

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
August 20, 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 Dr. Leathers

Moved to approve the minutes of Board Meeting of August 6, 2002, and Special Board Meetings of July 23, 2002, and August 1, 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 August 20, 2002, as presented.

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

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Carroll noted the district held its Back-to-School Fair at the Oaks Mall for the community and commended district staff in putting it together, and commended Archer Community on a very good opening.

Superintendent Chambers extended condolences on behalf of the Board to retired Glen Springs Elementary principal Patsy Kinney and family on the loss of her husband, Orus Kinney, retired principal of Stephen Foster Elementary School.

Condolences were also extended to the following employees: Laura Rafferty, teacher, Wiles Elementary, and Debbie Bass, ESE aide, Shell Elementary, and their families on the loss of their mother, Darlene Terrell; and Jennifer Taylor Allen, Head Start liaison, and her family on the loss of her sister Alana Dennard.

She thanked the Alachua County Public Schools Foundation for sponsoring the Harry Wong seminar and the Leadership Gainesville Alumni on their annual back-to-school fair for children at Family

Services Center.

Dr. Chambers noted that she had been asked to clarify her contract and the contracted salary of \$131,015. Since she has been working for about two years under the original contract prepared by Board Attorney Jim Lang, she requested he review the highlights of the contract to clarify for the record what the superintendent's contract has been.

Mr. Lang clarified that the salary the Board agreed to pay the superintendent was a supplement of \$3000 per month to her current base salary at that time as allowed by law, and base salary was defined as meaning the base salary of the employee's former position or former position as it may be known during the term of the contract as it may be increased from time to time commencing on July 1, 2000. The superintendent should be paid \$3000 a month plus whatever the base salary would be in the position it is now know, which is deputy superintendent for Planning, Budgeting, and Systems Accountability. This was the contract that was entered into by the Board and the Superintendent on October 17, 2000.

Mrs. Carroll felt it fitting to read "I Am A Teacher" which was sent to her by a teacher and describes what teachers do each day.

Mrs. Sharpe noted there were over 2000 people at the seminar by Dr. Wong. She stated after hearing Dr. Wong at a FSBA conference, she came back and initiated a proposal and the Board was in agreement that the Induction Program would be a good thing, and the program was implemented in the 1998-99 school year. The district has been practicing the Induction Program since, and Dr. Wong's speaking here has enhanced this program, which is all about classroom management.

Dr. Leathers spoke of recent trips to Georgia and of the commitment of all of Georgia to education and feels Florida has a real challenge to come close to this type of commitment.

The Chairman participated in the district's first day of school "helping hands" initiative and reported a smooth opening at Littlewood Elementary School.

RECOGNITION/
PRESENTATION/
REPORT

School Assistance Team Report

Dr. Bill Cliett, deputy superintendent, Curriculum and Instructional Services, reported that the District Assistance Plan has been developed to provide assistance to district schools that have been identified by state criteria with a school performance grade "D" or "F." The process will be done in a collaborative manner among the School Improvement Assistance Team, the School Advisory Council, and school

administration. The team will meet on a monthly basis and regular reports will be provided.

Dr. Leathers questioned the cost that goes into this process of responding to a system that hasn't been proven, and suggested that at some point the need to price these processes in terms of the improvement plan at Duval and the assistance plan for D & F schools.

Mrs. Carroll thanked the staff for the recent report sent to Board members, and she noted one comment made she thought was very good—to move away from the FCAT mindset and refocus on the Sunshine State Standards, which were written by teachers.

Dr. Cliett noted that the Board would also receive a copy of the quarterly reports made to the Department of Education.

Mrs. Sharpe asked of the \$11 million dollars allocated for the state for low performing schools, how much will Alachua County receive.

Superintendent Chambers responded that to date the district has been promised a little less than \$600,000 particularly for reading coaches. To keep the Board and public aware, staff will bring a report to the Board monthly. Also when zoning, functional capacity and utilization of our schools are addressed, the two upcoming Constitutional Amendments need to be considered.

Budgeting/Financial Update

Mr. Keith Birkett, deputy superintendent, Planning, Budgeting and Systems Accountability, reported that the district has its first group of employees in the DROP program that will be leaving the system in 2003—5 administrators, 9 career service, and 30 teachers.

He reviewed the local tax increase resulting from an increase in the state determined millage rate, the financial implications of Charter schools on the district budget, and the impact of the two Constitutional Amendments that will appear on the November ballot. Florida's Amendment to Reduce Class Size will cost the state approximately \$27.4 billion during the eight-year implementation, requiring Alachua County to build five new elementary schools and one new middle school and high school. In comparison, the total 2002-2003 Florida K-20 budget is \$21.6 billion. The second Amendment for Voluntary Universal Pre-Kindergarten Education could result in over 900 new students in the Alachua county Pre-K program.

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

PUPIL PROGRESSION
PLAN

There was no public input on the Pupil Progression Plan.

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

SCHEDULED AGENCIES

There were no scheduled agencies.

CITIZEN INPUT

The following comments/suggestions/recommendations were presented:

- The Superintendent was thanked for addressing her contract.
- Ways were suggested for each school to show patriotism and support for all the families who lost loved ones on 9/11/01.
- The scheduling at High Springs Elementary and Spring Hill Middle on Wednesdays has caused concern with younger and older siblings not being picked up in the afternoon at the same time, causing younger children to get home before the older siblings. Would like help and compassion on this and an explanation of buses running twice on Wednesdays.
- Concern was expressed with children being picked up at 6:14 a.m. and the location of the bus stop in an unlit, deserted area with bushes in Jonesville. Feels this presents a safety issue.
- Several expressed and requested support and assistance for Duval Elementary School and its current programs and new special programs, some of which will be provided through grants.
- Information was shared on the arts program and students wore their uniforms to show Board members.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that the uniforms make a world of difference on how the students see themselves and how they feel about other students. She challenged other churches to join Holy Trinity to step up and help schools that need help, particularly Duval. She and Duval principal and teachers visited the Davenport School of Arts, a school that was fast becoming a low performing school until it developed the same program that Duval is implementing. Now there is a waiting list for the school. She feels this program will be good for Duval. The arts contribute and enhance the reading and math. She happily noted that the School Board is willing and is assisting Duval.

SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT PLANS
FOR 2002-2003

Mr. Don Lewis, director, Curriculum, noted that School Improvement Plans for 2002-2003 school year have been prepared by each School Advisory Board in accordance with School Board Policy 2.42 and F.S. 229.592 (1001.11). He stated that although each plan is uniquely different there is a single common thread that runs through each plan, and that is reading will be the priority of the district and special attention will be given to the lowest quartile to make student gains. He

highlighted some strategies included in the plans. Each school's intervention plan is aligned with the district's Strategic Plan.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the School Improvement Plans for 2002-2003 school year as presented.

Mrs. Carroll noted Archer's Plan is in a format that is easily understood. She commended Chiles and Wiles on their new way of providing kindergarten the first week of school, and Rawlings for providing after school enrichment programs for gifted students.

Dr. Leathers noticed, looking at Duval's Plan, an unbelievable amount of effort to involve the families in the homes. He is convinced that the more help we give the home with after school programs and to make that bridge each and every day more equal to other kids, we will have a lot more success. He feels this is the real challenge and applauds what the district is doing.

Mrs. Sharpe commended the schools on their plans. She specifically liked the school, parent, teacher contract in Rawlings' Plan. She was assured that all waivers were approved.

Mrs. Carroll pointed out that teachers at Williams as well as other schools go into the homes to meet with the families that are not able to attend conferences at the school.

Chairman Cake observed that the quality of the School Improvement Plans have changed tremendously over the past ten years.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

AMENDMENTS TO
POLICIES 6.162 and
6.21—SECOND
READING

A public hearing was held August 6, 2002, to consider amendments to Policy 6.162, Contracts: Instructional and Administrative Personnel, and Policy 6.21, Certification of Administrative and Instructional Personnel.

Dr. Pratt, director, Personnel Services, reiterated that Policy 6.162 addresses contracts for the hiring of non-degreed vocational and non-certificated instructional personnel. This not a new policy but a change to comply more fully with the law and current operating procedures. The policy does not supplant the need for teachers to have a valid Florida teaching certificate in the basic academic areas of instruction.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration’s recommendation to adopt Policy 6.162 and Policy 6.21 as amended.

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 1-9 . (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

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

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mrs. Carroll

- Noted Board members had received a letter from the University of Florida as Chamber members asking the School Board to be aware of rules governing employment of students if they are in athletics. She provided the letter for Personnel.
- Pointed out concerns received regarding the traffic during parent pickup at Eastside High School and requested staff go out the next day and help with this situation.
- Highlighted that 20 portables have been moved and returned to the leasing company.
- Requested a workshop on choice and zoning—confused as to how the choice issue is working in concert with the zoning issue. Be sure what the Board has asked the Superintendent to do and the timeline with that is what we intended. The workshop would be just information for this Board and candidates could come and listen. There is a timeline for school choice information to go out in November that may affect zoning, and she is not clear on this.
- Superintendent review the kindergarten count at High Springs Elementary—as of Monday the count was 1:26. See if there is a need to help in some way, and there may be others in the system.

Dr. Leathers

- If we hold a workshop, would like it structured so that everyone that has any interest can be involved.

It was clarified that Mrs. Carroll’s request for a workshop is for clarification of what has already been past by this Board and what’s coming on timeline wise and how we are impacted by what we have done.

Mr. Tougaw noted that the Superintendent’s Advisory Council will be meeting soon and will discuss a task force and take a look at what a zoning plan might entail. The concern about a choice plan is out there. This Board did pass a policy stating that Choice would take place next year. This is an item that needs to be reviewed collectively in terms of

whether we need to delay or readdress that policy and put it a year further out, depending on how we go about total rezoning of the district or whatever the Board might choose to implement. In terms of the Constitutional Amendment talked about earlier, that also would play into some of the criteria that we would need to review. There are many items that need to be on the table as we address the timeline for the future.

Mrs. Sharpe understands that Mrs. Carroll's request is a workshop for just an informational item for clarity and anyone that wants to come is invited. She also pointed out that the Constitutional Amendment is going to very much impact this whole thing.

The Superintendent noted that we have been trying to set some Board meetings with lengthy discussion items and asked if this could be a discussion item or if the Board prefers a workshop.

Following discussion, Mrs. Carroll stated she would be happy with holding a workshop or placing an informational item on an agenda as long as the Board had discussion on this issue.

Mrs. Carroll addressed flyers, ACEA Alert and Bargaining Update, sent out by the Union over the last two weeks.

I received these from friends who are in the organization that were concerned about the tone. I was very saddened by comments, particularly, in the first flyer that went out. Most of the time I have been on this Board the Board has had some real issues with salaries, some years it was handled well and some years it has been out of our control. From 1996 the Board has given raises to teachers and other employees each year with one exception—when employees received nothing, I gave my raise from the state back to the teacher mini grant program. First of all I am a teacher and this flyer very much offends me because people would think that I would not support teachers. Board members take countless hours of phone calls day and night. Over the years I have volunteered in the classrooms and one of my favorite programs is Rockin' Reader. I have been a classroom speaker whenever asked and donated countless materials to classrooms.

We have had a serious budget issue and the Board and staff have all had to work to balance our budget needs. We are not perfect but try to make the right choices. We have balanced the budget over the years and this year it was very difficult because of the cuts that were made and challenges that faced this Board. There were severe facility issues when I first came on this Board. The first master planning committee that I served on was Stephen Foster. When we set down for the first

master planning meeting some things that came across were administrative first and we went back and said teachers deserved classrooms first. Mr. Cake has served as the hearing agent for seven years and never complains. I do not remember one case that has come before this Board where he did not uphold the wishes of that teacher and the administration moving and disciplining these students either out of the schools or into better circumstances with teachers. Most recently the Board held a discussion about the closing of Prairie View. The Board listened to the teachers and parents and did not close the school, probably to the detriment of other programs because it costs to keep that school open. We voted policy after policy. We listened to a teacher at Williams with concerns about a convenient store, and although we are not in the convenient store real estate business, we went to the city and worked a deal with them so that we could take care of a problem.

We were concerned about career service salaries and worked with the Union to bring a study to this district and this year we were able to vote not only for the two steps, even though the arbiter only recommended one, we brought \$50,000 forward to repair those steps for those who felt they were not placed correctly. I feel that most of us have done our job to the fullest, not perfect all the time, but that we all answer to concerns; teachers that called with several issues that needed to be handled in the schools were addressed.

My family has donated hundreds of hours to the school system. My husband volunteers at Lincoln, my middle daughter has volunteered in the ESE program at Talbot, our company has donated thousands and thousands of dollars in goods and services to the school system and never once have I mentioned that at one of these meetings and I will never mention it again, but we do it weekly and sometimes on a daily basis.

We have to choose how we travel through life and I like to choose the high road. This is why this is extremely uncomfortable to me tonight, but I don't like this because it hurts our school system. It is better when we work together, and after September 11, rather than working separately in an adversarial situation, we should have come together as a district and a union, and we should have said this is a crisis of international proportions that has affected this country, the state of Florida and this school system and when that happened to this whole country and this school system and the repercussions of this budget occurred, we should have come together and worked as a community to bring forward better things for our employees and not what I see in this publication.

In the first publication there is a misunderstanding of the School Board's work because they only listed two people of leading us to impasse. It takes three people on the Board to get anything done and we don't lead to impasse, we work as a group. The executive session is not privileged to other people but when we walk out the door, one of the questions asked is, "Is everybody in agreement with what we are doing?"

To put this on the backs of anybody in an adversarial year is questionable. I wondered why Mr. Cake and I were chosen and Mrs. Sharpe was added. I particularly wondered because we are not running for election. It surprised me. Other than the fact that it was mean spirited, why would you do it? And then I wondered that maybe someone thinks we are endorsing candidates. I haven't done that and I am not going to do that and I haven't heard Mr. Cake endorse anyone, but I am going to say this. As a parent of a child that will be entering this school system, I will be voting for a person that is positive, that's bright, energetic and fair, that is thoughtful and hard working and willing to listen, and understands they may not always have the only answer. I will not vote for anybody who is involved in negativism or name calling, or who undermines the school system.

Folks, let me tell you, this was in the Jacksonville paper in July, home schooling is the fastest growing segment of education in the United States, and it is easy to do. Any parent with today's technology and the home school support groups can home school their child. It is now growing at 15 to 20% per year and the children who are from those homes who are going to college are exceptionally, extraordinarily prepared. Private schools are making rapid advances. In Michigan, 40 private companies now manage three-fourths of the state's schools, charter schools, and religious schools are also adding to the mix.

We don't have room for negativism, to be ugly. We only have room to work together if we are going to save public education. Patriotism is hurt when public schools hurt, and we can't continue on the road that we have been on. My request to the candidates is that you stay out of a negative campaign, put your best out there and let the voters decide. I hope that your situation will be better than what this Board's has been with this union at this point in time.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.