

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 6, 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 Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

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

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Dr. Chambers requested that the Board delete Action Item 8, Superintendent’s Contract. She noted that the item was placed on the agenda for the right reasons and the request to remove it is for the right reasons. She wanted the contract put on the agenda so that she could answer questions about commitment level to Alachua County and believes she has done so by allowing it to be placed on the agenda, however, it has become very divisive. Her current contract and contracted salary are fine at this point.

Motion by Dr. Leathers

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of August 6, 2002, with the removal of Action Item 8.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Cawthon, referring to the Florida Trend magazine, noted that for those interested in reading about education in Florida the current issue’s focus is on education. It tells the focus points of the state’s education system and gives a short view of what is going on in Florida. One article on principals around the state highlighted Neil Drake, principal of the One Room Schoolhouse Charter School.

Superintendent Chambers noted that this month’s character trait is “Civility,” and she recognized the Boardroom artwork provided by

Spring Hill and Westwood Middle Schools, Wiles and Chiles Elementary Schools and Sidney Lanier Center.

RECOGNITION/
PRESENTATION/
REPORT

Facility Readiness Team Update

A report was presented to the Board on the supplemental cleaning services provided on a project basis, by requests from principals. A combination of district staff and outside contractors, depending on the need, focus on periodic cleaning or as need be on an emergency basis. These services supplement the routine maintenance performed by staff. The report included an overview of the program objectives and procedures; a list of projects being accomplished; a summary report by fiscal year; and a detailed breakdown of work at each school.

Mrs. Carroll, referring to EHS and BHS, requested information on the differences in costs for cleaning the two malls, which are about the same size.

Responding to Mrs. Sharpe, Mr. Gable stated that Facilities will use the documentation and the history to compare outside services and vendors to in-house services.

Mrs. Sharpe requested that someone from the Facilities department go around to the schools, not wait until a request is received from the principal, and look for danger spots, safety hazards, or whatever needs to be done and taken care of before it becomes an emergency. She would also like a report to the Board members on findings during these trips and how staff is handling whatever issues are discovered.

Mrs. Carroll expressed appreciation for the report, but maybe it could have been taken a step further, i.e., every school is ready, all air-conditioners, fire alarms, etc., are working.

Superintendent Chambers assured the Board that every effort has been made to make sure the schools are ready.

School Grade Process

Dr. Mel Lucas, director of Testing and coordinator of Accountability, reviewed the appeals process for school grades issued by the state. He explained that schools have a window of opportunity (during the month of April) to review the list of students included in the determination of the grade and to revise the student roster prior to the grade being calculated and issued for each school. District schools did respond by the deadline, but the district has sent an appeal for the state to re-evaluate the information used to determine one of the school grades.

Dr. Lucas noted that the district and statewide organizations he belongs

to see many ways for improvement and are in communication with the state trying to get the state to make some changes in the school grading system--place more emphasis on gain scores and grading of the schools be expanded to include more characteristics.

Dr. Leathers noted his unhappiness with the system for grading schools and stated he would like to see what an "A" school constitutes and what an "F" school constitutes.

Dr. Lucas noted that the district had 17 schools with the grade of an "A," better than 75% of other school districts across the state, which is a tribute to the good teaching occurring in the schools and a good measurement from the FCAT, but the system that awards those grades needs a lot of work and the district needs to keep the focus on that.

Responding to Mrs. Carroll, Dr. Lucas noted that gain scores promises to be a very valuable tool in a variety of ways. They look at FCAT scores in two distinct ways. They look at the percentage of students that meet a certain standard at each grade level, and they also include, for the first time last year, consideration of the number of students making gains at the school. That element of the school grade is very strongly influenced by the demographic makeup of the students at the school. Schools by zoning decisions or otherwise that have a very small number of children on free and reduced lunch get grades substantially higher than those schools that have high percentages of students on free and reduced lunch. When the gain score was brought in to supplement the calculation, you see a little decline in that correlation.

Dr. Lucas stated that, ideally, the school grade would reflect the instructional success of the teacher at the school rather than the skill level of the student body. He feels that the grading of the schools ought to soon evolve into total reliance on student gains from one year to the next, which he feels would eliminate the influence of the demographics of the student population of the school.

Mrs. Carroll also commended the "C" schools that have a high makeup of students on free and reduced lunch and have looked at difficult situations and done well and continue to do what is needed to improve.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that the FCAT should not be a measurement of how much children know. Students are coming to school unprepared and the burden should not be solely on the school district. Parental involvement is most important.

Dr. Chambers noted that staff has worked very hard to get information

on student gains to the principals so that it will be available in the schools when the teachers come back and they can see what is actually successful and what is not.

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

AMENDMENTS TO
POLICIES 6.21 AND
6.162

Amendments to Policy 6.21, Certification of Administrative and Instructional Personnel, and Policy 6.162, Contracts: Instructional and Administrative Personnel, permit teachers with appropriate course work and experience to teach areas related to their expertise without the burden of additional course work. The change would also permit persons with vocational skills and demonstrated satisfactory teaching performance to be certificated by School Board issued certificates and permits persons with special area expertise to be recognized.

Responding to Dr. Paulson, president, ACEA, Dr. Pratt, director, Personnel Services, stated that certification requirements are in no way intended under the non-degree vocational, under the subject area expertise, or under the specialty area, which falls under Policy 6.162. There is no intent meant to circumvent or prevent the hiring of persons with a valid certificate. The state has always allowed people to be hired in a specialty area that is not covered by academic certification. Policy 6.21, which deals with subject area expertise, addresses the in field/out of field issue only.

Dr. Paulson expressed concern related to 6.162(3)(c) that a safeguard is being removed and the new language allows too much flexibility in hiring less qualified individuals.

Dr. Pratt noted that the language mirrors the language contained in the law. The teacher under this provision would not be a teacher that would qualify for an academic coverage. It is a specialty area that is not covered by a state certificate.

Dr. Paulson noted that the language does not state the individual cannot teach in a subject area and feels you must look at it more carefully when putting it in writing.

Mrs. Carroll requested a copy of the statute be provided to the Board.

Mr. Matt Coleman, resident and educator, stated that it is important that we have qualified people in the classrooms. Every five years teachers have to do something to satisfy recertification. This language is talking about a select group, possibly four, in the system that don't have to comply with this. He thinks every teacher that is teaching in Alachua

County should have to do something to maintain that certification.

Dr. Pratt clarified that this policy does not deal with recertification. When a person has to recertify there is a requirement to maintain a certificate once it is issued. This policy deals with certification.

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

RECOGNITION/
PRESENTATION/
REPORTS (cont'd)

Budgeting/Financial Update

Mr. Birkett, deputy superintendent, noted that the past year has been a stressful year on everyone and staff has attempted to keep the Board informed on the financial and budget status. He reviewed the final budget amendments for the last fiscal year on the Consent Agenda.

He presented an overview of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) noting that the basic fund structure for Florida school districts follows GAAP for governments.

SCHEDULED AGENCIES

There were no Scheduled Agencies.

CITIZEN INPUT

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

- Review the following when considering superintendent's proposals: increase in classroom disturbances; continuing turnover of teachers; continuing multiple cost increases in school construction contracts; an almost complete absence of citizen participation in critical school affairs; and nepotism.
- Shared comments made at events attended: what kind of crazy school board do you have if they can't decide how to move kids around; why does the school board want a chief financial officer as superintendent; and why don't we have at the top a person whose primary focus in their education has been in the field of education. We all know finance is important but we also know the primary job of school board is to educate the kids to the best of their ability.
- Referring to the salary schedule for the administrators, wants to see what every administrator in the district is getting.
- Is it \$2.5 million that cost the 2 step for career service and teachers or is it career service, teachers and administrators? Go on record it cost almost a million dollars for career service and teachers to have 1 % increase. All of sudden it is being said that it cost \$2.5 million and all of a sudden we have a 3.8% increase.
- Questions the wisdom of awarding a raise to administrators when teachers have not received similar consideration and are only now being given credit for levels of experience. Urged the Board to

table the Administrative Salary Schedule, until a new board is convened.

- The most important priority in this school district should be the students, the second should be the teachers and the last priority should be administration. Expressed concern with an item in the budget for an air-conditioned gym that will cost \$2.5 million and will serve less than 300 students. This could better be spent helping teachers and replacing carpets, air-conditioners, fixing roofs and other items.
- Impressed with the African/African American curriculum study guide. Problem is that it is optional and the law is required. Semi-impressed with the Harcourt Brace fifth grade social studies as it does include points omitted in the past but continues to repeat errors.

Dr. Cliett noted that the resource guide is to help the teachers better meet the requirements of the law in the classes, which is taken very seriously.

REQUEST TO CHANGE
NAME OF HORIZON/
NEW PATHWAYS

Mr. Tougaw, executive director, Facilities, gave a historical overview of Horizon/New Pathways and noted that the principal, staff and School Advisory Council of the school have requested a name change to the original name, Horizon Center.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to change the name of Horizon/New Pathways to Horizon Center.

Ms. Diana McPherson, chair, School Advisory Council, stated that the Council, administration and teachers have all requested consideration of changing the name to Horizon Center. It has been cumbersome and confusing having two names.

Dr. Chambers noted the principal stated the SAC had met and because the schools function as one school, function as one faculty and function together, they would like the name change for continuity.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADMINISTRATIVE
APPOINTMENT(S)

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the Superintendent's recommendation to appoint Ms. Felecia Moss as principal of Newberry High School, effective August 7, 2002.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the Superintendent's recommendation to appoint Ms. Lacy Redd as principal of Newberry Elementary School, effective August 7, 2002.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

RATIFICATION OF THE
COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING
AGREEMENT FOR
CAREER SERVICE
PERSONNEL, 2001-2004

Mr. Leonard Dietzen, attorney, Collective Bargaining, noted that during the 2001 bargaining process, a full contract was negotiated for Career Service Personnel for 2001-2004.

Dr. Paulson confirmed union ratification of 444 to 4 by career service employees.

Motion by Dr. Leathers

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to ratify the Career Service Personnel negotiated Agreement for 2001-2004.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF THE
2002-2003 SALARY
SCHEDULES

Mr. Birkett reviewed the Salary Schedules as follows:

- **Teacher Salary Schedule** (Instructional)—Includes all footnote changes as related to the bargaining agreement. Cells 30 and 31 have been increased as negotiated. Teachers will be placed on the schedule in accordance with the arbiter's ruling commensurate with their experience based on that ruling.
- **Career Service Salary Schedule (bargaining unit members)**—Reflects all the footnotes as reflected in the negotiated documents. The Board did grant an additional step for all career service employees in addition to the arbiter's ruling. Employees hired prior to July 1, 2001, will receive a 2-step increase. An additional \$50,000 is being set aside to address experience after a committee has been formed.
- **Professional/Technical Salary Schedule (non-bargaining unit members)**—Mirrors the career service salary schedule. They will receive 2 steps and \$6,000 has been set aside to adjust experience for these employees.
- **Administrative Salary Schedule**—When the administrative salary schedule was adopted in 1996, the methodology on the way employees were placed on the salary schedule and in an effort to catch up people who were placed below where their experience placed them, administrators were granted a 2-step increase over a period of years, of course, there were no adjustments made last

year. It was found when a teacher came from the instructional ranks and was placed on the administrative schedule they may have been placed on step 4 or 5 and held there because they didn't have administrative experience. In an effort to assist in recruitment of instructional staff to the administrative ranks, we found we had people wanting to return to the classroom because they can make more money in the classroom. We are proposing that the overall salary schedule be increased 2% and then administrators be given one step on the salary schedule. We are taking out the language that addresses experience so that in the future these folks will be able to progress through the salary schedule, pending funding.

- **Other Compensation Salary Schedule**—Includes substitutes, student trainees, after school enrichment program, extra duties for athletic events and those types of things.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt the Salary Schedules as presented, pending ratification. It is further recommended that the salary schedules adopted continue from year to year until amended by action of the Board.

Mrs. Carroll requested to see information chart by chart on the administrators for assurance that the chart is not becoming unbalanced. There are two things that will guarantee a child's success and they are a good principal and a good teacher.

The Superintendent agreed that the number of administrators in the first phase of DROP for next year, including principals and assistant principals, is substantial. She can't assure the Board that the salary schedule is in balance at this point and would like the opportunity to address the balance, particularly, as it relates to assistant principals.

Responding to Mrs. Sharpe, Mr. Birkett stated there are 50-60 in the administrative pool.

Mrs. Carroll stated that it may be time to sit down and look at the administrative salary schedule in a workshop format in terms of is it keeping up, are there imbalances, is it balanced.

Dr. Paulson indicated that the teachers' union will vote on ratification during the week of preplanning, and Mr. Birkett stated that this could present a problem, but the timeline for salary increases in checks is the first check at the end of August.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

COMPENSATION/
CLASSIFICATION
COMMITTEES'
RECOMMENDATIONS

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the Compensation/Classification Committees' recommendations as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

AMENDMENTS TO
PUPIL PROGRESSION
PLAN—FIRST READING

Mrs. Sandi Anusavice, executive director, Curriculum, reviewed changes being proposed due to legislative mandates and/or district changes.

Motion by Dr. Leathers

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to schedule a public hearing 7:30 p.m., August 20, 2002, to consider amendments to the Pupil Progression Plan.

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 1-17. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mrs. Robin Snyder, Communications, reminded the Board and public that a Back-to-School Fair is being held at the Oaks Mall, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Sears court area, Saturday, August 10, 2002, which will feature 21 tables with information and staff on hand to answer questions parents, students, and community members may have about our schools. There have been a lot of changes this year.

Mrs. Carroll requested an update from staff as to how the district has dealt with the Duval grade of "F" issue, changes being made, etc.

Dr. Cliett, deputy superintendent, reported that an assistance team has been formed, an organizational meeting held and a first meeting has been held at Duval with people from the curriculum staff and the school. We have identified a number of items that need to be addressed. We are examining the curriculum; programs; schedules; additional resources that may be needed; there is a grant received to help enhance the academics through the arts--out of that we have designated funds to put the Waterford supplemental reading program

there to provide additional reading assistance; and tutoring after school can be done with Title I funds. We will be giving Duval Elementary School every bit of curriculum and financial assistance we can to ensure a successful next year.

Mrs. Cawthon noted that she went to the assistance meeting and will continue to go to the meetings to hear first hand what is being said and see what is being done to help the school.

Mrs. Carroll requested periodic updates for the Board.

Mrs. Sharpe would like to quiet the rumor that the principal is being removed from Duval. She asked if Success for All is still being used.

Dr. Cliett replied that the school wants to continue to use Success for All and also the new Harcourt reading program. It is being looked at to determine if the schedule will allow the use of both sufficiently and still use the Waterford as supplemental or whether we need to do away with one program and go with the district adopted program.

Mrs. Sharpe asked how the other schools participating in the Success for All program are doing, and if it is beneficial to continue paying for this program and not have the results needed, or should we look at another reading program and not have duplication?

Dr. Cliett stated that the district is reviewing this locally and looking on a national level to see what research is showing.

Mrs. Carroll stated that she knows Waterford is a supplemental program and that Success for All can be successful but whether it is the best choice for Duval is the question. If we continue with it, as a part of the reporting, she would like to receive information as to the responsibility of John Hopkins in the past and now; what has been their response; what is their agreement to work with us in the future; and how we are working all those things together.

Mrs. Cawthon asked how her request for a policy on rezoning is coming along, and when will the task force be up and going.

Superintendent Chambers stated that staff is currently working on a list of agencies and different groups that would be asked to participate on a task force for rezoning. She sees one of the charges for the task force could be to make recommendations on a policy after it looks at where we are and where we need to be. Mr. Tougaw has contacted local governmental agencies for additional information relating to the planning aspect since a lot of it will have to do with facilities and

utilization within our community. The Superintendent's Advisory Council has this issue on its next agenda to look at as far as recommending additional members and to make sure from a community standpoint we have all the players covered. This issue will probably be presented to the Board during the first meeting in September.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that with regard to recruitment she sees that we have somewhat of a problem and it is a compounded problem, i.e., the tenuous state of affairs that this district is in at the present time. It is tenuous not only with our Superintendent withdrawing her contract tonight, which caught me totally off guard, combined with the lack of funds and not being able to give salary increases like we would like, and the very sad state of affairs between the ACEA and the School Board, one like she has never seen. She would like to know who in their right mind would like to come here, with all the unrest and instability. We are the Board! People keep saying the "new Board," "the Board should wait." The state of Florida commissioned us to make decisions, some of those are tough and some are easy, but it is our responsibility as long as we draw a paycheck from the state of Florida to take care of business at hand. We should not be putting off things because of the new Board. When the new Board members come on in November, it is going to take them a while to get adjusted to what is going on. Being a school board member is unlike anything they have ever done, regardless of whether they have been an assistant superintendent or a superintendent, it is totally different. It is going to be up to them to bring themselves up with the programs we have to offer. We don't know what the makeup of the new Board is going to be; we don't know what the personalities are going to be. We do know the new members are going to need to have training, in order to learn first of all Boardsmanship, secondly, what it is with the state of Florida that they need to be doing. So, I'm telling you I am not a wimp, and I am here to say that I was hired to make tough decisions, and I am ready to do it. Let's stop talking about the new board this, the old board that, we are the Board until November 21 when we have reorganization.

Dr. Leathers stated that he does respect and will honor his commitment to this Board through the time he serves; however, he remembers very vividly four years ago when the district had a superintendent that had been appointed on a 3-2 vote and when he came on the Board it became a 2-3 vote, and that is not the way to bring on a superintendent. He made the appeal to the Board at that time to hold off until after the election because it may have a different situation. He feels had the Board had to address that situation tonight, he would say that he thinks it's the best interest of this school district and the community to not make certain decisions that will be carried over for the new board, and

he thinks one certainly is important enough for the superintendent. The current contract goes 10 months into the next year and that is plenty of time for the new board and superintendent to make a decision. He certainly does not want to make changes now about that but will make every appropriate decision that he thinks is appropriate for this Board. He agrees with Mrs. Sharpe to a certain degree but feels very strongly that not every decision should be carried out by this particular Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.