

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
October 1, 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 Dr. Leathers

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the minutes of Board Meeting of September 17, 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 October 1, 2002, as presented.

Delete Action Item H.6.c., Student Case No. 02-23-X; add as Action Item H. 7., Alachua County Children's Services Council; change the Consent Agenda to item J., and add as Item I., Discussion Item— Citizen Requests.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Carroll thanked the City Commission for upholding a request to allow a School Board as member to serve as a voting member on the Planning Board. She also congratulated Kanapaha Middle School Social Studies teacher, Rachael Sharpe, on being named by the Social Studies National Council as the Social Studies Middle Level Teacher of the Year for 2002.

Mrs. Sharpe attended a March of Dimes Chain Reaction teen group retreat at Camp Crystal and made a presentation to the group on the history of the March of Dimes, and also read a thank you note from president, Amy Silverman.

Condolences were extended to Judith Weaver, media specialist, Spring Hill Middle School, and family on the loss of her daughter Katherine, a recent graduate of Eastside High School. Condolences were also extended to the families of current and former employees Carolyn Wallace Long, a school food service employee at High Springs Elementary and Spring Hill Middle school; and to Claire MacKenzie, a former school nurse at Prairie View Elementary School.

RECOGNITION/
PRESENTATION/
REPORT

Character Education Student Artwork

Students Janell Pagliara, Hidden Oak, and Kenneth Moseley, Glen Springs Elementary schools, were presented with certificates for their outstanding Character Education artwork depicting the character trait “Responsibility.”

Chief Will May, Alachua County Fire Rescue, and education director Shirley Copeland, thanked the Board for allowing them to teach fire safety and prevention skills in the elementary schools during the months of October through December. It was noted that all the materials used in the schools are FCAT formatted.

Mrs. Sharpe recognized and thanked Representatives Perry McGriff and Ed Jennings, Jr., for attending the meeting.

A-Plus School Awards

Representatives Perry McGriff and Ed Jennings, Jr., thanked the Board on behalf of Alachua County’s legislative delegation. They presented certificates to 22 Alachua County public schools, which received School Recognition Awards for the 2001-02 school year, along with flags for schools receiving the awards in 2000-01. The awards are given to schools which earn a state grade of “A” or that improve a letter grade from the previous year. The awards totaled \$1,792,076.00 for the designated schools for 2001-02.

Representative McGriff informed the Board that his family’s donation to the school system will be finalized in the near future.

Mr. Keith Birkett, deputy superintendent, Planning/Budgeting/Systems Accountability, informed the Board that most schools vote to spend their cash awards on bonuses, equipment, materials or temporary help.

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

PUBLIC HEARING—
POLICY 5.11, SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE

A public hearing has been scheduled for Policy 5.11, School Attendance Zones/Areas/Choice, to consider deletion of the prescribed implementation date.

ZONES/AREAS/CHOICE

Dr. Mel Lucas, director, Research/Evaluation, reminded the Board that the original policy stated that school choice would be implemented the 2003-04 school year. Due to the uncertainties that confront the district with respect to the statewide constitutional amendments on Class Size and Pre-School Education, and also because of the uncertainties of school rezoning the district is facing, it was felt to be prudent to delay the implementation of school choice beyond the 2003-04 school year. At the September 17 meeting staff presented a proposal to substitute 2003-04 school year with the words "...at a time to be determined by the superintendent." Based on a recommendation from Mr. Jim Lang, Board attorney, it is recommended that the Board consider changing the prescribed implementation date to the 2004-05 school year.

A citizen urged the Board to go forward with the original date of 2003-04 school year and delay a decision until after the November School Board elections.

Mr. Lang explained to the Board that the first proposal presented on September 17 left the implementation date to the discretion of the Superintendent. He felt the Board could not leave the effective date of a policy up to the decision of one person since the Board is the one adopting the policy and needs to set a time when it will become effective. He also pointed out that the statutory law dealing with rulemaking backs up his recommendation to make it date specific.

Superintendent Chambers reminded the Board that during the recent rezoning proposal, the capacity of a school became a very controversial issue when parents requested zoning exceptions. She stated that the one thing the Board must be cognizant of is that the constitutional amendments are up for vote in November and may very well impact school capacity. She believes the district needs to clearly establish the capacity of those schools before opportunities are created for parents to submit applications to attend different schools, and parents need to know the guidelines prior to submitting their application. The 2004-05 proposed recommendation will provide the district with the opportunity to find out the outcome of the amendments and to work with facilities staff to determine school capacity prior to offering choice. She pointed out that the parts of the policy dealing with zoning exceptions are still in tact and the capacities established today are still the current capacities until after the amendment issue is decided.

Mrs. Sharpe believes the amendment is going to pass and that it will impact the district and all school districts very severely all over the state of Florida. The Board needs to be careful to use choice for the right reason because it is growing all over the United States, and some

school districts are using choice to resegregate the school system. It is up to this Board to be sure that there is a balanced and healthy mix in this school system. She hears about neighborhood schools, but the Board needs to be careful about neighborhood schools because that is a word that is used in many instances to go another route. She has confidence in this Board and that it will not lose ground. It is not so much as race to look out for, but more compelling than that is the socio-economic class of these students. Must be sure that there is a healthy mix and that the bottom line lies with the Board and new Board members, who should keep thinking along those same lines.

Discussion took place on the timelines for construction, etc., involved if the constitutional amendments pass.

Mr. Terry Tougaw, Executive Director, Facilities, reminded the Board that the Superintendent's Advisory Council has a subcommittee forming to present a Board recommendation of a task force for overall rezoning.

Dr. Leathers continues to believe that neighborhood schools are the solution and gave examples such as Williams and Lincoln magnet programs, which have made a positive impact. He expressed concern with over 50% of Alachua County's students on free/reduced lunch and the need to reduce those numbers. Emphasized that the focus must be placed on a plan to have true learning centers at every school on the east side and more parental involvement.

Mrs. Carroll felt that it is not about how much money a person makes, but how much you support your public education system.

Mrs. Sharpe agrees that magnet programs help schools become diverse, but the bottom line is parental involvement. She pointed out that all parents are not created equal and the district has to do what is best for the children because they are in the classroom more time during the day than they are at home, and it is up to the Board to give these students the best education possible. She pointed out that Duval, Williams, Rawlings, Prairie View, and Lake Forest elementary schools are so burdened with the socio-economic class and lack of parental involvement that there is a whole generation of students who are coming to school unprepared, and that is the key. She felt that it is incumbent upon the Board to be sure that we provide the best education possible for all those kids. She is not referring to just black kids, because "All black kids are not poor and all white kids are not rich." She referred to all children, who don't even know their parents' names. She stated that it is incumbent upon the district to get these students prepared and it is not only a school problem, it is a societal problem.

Everyone needs to work to improve the situation and not draw lines in the sand and do what is best for all kids.

Chairman Cake felt it important to note that all the Board would be voting on is a change in the implementation date (2004-05 school year), and no other part of the policy is being amended.

Superintendent Chambers stated that the 2004-05 school year is believed to be the earliest possible date for implementation. If the universal Pre-K constitutional amendment passes, there is a probability that school capacities would need to be adjusted for implementation. If both amendments pass, and schools need to be constructed, it is a different matter and staff may very well have to bring this policy back to look at the date when a full timeline is provided by the Department of Education and funding is available.

Mrs. Carroll stated that if the policy is implemented as written, not the change, but current, the worse case scenario is that parents would choose for next school year and then possibly there would be a new school open for the next year, which would change choices.

Dr. Chambers stated that the timeline would need to be readdressed after constitutional amendments are voted upon.

Following discussion, Dr. Lucas pointed out that if the constitutional amendments failed, rezoning should be finalized before choice is offered and he does not believe that it could occur in the 2003-04 school year opening.

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

BUDGETING/
FINANCIAL UPDATE

Budgeting/Financial Update

Mr. Birkett provided an update on United Way donations for the district; reviewed current FTE information for charter schools and district schools; and stressed the importance of student attendance during FTE week, October 7-11, 2002.

SCHEDULED AGENCIES

There were no scheduled agencies.

CITIZEN INPUT

The following comments/concerns/recommendations were presented:

- A citizen expressed condolences to the family and friends of former science teacher Dr. Martha Green.
- A citizen expressed concern with the current School Board campaign process and explained that there have been situations in

which candidates and/their campaign committee members may have violated school board policy. Recommended the Board adequately enforce the existing policy on political campaigning and revise the policy on political activities on school board property.

- A citizen expressed concern with the high number of high school graduates requiring remediation at Santa Fe Community College and urged the Board to solve the problem.

Dr. Bill Cliett, deputy superintendent, Curriculum and Instructional Services, provided the Board with a report from Santa Fe Community College on the number of Alachua County high school graduates requiring remediation in reading, writing or math. The percentage is essentially unchanged from last year. These are students who received a basic diploma and did not complete the courses required for a college-ready diploma. Students who meet the requirement for a college-ready diploma require no remediation. Since Santa Fe Community College has an open enrollment policy, all high school graduates are accepted regardless of their readiness to succeed in college courses.

During Board discussion it was suggested working toward getting the number of students requiring remediation down to the 40% range.

- An employee provided operating budget and salary comparisons between the Clay County school system and the district.
- A citizen expressed serious concern with the high number of black students assigned to special education programs.

RESOLUTION NO.
02-05—EXECEPTIONAL
STUDENT EDUCATION
WEEK, OCTOBER 6-12,
2002

Dr. Renee Speisman, director, Exceptional Student Education, read Resolution No. 02-05 proclaiming the week of October 6-12, 2002, as Exceptional Student Education Week.

Motion by Dr. Leathers

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to adopt Resolution No. 02-05 proclaiming the week of October 6-12, 2002, as Exceptional Student Education Week as read.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

AMENDMENT TO
SPECIAL PROGRAMS
AND PROCEDURES FOR
EXCEPTIONAL
STUDENTS
DOCUMENTS 2000-01

Dr. Speisman reported that the Special Program and Procedures document is being amended to reflect changes in state and district procedures. The amendment to existing Amendment of Rule 6A-6.03019, FAC, special instructional programs for students who are gifted was recommended by a workshop that convened in April and represented FLAG, META, NAACP, and PALS. The rule goes into

THROUGH 2002-03—
FIRST READING

effect July, 2002.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration’s recommendation to schedule a public hearing 7:30 p.m., October 15, 2002, to consider the proposed amendments.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

RENEWAL OF GROUP
BENEFIT PROGRAM—
HEALTH, LIFE AND
CAFETERIA/125 PLANS

Mr. Dave Hotary, director, Risk Management, made the following recommendations to the Board:

1. Renewal of Health Insurance Plan with Blue Cross Blue Shield inclusive of the replacement of the Care Manager Plan with the Physician Co-Pay Plan and a rate increase of 13.8 percent.
2. Renewal of the Life Insurance Plan with American International Group (AIG) at the same/expiring rates.
3. Renewal of the Cafeteria/125 Plan administered by Fringe Benefits Management Company (FBMC)

And

Approval of SouthTrust Bank as the depository for monies remitted to FBMC for the Medical and Dependent Care Reimbursement accounts. SouthTrust Bank appears on the state of Florida’s list of approved deposits.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to approve the district’s Health Insurance Plan, Life Insurance Plan, and Cafeteria/125 Plan as presented.

Mrs. Sharpe thanked Mr. Hotary and insurance committee members for their efforts.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

REVISED JOB
DESCRIPTION—FIRST
READING

Mr. Birkett reported that this is a job description for a Computer Operations Manager that is being reclassified from an administrative position to a professional/technical position with a new title of Computer Operations Coordinator.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to approve the revised job description for advertising.

Ms. Sande Caulkins, ACEA, and employees from the Computer

Operations division expressed serious concerns related to the reclassification of the position and urged the Board to postpone voting until additional information can be presented.

To ensure fairness and due to the difficulty of the situation, it was suggested to table the motion to allow the Superintendent the opportunity to research the issue further.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to table the motion until the November 5, 2002, Board meeting.

The question was called on the motion to table.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND
GAINESVILLE POLICE
DEPARTMENT
SECURITY CHANGES
FOR FALSE ALARMS

Mr. William Bryan, district security chief, reported that when the City and County Commissions instituted a false alarm ordinance in the unincorporated areas of Alachua County and the City of Gainesville on October 1, 2000, the School Board had 58 alarms responded to by law enforcement during October 2000. With the false alarm ordinance going into effect, measures were taken by the district and schools to reduce that number. However, as of September 17, 2002, several schools/facilities owe the False Alarm Reduction Unit \$35,490.00. The Sheriff's Office, in an effort to collect these bills, has turned over the collection effort to a collection attorney.

He made the following recommendations:

- Schools pay the outstanding bills and register any unregistered alarm systems.
- Schools work with the False Alarm Reduction Unit in reducing their alarms.
- Schools pay each invoice as they receive them in order not to get behind.
- Request the City and County commissions to revisit the False Alarm Ordinance and exempt other taxing agencies.

Superintendent Chambers stated that she has been working with the Sheriff's Office to try and work out a way to have these bills forgiven and will work with staff and go to the City and County commissions to work something out.

Mrs. Carroll stated that she would like for the Board to pay the debt for the schools with the understanding that they are responsible in the future for their false alarms.

Board members expressed concern with a taxing authority charging another taxing authority and urged staff to continue their efforts to reduce false alarms. It was suggested, as a method to curtail false alarms, that a monthly report on the number of false alarms and payments be provided to Board members.

Superintendent Chambers requested that the Board authorize her to address a letter requesting the city and county attorneys waive or reduce the fee and provide information to them on efforts that have been made to reduce false alarms since the inception of the ordinance.

Mr. Jim Lang, board attorney, informed the Board that will he contact the collection attorney retained by the Sheriff's Office and report the Board's action and what efforts have been taken to reduce false alarms.

STUDENT CASE NO.
02-21-SB

Mr. John Dukes, deputy superintendent, Student Support Services, reported that the student is charged with exhibiting threatening behavior toward the bus driver while riding the school bus. The parent has not requested a hearing.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved the superintendent's recommendat to suspend the student's bus riding privileges for the remainder of the 2002-03 school year, through June 2, 2003.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

STUDENT CASE
NO. 02-22-X

Mr. Dukes reported that the student is charged with disorderly conduct and battery of another student. A hearing was held October 1, 2002.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to extend the student's suspension through October 15, 2002.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

STUDENT CASE
NO. 02-24-X

Mr. Dukes reported that the student is charged with assault of a teacher.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to extend the student's suspension through October 15, 2002.

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

ALACHUA COUNTY
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
COUNCIL
DISCUSSION ITEM—
CITIZEN REQUESTS

By consensus, the Board selected Mrs. Cawthon to serve on the Children's Services Council.

Based on recent complaints, Board members requested that Mr. Lang review and revise the Board's current policy on political activities on School Board property in order to clarify, enforce and make expectations clear to both employees and the public, and include appropriate consequences for non-compliance. It was noted that not all School Board candidates are included in this concern.

Superintendent Chambers informed the Board that schools/departments are reminded annually about the policy dealing with political activities on school property. She requested Board members provide her with information on the complaints they received.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to approve the Consent Agenda as described in items 1-13. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

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

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

There were no Board Members/Superintendent requests.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 p.m.