

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
June 4, 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: Jeannine Cawthon, vice-chairman; Bev Carroll, Chester Leathers and Barbara Sharpe, members; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board. Board Chairman Bill Cake was absent.

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Cawthon, 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 May 21, 2002, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of June 4, 2002, as presented.

Add as Recognition Item E.1., Character Education Student Artwork; change Item 1, March of Dimes, to 1.a.; delete Action Item 1, Student Case No. 01-17-X; and delete Stephanie Lytel from Attachment A-Page 5.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Carroll announced the activities and events she attended.

Superintendent Chambers and the Board extended their condolences to the family and friends of Kathy Torres, a recent Newberry High School graduate.

RECOGNITIONS/
PRESENTATIONS/
REPORTS

Character Education Student Artwork

Kanapaha Middle School student, Jeff Short, was recognized for his outstanding Character Education artwork depicting “Wisdom” as the character trait for the month of June.

March of Dimes—Walk America Top School Traveling Trophy
Representative Perry McGriff, Walk American Chair, recognized the top three schools for their fundraising efforts: Chiles Elementary School, \$6,549.34; Howard Bishop Middle School, \$4,206.15; and Eastside High School, \$15,923.27.

Mrs. Sharpe thanked Representative McGriff and Mrs. McGriff for their support and involvement with the March of Dimes. She noted that she has been involved as president of the Florida School Boards Association for the past year, and was in New Orleans when the walk took place and she was unable to participate, but hopes that when she passes the gavel she can participate once again.

School Improvement Highlights

Representatives from Archer Community and Eastside High Schools shared highlights of activities and programs in their schools that help contribute to higher student achievement.

Mrs. Sharpe thanked everyone for their excellent presentations. She pointed out that Alachua County has excellent schools and it is hurtful to her that the grading system pits schools and teachers against each other, with some receiving bonuses and others not receiving bonuses, and grading the schools, which makes the students feel bad. She thinks it is one of the worse forces that has ever hit the state of Florida, particularly when the standards are changed every year--have not had consistency since the inception of the A+ Plan. She believes that all of Alachua County's schools, teachers, students deserve an 'A' and she will be glad to see the day when the Department of Education and the Governor of Florida recognizes this.

Budgeting/Financial Update

Deputy Superintendent Keith Birkett provided a legislative funding review and the impact to next year's budget.

Legislative Update

Dr. Joy Frank, Legislative Lobbyist, provided the Board with a comprehensive overview the 2002 Legislative Review, Florida School Code, Education Funding and Proviso Language, and the Florida Education Finance Program.

The Board thanked Dr. Frank for providing an overview and providing all the information.

CITIZEN INPUT

The following issues/concerns/suggestions/requests/ were presented.

- A citizen spoke on the issue of an elected vs. appointed Superintendent and provided the pros and cons and urged the Board to consider putting this issue before the voters in the form of a Straw Ballot, which is a non-binding opinion poll. The county commission is the only governing board that can put a straw ballot, or straw poll on the ballot. If the SBAC decided it wanted a poll the BOCC could vote in favor or against. If the

SBAC objected to such a poll, even if the community wanted it, the BOCC may not have the authority to move forward with such a poll. Urged the Board to consider all the options before making a decision about the district's future leadership if there is a decision to be made. She suggested the Board employ an interim superintendent to serve for a 6-10 month period and open the position to anyone who is interested, which will allow the new board and community to work together to decide what to do about the superintendent's position. Suggested that when the Board selects an interim and use the model the Board of County Commissioners used when they picked their county manager in which they had one on one interviews with the candidates and had a social function for the community to talk with each candidate and encourage community participation.

- The ACEA president reported on the Ruling that was handed down by Arbitrator Mark Sherman, concluded that the grievances filed by ACEA are sustained in part and the School Board of Alachua County was found to breach their contractual obligations for the 2001-02 school year. Dr. Sherman also stated that the Board contributed to the circumstances that frustrated their abilities to live up to their contractual obligations. However, he ruled that they would not be compelled to remedy that breach for the 2001-02 fiscal year under the current circumstances. It was ruled instead that the Board would be compelled to remedy these breaches of contract in the next budgetary cycle. The ruling spelled out that instructional personnel would receive a two-step increase for the next year, but career service personnel would receive one-step and begin implementation of credit for experience that was tabled last year. At the present time ACEA and the School Board are engaged in an Unfair Labor Practice that could tie the district up legally and have financial implications for many months to come. ACEA is faced with the option of pursuing the breach of contract through the legal system, but can also go back to the negotiating table and work together towards a positive direction and one of healing.

Superintendent Chambers informed the Board that staff was given the Arbitrator's Ruling right before the Board meeting and she noted that the Ruling also recognizes the Board's impossible circumstances in trying to provide for the salary increase. The Board has worked very hard to try and provide the salary increases for all the employees including career service. She invited the negotiating team back to the table on Monday, June 10.

- A citizen addressed the Board on an issue of rezoning a community task force to develop a plan which the new board

could then accept, amend and take it out of the school board hands and put into the community's hands. Agencies and organizations selected which included: ACEA, Alachua County League of Women Voters, Association of School Advisory Committee, Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Gainesville Area Ministerial Association, Gainesville Jaycees, Gainesville Review of Issues and Trends for Self Action, and Junior League of Gainesville. The Board did not select the people, but the agencies picked their own people, taken out of hands of the board. Problem political season: Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, Board of Realtors, Board of Developers, NAACP, Black on Black Crime Task Force, Corner Drugstore, Leadership Gainesville Alumni, Alachua County Public Schools Foundation (Take Stock In Children), School Advisory Council Chairpersons, Retired Teachers. Have a developer serve as chairman or a Realtor and let each organization that the Board selects, select their own people to be on the task force and have them begin working together beginning end of August, or beginning in September, and have the task force present their report to the new school board at which time they can decide to use it or not. Consider for the benefit and gift to the new School Board and people of Gainesville.

- Mrs. Ludwig representative of NAACP Education Committee very concerned as to what is happening to Black students in the schools. Special education disparate treatment of Black students in the schools. Too many black students in special education in fourteen Florida school systems, including Alachua County. Moving low scoring kids into ESE to improve the average scores of regular classes, in special ed FCAT scores do not count in the grading of the schools. Schools get more money for ESE students than regular students; NAACP calling for local chapters to take community action on this issue Requested that a discussion item on ESE be placed on the next agenda for parents to address parental concerns. Caring and Sharing Learning Center is having a workshop on Tuesday, June 18, 8:30-3:30 on ways people can help children in the learning process.

Superintendent Chambers requested that Mrs. Ludwig submit her request to be placed on the next agenda to her office for processing and working with the Board chair.

- A citizen addressed the Board on the issue of reading skills FCAT behaviors dampening academic interests visit Sharing and Caring member of NAACP education committee racial disparities, low grad rates, suspensions, expulsions, qualifications of teachers, facilities, for minority students required instruction law litigation

- broken law take action time for action
- Mrs. Ruth Brown update on what progress has been made on the information presented to the Board in April required Chapter 233 course of study history of african american required instruction of history of african-americans including the history of african people before the political conflict that led to the development of slarvery, the passage to America, the enslavement experience abolition, and the contribuion of african americans to society. Ancient Egypt This Board is not offering to students the true history of black people. Importance of education and feeling of worth that is needed for all children. What has been accomplished since March on the issue Chapter 233.061, which is required instruction for the Board. Do a better job of enforcing instructional materials.

Superintendent Chambers reported that staff has gone back to the Sunshine State Standards and what the teachers are currently teaching within the classrooms have indeed looked at the materials that we've worked through. Reading adoption it was noted that a lot of the materials and stories and names were more in line with what is expected of the law today. Staff has worked on that and she has seen it.

- A citizen inconsistency last meeting specifically requested that ht Board agenda a public hearing on the matter of elected superintendents and since that time has not heard anything. Well over a year ago sent a letter requesting that the matter of elected superintendents be placed on the agenda. Received information from the staff attorney to take this matter to the School Board and he has requested again last week.

Superintendent Chambers clarified that when a citizen requests that an item be placed on the agenda, the citizen must submit that issue in writing to the Superintendent's office and the Superintendent will work with the Chairman on the issue, but it is up to the Chairman, working with the Superintendent, to determine what the board priorities are in order to get an item on the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the consent agenda as described in items 1-8. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mrs. Sharpe made the following statement for the record:

Some people continuously talk about the children and what they are

not being taught and how they come to school without a feeling of self-worth. As a parent, I do believe that a child should leave home with those feelings of worth before they ever enter the school door. Schools need help and they cannot raise children. There are a lot of things that need to be taught to children before they come to school. Nobody addresses the parental responsibility. What are the parents' responsibilities to those poor kids who come to school so unready that half of them do not know how to pronounce their names, and by the time the teacher, the aides and everybody else work with them to try to get them to that point, they are already behind when they come.

As far as history, that is something else that can be taught at home. If the schools are not teaching it the way we want to, lets try to teach some of it at home. Every time you give your child a peanut butter sandwich, that's history, tell them about where the peanut came from; every time you see a traffic light, that's history, tell them where the traffic light came from; every time there is a drop of blood coming from a child, tell them where the transfusion come from; every time they see a railroad, or a underground or anything of that nature, tell them what the significance of this is. It is very difficult to sit here, night after night to hear what we are not doing. We're not a perfect school system—nobody is a perfect school system, there is not one in the world anywhere and what we need is help. We need help from parents, we need help from people who are interested and people who confront us night after night to tell us about what we need to be doing. Maybe you need to tell us what we need to be doing, but you also need to be trying to help these kids to become ready to come to school, and that is going out soliciting parental involvement.

I thought I was not going to go there tonight, but it is just very difficult for me not to say these things because I feel like it is very important. And I think that the laws should be not only to teach history in school, history belongs to everybody, it not only belongs to blacks, it belongs to every race there is. The law needs to hold parents responsible for their children.

Mrs. Carroll made the following comments:

- Reminded the Board that she attended the Rule Negotiations Conference in Washington, D.C., and discussed the No Child Left Behind Act, which will require every state to test their special education children in order to receive future funds.
- She encouraged all principals to attend the upcoming meetings dealing with available reading grants through the federal government for the Reading First program.

Dr. Leathers made the following request:

- Superintendent Chambers and the Board establish a group that could articulate criteria for the Board to develop a long-term rezoning plan.

Mrs. Cawthon stated she would prefer an apolitical group and suggested Board members come up with a list of organizations and allow those organizations to select their representatives.

Dr. Leathers requested the Superintendent present a tentative plan to the Board at the next meeting.

Mrs. Carroll made the following recommendations/suggestions:

- Board members meet with the Superintendent prior to the next meeting to give her names of additional groups.
- Once again suggested that the Superintendent's Advisory Council assist the Board with the zoning plan and also with the selection of an interim superintendent.
- Use the same format that was used during the strategic planning process in order to allow for community involvement in the process.

Dr. Leathers suggested exploring the possibility of going to the public to supplement the state's support for education and requested Superintendent Chambers conduct research with other districts that have previously done this and obtain literature, and report back to determine the role of the School Board in the process.

Dr. Chambers stated that there is currently a subcommittee of the Superintendent's Advisory Council working on this particular issue. She is aware that the counties that have been successful in the past have been very grassroots oriented, and she will be happy to work with the subcommittee and provide the Board with information.

Mrs. Sharpe pointed out that the minutes will reflect that when she voted for Option 4, one of the things she requested was to have community involvement during the rezoning process and the agencies she mentioned included the University of Florida, *The Gainesville Sun*, Santa Fe Community College, parents and neighborhoods.

Mrs. Cawthon stated that she has talked with Dr. Glen Ehrlich and he is very interested in pursuing a sales tax option and has previously addressed the Superintendent's Advisory Council on this issue. She has requested that he contact several counties that have been successful with their initiatives instead of contacted, rather than going through a bunch of failures, if they already know what doesn't work and Dr.

Ehrlich indicated that he would make some phone calls and see what groups to approach and what not to, what to try and not to go through a failure again with that. Hopefully something will come out of that.

Dr. Gunnar Paulson, member, Superintendent's Advisory, Council, pointed out that they are already investigating these options and noted that Keith Birkett came up with a booklet for the SAC meeting and there are five or six alternative financing options and the impact fees.

Superintendent Chambers announced the following upcoming meeting dates:

- 6/17/02 – 1 p.m. -- Budget and Strategic Planning Update Workshop
- 6/18/02 – 7 p.m. – RegulSchool Board Meeting
- 7/2/02 – 7 p.m. – School Board Meeting to provide updates on the Budget and a general overview on the strategic planning update
- 7/16/02 – 7 p.m. – School Board Meeting

Tuesday, July 16, 2002, 7 p.m. – School Board Meeting

Tuesday, July 23, 2002, 3 p.m. Special School Board Meeting approve budget for advertising

August 1, 2002, Special Public Hearing on the Budget

September 3, 2002, Special Meeting Final adoption of the budget

A citizen and former employee stated that she agrees with

The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 p.m.