Al-Anon/Alateen representatives to discuss assistance that can be provided.
- Superintendent Chambers and Board members provide new information to finalize the rezoning issue.

Mrs. Cawthon requested the following:

- Update on her previous request to develop a new policy related to revisiting the zoning issue on a regular basis (every 3-5 years), and make sure that no additional neighborhoods, whether they are already in place or future neighborhoods would be zoned to schools that are at capacity.
- Research the legality of answering questions by citizens at a board meeting instead of waiting until the next meeting, or in a timely

manner.

Chairman Cake suggested that each board member, individually, meet with Superintendent Chambers and appropriate staff members about any concerns, new ideas or suggestions related to rezoning in order for staff to come up with a new and more appropriate plan to present to the public and Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 a.m.