

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JUNE 18, 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; Chester Leathers, Bev Carroll 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. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved to approve the minutes of June 4, 2002, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of June 18, 2002, as presented.

Delete Presentation Item E.2., Student Achievement Initiatives, Action Item H.1., Personnel Appointment(s), and Consent Agenda Item 27.d., School Bus Agreement with the Florida 4-H Congress.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Cake noted that Mrs. Carroll left to take care of sickness in the family and may be returning shortly.

Dr. Leathers remarked, regarding the FCAT, that he, along with a number of people, was upset about the headline in the newspaper about the status of Duval. He noted that following productive conversations with people at *The Gainesville Sun* there was a very appropriate lead editorial response the next day with regard to this situation. He is not a proponent of the current status of FCAT. With more validity and reliability in terms of measuring as an instrument, he feels it has the potential to be an excellent measurement, but it hasn't been administered the same way twice in two years

Mrs. Sharpe pointed out that the Florida School Boards Association is

putting together a booklet on the School Code Revision for distribution to all districts. At that time the district policies will need to be reviewed and revised to comply with Florida Statutes

She also noted that the staff, faculty and students at Duval are doing a good job. She does not think any test should be given so much weight that it determines what a child actually knows. The tests are important, but she does not think schools should be graded--one of the worst things that has happened in the state of Florida. It pits schools against schools, teachers against teachers, and makes students feel bad. She does not think we have any "F" schools; they are all good. Don't bask in the sunshine because you have an "A" today, because one student can bring that grade down. We all need to work together and know that all schools are good in this district.

Mrs. Cawthon noted that she had talked with the Duval principal today who had indicated that there was some question that it had been scored correctly. Hopefully, an appeal will be filed.

Superintendent Chambers extended condolences to the family and friends of Jeral Harrison Scofield, Sr., a retired school bus driver, and Janet S. Fagan, retired teacher from Sidney Lanier.

RECOGNITION/
PRESENTATION/
REPORT

School Improvement Highlights

Representatives from Sidney Lanier/Anchor Center, Horizon/New Pathways, and Alachua Regional Detention Center shared school improvement highlights of activities and programs in their schools that contribute to higher student achievement.

Mrs. Carroll arrived in the Boardroom.

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

PUBLIC HEARING--
AMENDMENTS TO
POLICIES 6.31 AND 7.01

A public hearing was held to consider amendments to Policies 6.31, Salary Schedules, and 7.01, School Budget System. The change would incorporate into the policies the state mandated 5% performance-based pay for instructional personnel and school administrators.

- Newberry Elementary teacher and member of the Teacher Appraisal Committee suggested the Board make teacher salary its top priority when considering the budget. Also requested that the Board think about the disparity between the teacher and the administrator when planning the budget.
- Teacher at Eastside High School and member of the Teacher Appraisal Committee presented a letter to the Board and

Superintendent that the committee is sending to the Department of Education. The committee members have come up with a plan they feel is as fair as they can make it, but felt the necessity to inform people in Tallahassee how they truly feel. Board members and the superintendent were requested to sign the letter along with the committee.

- Teacher agrees with the members of the committee on the issue of merit pay. He feels the merit pay is based on the assumption that teachers are not doing their job, and that this is another bad idea.

Dr. Leathers expressed agreement with the letter and a strong disagreement with this requirement being imposed on the districts. He supports the letter and commended the committee on its work.

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

RECOGNITION/
PRESENTATION/
REPORT (CON'T)

Budgeting/Financial Update

Mr. Keith Birkett, deputy superintendent, reviewed the budget amendments (numbers 23, 24, and 25) on the Consent Agenda. He also presented the financial status of the nine district charter schools. One more charter school, Micanopy Middle School, is scheduled to come on line next year and two more in 2003-04, which places the district at its cap of twelve charter schools. He noted that Alachua Learning Center Charter School is being monitored on a monthly basis and staff is working with them to help them to succeed and be in the right direction by the end of the year. There is a concern with the Oasis Enrichment Academy Charter School as it is relying heavily on the federal startup funds. Staff will be working with them through the year because after next year they will no longer have those startup funds.

Mrs. Sharpe requested that during the monitoring period staff keep the Board apprised of the monitoring results.

Mrs. Carroll requested an update on these two charter schools after June 30, 2002.

Mr. Birkett shared as information the results of a national survey indicating public education systems across the country are facing many of the same issues and financial challenges as Florida and Alachua County.

SCHEDULED AGENCIES There were no scheduled agencies.

CITIZEN INPUT

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

- Teacher addressed the early-release Wednesday. Sent out a survey and 89% expressed satisfaction with the contact time. Need the time to sit with colleagues to plan, for professional development, and to make parent contacts.
- Teacher asked Board members and superintendent if they felt it important that teachers and concerned parents have the right to communicate with the School Board. E-mail to the school board has been blocked.
- ACEA representative noted that a reduction in force was discussed at the workshop the day before. Feels it is premature to make plans for this drastic action without complete information and necessary cost comparisons. Information and department reports requested through OPPAGA have not been sent. There is not a recommendation from them on whether a department is running efficiently or not. Allow us to participate by bringing the employees involved, their views and facts they have gathered over many years of working, to you for consideration. Managers must articulate possible problems or concerns to their employees. Employees must be given the opportunity to improve. Work on devising a plan to make your current system more cost effective. Talk to the employees, they are professionals in their respective fields. They know where the problems are and where the waste is. Regarding the insurance question about 100% contribution, twenty-two to twenty-three counties pay 100%. The amount of money the school board contributes here for single coverage for all employees rates 60 out of 67 counties.
- Gainesville High School teacher and ACEA representative noted that in the budget proposal at the workshop it was estimated the additional cost of paying employees the two steps awarded by arbitration would be \$2.7 million. Asked if the Board would guarantee \$2.7 million above and beyond what salaries cost this past year? It is felt that the figure significantly exceeds the actual cost of the steps and the surplus can be equally distributed throughout the salary schedule in the form of genuine raises for all non-administrative employees.

Mrs. Carroll commented that during the budget meeting on Monday it was noted that the School Board is still \$26,000 away from balancing the budget. She pointed out that everything heard here tonight comes out of the same budget. The insurance is going to be well over \$4 million, 150% increase. If the first priority is to be teacher salaries, then we are probably going to have to cut personnel. We may have to change school hours. Since September 11, 2001, we have had a

difficult year trying to maintain our teacher/pupil ratio, maintain our employees, maintain our teachers in the classrooms and get to a zero balance by the end of June. Every time we set a priority order it is going to greatly impact something else in the school system.

APPLICATION FOR
HOGGETOWNE
MIDDLE SCHOOL
CHARTER SCHOOL

Mr. Don Lewis, director, Curriculum, stated that the application is for a new charter school for 2003-2004 that will target home-schooled students and elementary students enrolled in charter schools moving up to middle grades.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the application in concept and authorize the staff to develop a proposed charter contract.

Chairman Cake pointed out that this is the twelfth charter school for the district, which is capped at twelve.

Mr. Lewis noted that he has had another four inquires for charter schools. He has informed them he will not be accepting applications, and they will have to submit a request for a waiver to the state Board of Education to expand the cap for charter schools for Alachua County.

Responding to Mrs. Sharpe, Mr. Lewis noted that a copy of the application was given to the staff attorney. He was not present at the staff review and did not provide any input.

She is concerned that when an application has been approved in concept, historically, it has been about the same as approving the charter school. She would feel more comfortable with the application being reviewed and approved by the staff attorney prior to the Board approving it in concept.

Superintendent Chambers suggested amending the recommendation to read "subject to approval by the attorney."

The mover and seconder agreed to adding the language, "subject to approval by the attorney," to the motion.

Mr. Lewis confirmed that he is comfortable with this application and that it met all the criteria and that he has no problem with adding this language.

The motion now reads to approve the application in concept, subject to approval by the attorney, and authorize the staff to develop a proposed charter contract.

Mrs. Sharpe qualified for the record that she is voting no because the law is one thing and what we feel comfortable with is another. When this application comes back before her after having been read by the attorney and approved by the attorney, she will vote in the affirmative, but until then she is voting no.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1
Yes: Mr. Cake, Mrs. Carroll
Mrs. Cawthon
Dr. Leathers
No: Mrs. Sharpe

REVISIONS TO CODE
OF STUDENT
CONDUCT—FIRST
READING

Mrs. Kathy Black, executive director, Student Services, noted that there are two changes to the Code of Student Conduct. The first is the addition of *public displays of affection* on the Misbehaviors and Consequences Chart, and the second one is the definition of *public displays of affection* in the Glossary of Terms. These changes address specific concerns of the secondary principals.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved the administration's recommendation to schedule a public hearing 7:30 p.m. July 16, 2002, to consider revisions to the Code of Student Conduct.

Mrs. Sharpe questioned why the elementary change does not list specific displays of affection as the secondary change. Who will determine what public display of affection is if there are no standards?

Ms. Black stated that to have consistency, it was placed there for information for parents. The elementary principals and subcommittee that worked on this did not feel the need to be specific. They felt that the standards they set were not problematic at the elementary level.

Mrs. Sharpe feels it should be consistent and in writing.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

PROPERTY &
CASUALTY
INSURANCE
RENEWAL--FLORIDA
SCHOOL BOARDS
INSURANCE TRUST
(TRUST)

Mr. Dave Hotary, executive director, Risk Management, pointed out that the district currently insures \$450 million worth of property. The market will only provide a maximum coverage of \$100 million. He noted that continuation in the TRUST will provide for a substantial increase over the expiring cost. The cost is \$3,985,296.80 with a credit provided to the district in the amount of \$26,596, thereby, lowering the total cost to \$3,958,700.80. The district has many Certificates of

Participation (COPs) that require full coverage of properties associated with the issue. This “pool” of insurance will not provide unrestricted coverage for each of the contracts. The district may be required to secure a separate policy for each contract. Because of certain voids in the coverage, the district needs to fund an “internal” loss fund in the amount of \$175,000. Further, pollution claims are excluded under the new program, and a minimum of \$100,000 needs to be funded for this potential. Finally, the \$1,000 per property deductible with the expiring coverage will no longer be in place, and a minimum of \$25,000 should be set aside for this loss of coverage. This adds \$300,000 to the cost of the package and brings the grand total to \$4,258,701.

Mr. Hotary reported the coverage for 2001-2002 was \$2,133,335 -- a difference of \$2,125,366. He summarized that we are losing coverage, increasing the loss fund and the self-insured retentions (SIRs) are rising.

Mrs. Sharpe pointed out that insurance, nationally, as well as for Florida school boards, has increased by billions of dollars. The Florida School Boards Association is encouraging school board members to address this issue, along with the health insurance, with the legislators. She also pointed out that this Board has worked very hard to look out for its employees by trying not to have a reduction in workforce and not to burden employees with health insurance costs.

Mr. Hotary noted a meeting is scheduled with the TRUST and they are hopeful for some downturn with some of the insurances, they will continue to work with the market and talk about third party administration and other issues. There is potential for some savings, and he will report the final figures to the Board.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration’s recommendation to renew with the Florida School Boards’ Insurance Trust (TRUST) while at the same time creating an internal loss fund of \$300,000 to cover deficits in the coverage over expiring coverage.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration’s recommendation to send a letter to the TRUST advising that the district wishes to retract its “Letter of Withdrawal” which was sent previously to protect the district’s ability to seek the alternate proposal, and which must be withdrawn by June 30, 2002.

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

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt the "Safe School Resolution" as provided by the Florida School Boards' Insurance Trust.

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

Mr. Hotary suggested a work session for the Board with Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. for some self-help resolutions.

COMPENSATION-
BASED PAY PLANS FOR
INSTRUCTIONAL AND
SCHOOL-BASED
ADMINISTRATIVE
PERSONNEL

Dr. Leila Pratt, director, Personnel Services, explained that Florida Statute 230.23(5)(c) requires school districts adopt a budget and salary schedules to allow instructional personnel and school administrators who demonstrate outstanding performance, as measured under Statute 231.29, to earn a five percent (5%) supplement in addition to their individual, negotiated salary. Recent changes in the Florida School Code (Section 1012.22(1)(c)4) clarify how the money is to be reserved in the budget.

Two committees were established to develop criteria and a Performance-based Pay Plan for both instructional and school-based administrative personnel. Dr. Charles Hall presented an overview of the plan for instructional personnel.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the Performance-based Pay Plan for Instructional Personnel as presented.

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

Dr. Pratt stated that the HRMD Plan consists, basically, of three components of which performance appraisal is an integral part of those components. The entire HRMD Plan was reviewed to ensure that the practices and what actually had been written were consistent and was able to be carried out by the administrators in charge.

Dr. Chet Sanders presented an overview of the revisions of the selection, training and performance appraisal components of the HRMD Plan with special emphasis on the compensation-based pay plan for school-based administrators.

The instructional and school-based administrative plans propose similar criteria for faculty and administrators to qualify annually for the additional 5% pay.

Chairman Cake noted that Board members participated in a workshop three or four years ago and approved the HRMD Plan as presented, as a lot of work had gone into developing the Plan. Part of that Plan allowed for multiyear appointments of principals. Principals and assistant principals have no job guarantees. They give up their continuing contract when they move into administration. A concern of his is that aspiring principals enter into a one-year contract without any guarantees. The Plan allowed for guarantees for up to three years. It is very crucial in recruitment. He hopes that the district will look at the HRMD Plan in the future.

Mrs. Carroll stated that she would not want to do the total continuing contract plan again, but she liked the three-year plan and liked it for principals that are exemplary. She suggested bringing this forward again in the future.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the Performance-based Pay Plan for School-based Administrative Personnel and the revisions to the HRMD Plan component.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

REAPPOINTMENT OF
DISTRICT-LEVEL
ADMINISTRATORS FOR
2002-2003 SCHOOL
YEAR

Dr. Pratt explained that district-level administrative positions were analyzed to determine if any positions needed to be reclassified and moved to the professional/technical category. The current salary schedule footnotes do not allow for a smooth transition of the employees without incurring additional costs. She suggested this reclassification process be delayed until financial resources can better accommodate the changes.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved the administration's recommendation to reappoint the district-level administrators for the 2002-2003 school year as listed.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

SAFE PASSAGE ACT
REPORT

Mr. Bear Bryan, district security chief, noted that the Safe Passage Act, HB 267, passed by the 2001 Legislature provides for the development and revision of safety and security best practices and their use in school

districts. Each district must conduct an annual self-assessment of the safety and security best practices and present the results to the School Board at a publicly noticed meeting by July 1 for submission to the Department of Education. The Legislature passed HB 16C that made certain items exempt from public record. He feels this is one of those items along with the district security plan.

He found in conducting the self-assessment that the district looks real good. He noted there are two items that need improvement, one is being worked on and the other requires a large expenditure (a school-wide communications network that would cost about \$1.5 million).

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the Safe Passage Act Report for submission to the Department of Education.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to approve the consent agenda as described in items 1-28 with the deletion of item 27.d., School Bus Agreement with Florida 4-H Congress. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

Mrs. Carroll requested, with regard to internal funds at schools and centers, that training be made available for the parent booster organizations, possibly at the Back-to-School conference, and request every school send a representative from each organization.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mrs. Sharpe requested dates be pulled together to schedule a workshop with Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. on loss prevention and safety.

Dr. Leathers requested how the amount of time spent by staff on audits of accounts compare with the time spent dealing with charter schools.

Mrs. Carroll noted a concern by parents that the last day of school in 2003 is on a Monday.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.