

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
May 7, 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, and Barbara Sharpe, members; Mary L. Chambers, superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board. Chester Leathers, member, participated via telephone.

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

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to approve the minutes of April 16, 2002, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of May 7, 2002, as presented.

Add as Action Item H. 5., Student Case No. 02-17-X, and delete Consent Agenda Item I. 9.a., Agreement with University Athletic Association.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER
ANNOUNCEMENTS/
DISCUSSION

Chairman Cake announced that Dr. Leathers recently had hip replacement surgery, but he will be participating via telephone. The Board wished him a speedy recovery. He also announced that in honor of Teacher Appreciation Week, the Kiwanis clubs of Gainesville are providing apples for teachers.

Mrs. Sharpe made the following announcements:

- Introduced Mrs. Susan Parrish, a Leadership Gainesville participant that has been shadowing her as part of a class assignment.
- Congratulated Charlette Demko, 5th-grade student at Terwilliger Elementary School, for being named Safety Patroller of the Year for AAA South, which includes Florida, Georgia and Tennessee.
- Congratulated sixth-grade Howard Bishop Middle School student,

Gloria Cheung, for submitting the winning art entry in the annual Tulip Time Scholarship Games sponsored by the Children's Better Health Institute of Indianapolis. Gloria was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship by the Institute.

- For the 7th consecutive year, the Alachua County school district was awarded the "What Parents Want" designation by SchoolMatch, the nation's largest consulting firm. Only 14% of the nation's 15, 593 public school districts have been recognized for meeting the needs of families in chosen schools.
- Shared information with the Superintendent related to Bank of America's program entitled Financial Fitness for Life, a comprehensive economic and financial literacy program for grades K-12, and requested staff to research.
- Congratulated the Hungry Ram Culinary Arts Program at Eastside High School and instructor Billie DeNunzio for being awarded the second place in the nation for their culinary art skills. Four of the participating senior students each received awards of \$9,000 each. Instructor Billie DeNunzio also earned the "Top Chef" award for the state of Florida and is now certified to teach chefs.
- Duval Elementary School Business Partner, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, presented the Principal Lea McNealy with a beautiful photograph of the church as a token of appreciation and partnership.

Mrs. Carroll made the following announcements:

- Commended staff for efforts with the Teacher of the Year Program and congratulated all the exceptional teachers.
- Congratulated the Take Stock In Children graduates who received their college scholarships.
- School Readiness Coalition is completing contracts with the School Board and \$500 grant applications have also been sent to teachers.
- Attended the Glen Springs Elementary School Advisory Council meeting dealing with the Master Plan. The steering committee, staff and architects presented the original plans and two alternative plans and the neighborhood was represented and they presented two compromised plans. Principal Robert Craig will schedule another steering committee in the near future.

Mrs. Cawthon attended the Volunteer Center Awards ceremony.

Superintendent Chambers recognized the Boardroom artwork provided by Littlewood, Hidden Oak, Prairie View, Alachua, Idylwild and Stephen Foster Elementary Schools, depicting this month's character trait, "Honesty."

The Board extended their condolences to the families and friends of Sharon Simmons Molander, Program Services Specialist in Risk

Management/Safety; and 12-year-old student Adam Webb, A. Quinn Jones student and son of Alachua County bus driver Priscilla Pickett and Ronald Webb.

Dr. Leathers thanked everyone for their prayers and good wishes on his recovery.

RECOGNITIONS/
PRESENTATIONS/
REPORTS

Character Education Student Artwork

Depicting this month's character trait, "Honesty," elementary students Julia Kondratieva, Hidden Oak, and Brent Garrison, Prairie View, were presented with certificates for their artwork.

2002 Walt Disney World Dreamers and Doers Award

Caitlin Koval, Chiles Elementary; Ashley Zaffke, Kanapaha Middle; and Norissa Lee, Newberry High School, were recognized for their exemplary efforts.

Science Teacher of the Year Award

Missy Bozeman, Ft. Clarke Middle School, was recognized as the Clariant Science Teacher of the Year and was presented with the Clariant Science Award of \$1,000 and a plaque from Clariant Life Science Molecules.

School Improvement Highlights

Representatives from Lake Forest, Littlewood and Norton Elementary Schools shared highlights of activities and programs in their schools that contribute to higher student achievement.

Budgeting/Financial Update

Mr. Keith Birkett, deputy superintendent, reported the change in funding due to the February FTE count in comparison to the October FTE count. He also provided a brief update on the Legislative Session as it relates to anticipated budget approval.

CITIZEN INPUT

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

- A citizen urged the Board to place a discussion item on the next agenda dealing with the issue of required courses such as Life Management Skills (LMS) and Physical Education (PE) for seniors in magnet programs. Requested staff gather information from high schools as to the number of students who cannot complete their magnet programs as a result of moving to the six-period day, and what each school has planned to solve this problem. It was noted that IB students are not required to take LMS or PE.

Chairman Cake pointed out that the schools themselves must request a waiver. He pointed out that there is an item on the Consent Agenda from Gainesville High School's Health Science Program to replace Life Management Skills performance standards with three required Health Science courses.

- A citizen reviewed statistics provided in the monthly deans misconduct reports and noted the increases in school crimes and categories.
- Residents from Montechoa and LaCrosse areas urged the Board to allow them to remain at Talbot Elementary School.
- Residents from the Kincaid Loop Neighborhood Association and teachers urged the Board to allow Prairie View Elementary School to remain open and address rezoning issues when a new Board is in place.
- Several residents urged the Board to vote for Option 4, a comprehensive long-range rezoning plan for elementary schools for the 2003-04 school year.
- Northwood Oaks residents urged the Board to support Option 4, which would delay any action so a long-range plan can be developed.
- A few residents urged the Board to support the neighborhood school concept and rezone overcrowded schools.
- Three Alachua County commissioners urged the Board to allow Prairie View to remain open in favor of a long-range plan that will coincide with planning by the Gainesville City Commission and County Commission on the future of east Gainesville.
- A citizen addressed the Board on the issue of African-American history and provided information on several areas that have been addressed by a few teachers. Urged the Board to continue to address the needs of African-American students and minorities in compliance with the law.
- J. J. Finley parents urged the Board not to rezone and vote for a comprehensive rezoning plan when a new Board takes effect.

RESOLUTION—
TEACHER
APPRECIATION WEEK
MAY 5-11, 2002

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to adopt the Teacher Appreciation Week Resolution as read.

SPOT REZONING OF
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

Dr. Mel Lucas, director, Research/Evaluation, reviewed the handout presented to the Board on the four Rezoning Options, which was brought about due to the revenue shortfall. Superintendent Chambers created a school configuration committee to review ways to save money and the group came up with 14 cost saving options.

Staff members reviewed the operational, facility and transportation savings.

Mrs. Carroll suggested that each Board member review each option and provide their opinions on the negatives and positives prior to voting.

Mrs. Cawthon stated that she regrets that rezoning was not done when Chiles Elementary School opened. She noted that it is not realistic for the School Board to go on indefinitely without rezoning, due to population shifts, etc. It is the obligation of the School Board to make tough decisions such as zoning. She stated that she is not advocating closing Prairie View Elementary, but pointed out that the only way to open a new westside school is to close an underenrolled school because the state will not allow the district to open a new school as long as there are available spaces. Options would include busing students from the west to the east to fill the spaces, or close an eastside school. She stated that she did not want to look at an overall rezoning plan without assurances a new school could be built in west Gainesville in the near future.

Mrs. Carroll stated that she was impressed with the public hearings that were held, which brought out a spirit of community. She expressed concern that the process is being done at such a late date and she does not believe that it has been family-friendly or employee-friendly. She voiced support of a comprehensive study that would consider the following factors:

- neighborhood schools
- socio-economic balance
- ideal elementary school size
- staff develop taxing and funding options for new facilities
- effective elementary magnet programs for eastside schools
- zoning exceptions
- look into school-owned portables
- a school choice plan
- a prediction of the number of charter schools
- development of new policies dealing with new residential developments
- bring in a facilitator to help the new Board.

She noted that Terwilliger Elementary may generate dollars for the district and help protect Finley and Littlewood Elementary Schools in terms of losing numbers, which may enable the Board to build a new school.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that in 1992 she ran on neighborhood schools, but when she was elected to the Board she was not ashamed to tell anyone that when she looked at the consequences of neighborhood schools, as neighborhoods stand today, it was not a good idea and can be detrimental to low-income students. More compelling than a racial balance, is the issue of socio-economic status. She expressed concern at each workshop on the free/reduced comparisons between east and west schools: Prairie View currently at 92%, with the new proposal would go to 94%; Lake Forest currently at 87%, would go to 88%; Williams currently at 85%, would go to 87%; Metcalfe remains at 81%; Duval currently at 95%, would go to 96%; Rawlings remains at 93%; Waldo remains at 70%; and Shell currently at 81%, would go to 85%. These figures are not fair to eastside students who have no control over where they were born or what family they were born in, or what their circumstances are. She stated that of the four options, she supports Option 4 and recommends that the Board authorize a study for comprehensive rezoning of elementary schools for the 2003-04 school year.

She stated that she has serious concerns that three of the listed plans will lead to an even more inequitable distribution of low-socio economic status students. Helping all students to achieve, which she thought and still believes is the goal of the Board, is inherently bound to this factor. Research has consistently shown that taken together, being poor and attending schools with classmates who are poor, constitutes a clear double handicap. Economically separate schools are laden with discreet inequalities. An analyst by the name of David Rusk says: "All children in America should have a right to attend a solidly middle-class 'common' school, not a right to middle-class parents, or a right to live in a middle-class neighborhood, or a right to a middle-class income lifestyle, but every child in these United States, whether rich or poor, white or black, Latino or Asian, should have access to the good education that is best guaranteed by the presence of at least an equal amount of a middle-class student-body."

The district and the Board should not allow Alachua County schools to remain and become even more segregated by socio-economic status. She is not speaking about race, because all white children are not rich and all black children are not poor. The neighborhood assignment without consideration of socio-economic diversity, if allowed, can be a source of great unfairness to poor people. In Coleman's Research

Report, Equality of Education and Opportunity, he stated: “Educational resources provided by a child’s fellow students are more important for his/her achievement than are the resources provided by the School Board. Dozens of studies before and after have reached similar conclusions. Economic integration represents the new frontier of school desegregation. How can we help low-income students achieve? Don’t isolate them.”

Our schools need diversity. It is her personal responsibility as a Board member and the collective responsibility as a Board, to address this issue in a fair and equitable manner and not jump for a quick fix. She understands the reason for this plan, which is due to a revenue shortfall; however, she does not feel that staff has had the time to think through these plans appropriately. When you have plans that affect children so profoundly and of this magnitude, she believes that haste makes waste. How can the Board guarantee that the money that the Board predicts that they might save may not end up spending more money than that trying to correct the situation that the Board so hastily got into. The amount of money that the Board thinks they are saving by implementing a hastily, not well thought out plan, has the potential of costing more than the predicted savings.

No budget should ever be balanced on the backs of students, no matter what color the students are. If the Board is truly as caring as is stated, then the Board needs to do what is right for all students because doing right is the right thing to do. She stated that if she cannot defend a plan, she cannot support it, and she cannot defend the plans that have been presented; therefore, she cannot in good conscience vote for any option other than Option 4 this evening.

Dr. Leathers stated that he favored neighborhood schools and diversity but also that the schools should be balanced racially and socio-economically and he voiced his support for Option 4. He stated that he has no confidence that state government will provide adequate funding for education--need to go to the population of Alachua County with a sales tax initiative. He stated that no other options are satisfactory to him other than Option 4.

Mrs. Carroll thanked staff for their efforts, but regrets that the Board did not have additional input prior to staff releasing their first plan. She voiced her support of Option 1 with two modifications and reviewed the positives and negatives. She asked if Superintendent Chambers or staff has aggressively recruited the east Gainesville students to go back to their home schools on zoning exceptions that are being bused west.

Dr. Lucas stated that he is not aware of any action from the district office, but each individual principal may be doing something in their school community to recruit their students back.

Superintendent Chambers responded that principals have been advised, particularly throughout the many recent workshops and over the last several months, on the issue of zoning exceptions from overenrolled to underenrolled schools.

Mrs. Carroll felt that Prairie View Elementary School should not be closed at this time because she would like to leave the option open for the students that are being bused out of that neighborhood to come back due to a large habitat development that is being considered.

Dr. Leathers stated that he supports Option 4, which would address rezoning and financial stability in the future.

Mrs. Cawthon expressed concern with the term “comprehensive” in Option 4, which has the potential of rezoning all students.

Mrs. Sharpe voiced her support of Option 4 and noted that she does not support one or the other (consultant or facilitator), but would like to have the entire community involved—parents, teachers, administrators, members of the University of Florida, Santa Fe Community College, *The Gainesville Sun*, and anyone that feels they have something to offer.

Mrs. Carroll stated that the process of comprehensive rezoning of all elementary schools should involve anyone that wants to be included from neighborhoods that are affected. If they want to move east to west and west to east then those that do not would go to charter schools, home schools or private schools.

Mrs. Cawthon supported the idea of having a facilitator rather than a consultant because a consultant from the outside is not familiar with the community.

Chairman Cake stated that the issue of neighborhood schools vs. racial and socio-economic diversity are two different things—it is either one or the other. You have less transportation with true neighborhood schools, more transportation with socio-economic diversity. Strategic planning had two different committees develop recommendations and one said address overcrowding and the other said socio-economic diversity. The one that the Board is left with to address is overcrowding and that is the reason the Board is here today because the Board adopted it in its strategic plan.

He pointed out the following:

- He does not agree with Montechoa students being zoned to Talbot because there is room in the Alachua schools.
- There is a potential for growth in the Prairie Elementary School community, and he would recommend to leave it open.
- The new Board needs to deal with Horizon/New Pathways because portables cannot continue to be added to a program that should have a better facility than what has been provided and it is an expensive problem.
- He agrees with Dr. Leathers that the right kinds of magnet programs could help underenrolled schools on the eastside of town, and excellent facilities have been provided on the eastside of town. The magnet programs at Eastside High, Howard Bishop Middle and Williams Elementary schools have helped eastside schools. Magnet programs cost additional money for transportation, but is something that a future Board may need to look at as a viable option.
- It would be easy for anyone to support Option 4, but he feels it would be as difficult for the next Board as it is for the current board.
- Impact fees and sales tax options are not a solution but wishful thinking.

He stated that he could support Option 1.

Mrs. Carroll asked that based on public hearing comments if the Board would consider amending Option 1 to allow the Northwood area to go to Norton or Glen Springs Elementary Schools, and to move Majestic Oaks to Terwilliger Elementary School.

Board discussion was held on the status of zoning exceptions and how they impact overcrowded schools.

Chairman Cake noted that the Board can direct staff to allow no zoning exceptions in any overcrowded school that is overenrolled.

Mrs. Carroll pointed out that Talbot Elementary had very few zoning exceptions, but most of those were for staff members with children and the School Board stopped that process a while back because it had become so overcrowded.

Dr. Lucas provided figures to the Board on zoning exceptions. He stated that in the past the district has allowed employees to take their children with them to where they work and we've had an elementary school paired with each worksite. Also in the past the district has given

zoning exceptions to parents who are moving into a district within 120 days into that school. The district has not been giving zoning exceptions into the crowded schools except for those extraordinary reasons, but with one exception, Finley Elementary School because the district did not realize how crowded it was.

Mrs. Carroll stated that there is no desire to remove the employee issue because it is a perk the Board can afford.

Dr. Lucas stated that as per the zoning policy the district has experienced a net loss at those crowded schools—more students out than in.

Motion by Dr. Leathers Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to adopt Option 4, a comprehensive rezoning of elementary schools for the 2003-04 school year.

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

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved to adopt Option 1, spot rezoning of the elementary schools as presented at Public Hearings March 5, 6, and 7, 2002, and grant the grandfathering of this year's 4th-graders.

Motion by: Mrs. Carroll Seconded by: Dr. Leathers

Moved to amend the motion to allow Northwood Oaks to attend Norton Elementary School and Majestic Oaks to attend Terwilliger Elementary School instead of Area 10, which would continue to go to Hidden Oak.

Mrs. Cawthon stated she is not in favor of making Hidden Oak's free and reduced lunch percentages lower by moving Majestic Oaks to Terwilliger Elementary School.

The question was called on the amendment.

Upon Vote: Motion failed 3-2
Yes: Mrs. Carroll
Dr. Leathers

No: Mr. Cake
Mrs. Cawthon
Mrs. Sharpe

Motion by Mrs. Cawthon Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to amend the motion to send the Northwood Oaks neighborhood to Norton Elementary School.

The question was called on the amendment.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 3-2
Yes: Mr. Cake
Mrs. Carroll
Mrs. Cawthon
No: Dr. Leathers
Mrs. Sharpe

Board discussion followed on the Majestic Oaks neighborhood, magnet programs in east and west, school choice vs. costs associated with transportation, and socio-economic balance.

The question was called on the original motion as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion failed 3-2
Yes: Mrs. Cawthon
Mr. Cake
No: Mrs. Carroll
Dr. Leathers
Mrs. Sharpe

Motion by Dr. Leathers Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to adopt Option 4, authorize a study for comprehensive rezoning of elementary schools for the 2003-04 school year.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 3-2
Yes: Mrs. Carroll
Dr. Leathers
Mrs. Sharpe
No: Mrs. Cawthon
Mr. Cake

The Board took a break and reconvened the regular Board meeting.

REAPPOINTMENT OF
INSTRUCTIONAL AND

Dr. Leila Pratt, director, Human Resources, reported that she previously addressed the Board with an update on the reappointment

ADMINISTRATIVE
PERSONNEL

process for instructional personnel, and at that time she pointed out that due to the elimination of the 7th-period day, fluctuations in student enrollment and impact of the allocation of the units, as well as certification and evaluation issues, staff prepared 184 non-renewal letters. Of those 184 non-renewal letters, 39 of those were impacted by the elimination of the 7th-period day, 62 dealt with certification issues, and the remaining 83 were at the discretion of the principal.

At the time of the preparation of the instructional list for reappointment, the district was also able to void the non-renewal letters for 34 of the 39 annual contract teachers that have been impacted by elimination of the 7th-period day. It is anticipated that as soon as annual contract teachers with certification issues provide documentation that they have met the requirements that many of the 62 teachers that received the non-renewal letter will be reappointed.

The other non-renewed annual contract teachers who received the satisfactory evaluation will be placed on a list to be provided to principals to be given priority consideration for placement.

The list of instructional personnel that are presented at this meeting consist of annual contract teachers and the teachers that are recommended for professional services contract.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the reappointment list of instructional personnel for the 2002-03 school year as presented.

Mrs. Carroll requested an update during one of the budget meetings in July, on the issue of losing teachers and the impact it would have on class size. She also requested an update prior to budget on administrative retirees in the DROP program and their retirement dates.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

Dr. Pratt stated that several administrative positions were omitted from the administrative list provided to the Board because staff is currently in the process of reviewing and analyzing the district's position for reclassification from administrative category to the professional/technical category. This decision was based on the analysis and review of several sources, and the district felt that there were too many positions that had been classified under the administrative category and that some of those positions would be more appropriately classified as professional/technical. In the district's

continuous review and analysis of these positions, staff will be bringing back to the Board at a later date some revisions for approval.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to approve the reappointment of district-level administrative personnel for the 2002-03 school year as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BID AWARD FOR
PROJECT SBAC CB830-
WALDO COMMUNITY
SCHOOL STAIR
REPLACEMENT

Mr. Ed Gable, director, Facilities, reported that bids for the construction of this project were received April 25, 2002.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to accept the low base bid of \$167,765 and award a contract for construction to R. O. Camp Construction, Inc., Gainesville, Florida, with completion of this project to be within one hundred eighty (180) consecutive calendar days from the date indicated in the "Notice to Proceed."

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

STUDENT CASE
NO. 02-17-X

Mr. Dukes, deputy superintendent, reported that the student is charged with battery of another student while on campus.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to extend the student's suspension through May 21, 2002, pending an investigation.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved to approve the Consent Agenda as described in items 1-10, with the deletion of Item 9.a., Agreement with University Athletic Association. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

Chairman Cake requested Superintendent Chambers address the concern presented by Dr. Gunnar Paulson, president, ACEA, related to requests for waivers based on Article 18, Section 4, of the collective bargaining agreement.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mrs. Carroll made the following requests:

- Develop possible solutions to problems associated with students eating lunch early.

Superintendent Chambers responded that the issue of early lunch is due to overcrowded schools and has previously been discussed with principals. Principals have implemented several solutions to the problem such as opening kiosks, additional lines, but she will continue to work with staff to come up with additional solutions.

- Place an item on the agenda regarding waivers related to LMS and P.E.
- Update on repair of the district's computer system and email access.
- Aggressively recruit zoning exceptions to eastside schools that are underenrolled during the period prior to comprehensive study.
- Place the Gainesville High School band on the next agenda to be recognized on their recent award.
- Superintendent Chambers meet with high school principals and provide a prom update based on last year's concerns.

Mrs. Cawthon requested that an item be placed on the next agenda dealing with the issue of options that are available to magnet students related to the required courses of LMS and P.E., and also provide parents with written information on available options.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 a.m.