

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
March 18, 2003

The School Board of Alachua County, Florida, met in regular session duly called at 6 p.m. in the Boardroom, 620 East University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. Present were: Jeannine M. Cawthon, chairman; Barbara J. Sharpe, vice-chairman; Virginia S. Childs, F. Wesley Eubank and Tina Turner, members; Mary L. Chambers, superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cawthon, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Turner

Moved to approve the minutes of March 4, 2003, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of March 18, 2003, as presented.

Add to Action Item I.5., Student Case No. 03-02-X and Student Case No. 03-03-X. Pull Consent Agenda Items 9 & 10, Proposals for Start Up Funds for SIATech at Gainesville, Inc., and DeSoto High School, Inc., Charter Schools, and add to Action Items 3 and 4, respectively, for separate vote.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman recognized boy scouts from Scout Troop 164 in attendance as part of a requirement of their Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge.

Mrs. Turner, referring to the earlier Council for Exceptional Children reception for ESE teachers and paraprofessionals, noted how nice it is to hear others share what makes teachers so important to the students and expressed appreciation to these teachers and support personnel on their efforts.

Mrs. Childs expressed appreciation to the team of teachers and administrators for their support in helping to raise funds for public television.

RECOGNITION(S)

Spelling Bee Winner

Kanapaha Middle School student Rachel Wysocki was recognized and congratulated as the county spelling bee winner.

Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl State Championship

The Alachua Elementary School's National Thinking Cap Quiz Bowl team has achieved the state championship for the fourth consecutive year, outscoring all other 5th grade teams that participated in the annual competition. Scott Childress, Kayla Knight, Kasey Metzler, Collin Mixon and Paris Tressler, team members, were presented with certificates in recognition of their achievement. Teacher coach and adviser, Mrs. Shirley Tanner, was also recognized.

Principal Jim Brandenburg invited members of the Board and staff to a ceremony at the school with Mr. Donovan Brown, special assistant to the Governor, presenting special awards from the Governor's Office in recognition of the team's accomplishments.

Council for Exceptional Children

The Council for Exceptional Children presented the 2003 ESE Teachers and Paraprofessionals of the Year.

Office Depot Back to School Program Recognition

Representatives of Office Depot presented an oversized check representing over \$4000 in rebates returned to Alachua County public schools as part of the company's Back-to-School Donation campaign, which allowed customers designate 5% of their purchase to a local school.

Clariant Science Teacher of the Year

The Clariant Science Teacher of the Year, Ann Marie Heller, was presented with a plaque by representatives of Clariant Life Science Molecules. Ms. Heller will also receive a check for \$1000 from the company.

CITIZEN INPUT

A citizen referring to the Superintendent's Contract on the agenda, voiced concerns with an increase in classroom disturbances, graduates requiring remediation, and crimes with a victim and suggested the schools need a new leader--one who can see school problems; one who possesses great reorganization, problem-solving skills.

SCHEDULED AGENCIES

Alachua County Foster Grandparent Program

A representative of the Foster Grandparent Program thanked the Board for support of the program and shared the number of Foster Grandparent volunteers currently serving in the schools and the positive impact they are having on the students.

PRESENTATION(S)/
REPORT(S)

District School Assistance Plan Update

A summary of district assistance activities for Duval, Prairie View, Metcalfe, and Waldo was presented, along with a letter from Commissioner Horne regarding the state’s policy on 3rd grade promotion.

Budgeting/Financial

Staff presented statistics on the 2002-2003 School Resource Officer program in the schools. There are 23 deputies serving the schools at a cost of \$544,474.00, with 3 additional deputies funded through a grant due to expire in August.

Zoning Task Force Update

The Board-appointed Zoning Task Force held its organization meeting March 13 at 6 p.m. in the Boardroom and selected Mr. John Carnall as chairman, Mr. Ralph Hilliard as vice-chairman, and Ms. Patricia West as secretary. The task force was presented with its charge, and beginning next week, the task force will meet weekly. The task force will hold meetings throughout the community from 6 to 8 p.m. Information regarding the meetings will be posted on the web site.

BID AWARD FOR
PROJECT SBAC CC730—
ARCHER COMMUNITY
SCHOOL
RENOVATIONS FOR
FINE ARTS
CLASSROOMS

Bids for construction of this project were received March 11, 2003. All bids exceeded the established construction budget.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the administration’s recommendation to reject all bids and authorize staff to reevaluate the project and revise as required to accommodate budget parameters.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

MIDDLE SCHOOL
CONTRACT WAIVER
REQUESTS

Six Middle School Contract Waiver Requests—Scheduling

Howard Bishop, Kanapaha, Mebane, Westwood, Oak View and Lincoln Middle Schools are requesting a waiver from the contract schedule of five contact periods in a six-period day. All of these requests raise the student/teacher ratio above the schedule specified in the contract. The requirement of Amendment 9 is to lower class size by two students in the 2003-04 school year. A return to the contract schedule in these schools will lower class sizes by approximately four students per period.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration’s recommendation that the School Board approve a return to the contract schedule of five contact periods in a

six-period day in these schools, thereby lowering class sizes by approximately four students per period.

Mrs. Childs clarified that students will have fewer electives. This is the result of Amendment 9, but if the district were able financially to lower the class size and allocate on 24-1 instead of 26-1, it would not be in this situation. This will only be a stopgap for one year. Next year when everyone is teaching 5 out of 6 periods and the class size is 31, the district will still have to look at that top number and figure out how to allocate more teachers for that unit. Class size amendment is a wonderful thing, but the districts did not get the dollars to implement it.

A Lincoln Middle School teacher presented several points of view to the Board and requested consideration of Lincoln being allowed to stay on the 7-period day.

Staff noted that Lincoln can stay on the 7-period day if they teach 6 out of 7 periods as this would not raise pupil/teacher ratio, but the SAC and faculty would have to request a waiver to do this. The deadline for a waiver has past, but staff would work with ACEA as its Executive Board has to approve this, also.

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

Ft. Clarke Middle School Contract Waiver Request—Contact Minutes

Ft. Clarke Middle School is requesting a waiver from the contract requirement that a teacher’s schedule not exceed 250 contact minutes per day. Ft. Clarke’s contract time will be 265 minutes four days a week and 272 minutes one day a week. This request will increase the instructional time for students.

Motion by Mr. Eubank Seconded by Mrs. Turner

Moved the administration’s recommendation to approve Ft. Clarke Middle School’s contract waiver request for 265 contact minutes four days a week and 272 contact minutes one day a week.

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

CONTRACT FOR
FLORIDA SIATECH AT
GAINESVILLE, INC.,
CHARTER SCHOOL

A public hearing was held March 4, 2003, to consider the contract for Florida SIATech at Gainesville, Inc., Charter School.

Motion by Mr. Eubank Seconded by Mrs. Turner

Moved the administration’s recommendation to approve the contract for Florida SIATech at Gainesville, Inc., Charter School as presented.

Mr. Eubank noted that SIATech would have students up to 24 years of age, which means they will have them two years beyond when they are reimbursed, and they will have the students an additional 40 days a year.

A SIATech representative feels less than 50% of the students expected were residents of Alachua County prior to going to Job Corps.

A SIATech representative noted that the projections are based on a yearly projection. They don't anticipate the student population to grow beyond 250 students based on the demographics and the fact that they only fund students up to the age of 21.9. They anticipate enrollment to be a little higher than 140 for the first year.

Staff noted that projections predict the district will lose about 88 students, which equates to the district receiving about \$150,000 in declining enrollment next year.

An opinion is expected from the General Counsel as to whether these students will receive a diploma from the district or specifically from the charter school.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that she has concerns about this school. She knows the Job Corps Center has done an excellent job as it stands right now. It has always done an excellent job. They offer a variety of good programs. She was on the volunteer board for a while and knows they do a very good job. Her concern is that she believes this charter school is a duplication of services. When she called to find out about the reason for this charter school, she was told that because the diplomas are a different kind of diploma that does not carry the same amount of weight as others. If this is the reason, a cheaper and more inexpensive remedy would be to go through the school board, the superintendent and the Department of Education. Another concern is the bidding process. She knows that every three or four years the Job Corps Centers go to bid because it is a federal lease-funded program, and has been since day one. Another concern is the usage of federal and state funds. Another concern is that there was no clear answer on the number of students from Alachua County. In the past, unless it has changed, the majority of the students were not from Alachua County. That is still not answered tonight. She has never had a real gut feeling about a charter school as she has for this one. She has deep-seeded feelings that it is a duplication of services. If the diploma is the problem, there is another way of remedying that, and she also has a concern that a group of people from California is coming to head this charter school. These are her concerns and that is where she still stands on this issue.

Mr. Eubank stated that he shares some of those concerns and he did discuss some of those with both Job Corps and SIATech. First, on the governance, he understands there will be one board member from California and the others will be local people on the board. They also shared some documentation from the U.S. Department of Labor and the Department of Education, and he thinks the issue is they were getting the GED and the federal government would like for them to get the standard diploma. Probably, there is some duplication and had we been more proactive, he feels it would have been a very good thing for our district to apply for a charter school to do the same thing. The problem is we did not do that. At this point the issue is on the merits, on how we have to vote. In looking at ways to maximize our revenue, maybe we need to be a little more creative in the future.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that in the state of Florida the dollars follow the student.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1

Yes: Mrs. Cawthon

Mrs. Childs

Mr. Eubank

Mrs. Turner

No: Mrs. Sharpe

FLORIDA SAITECH AT
GAINESVILLE, INC.
CHARTER SCHOOL

A proposal has been prepared for submission to the Florida Department of Education for Florida SIATech at Gainesville, Inc., Charter School. A total of \$150,000 is requested for start up costs including salaries, staff development, computer hardware and instructional supplies.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Turner

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to approve the proposal for start up costs including salaries, staff development, computer hardware and instructional supplies for submission to the state Department of Education.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1

Yes: Mrs. Cawthon

Mrs. Childs

Mr. Eubank

Mrs. Turner

No: Mrs. Sharpe

CONTRACT FOR
DESOTO HIGH
SCHOOL, INC.,
CHARTER SCHOOL

A public hearing was held March 4, 2003, to consider the contract for DeSoto High School, Inc., Charter School

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the contract for DeSoto High School, Inc., Charter School as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

PROPOSAL FOR START
UP FUNDS FOR
DESOTO HIGH
SCHOOL, INC.,
CHARTER SCHOOL

A proposal has been prepared for submission to the Florida Department of Education for DeSoto High School, Inc., Charter School. A total of \$150,000 is requested for start up costs including salaries, equipment, facility leasing, staff development and instructional supplies.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to approve the proposal for start up costs including salaries, staff development, computer hardware and instructional supplies for submission to the state Department of Education.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

STUDENT CASE
NO. 03-02-X

The student is charged with battery on school personnel.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to extend the student's suspension through April 15, 2003.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

STUDENT CASE
NO. 03-03-X

The student is charged with battery on school personnel.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to extend the student's suspension through April 15, 2003

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

SCHEDULE
WORKSHOPS

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Turner

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to schedule a Budget workshop and an Accountability and Audits workshop at 9:30 a.m. and

2:00 p.m., respectively, on April 17, 2003, and a Facilities workshop be scheduled at 1:30 p.m., April 29, 2003, in preparation for the school plant survey.

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT

Mr. Lang reported that a proposed Amended Contract of Employment between the School Board and Superintendent has been prepared. This amended contract was discussed at an informal meeting of the Board and he has made three changes. In item two on the first page it now reads that the annualized salary of \$131,040 to be paid to the superintendent is to be paid periodically on the same schedule as all other 12-month employees commencing with the pay period in April, 2003. Another change was the addition of the second paragraph in item 4, which deals with severance pay. The third change was the addition of language to the end of item 6, which reads "...and within the budget as adopted by the Board."

Motion by Mr. Eubank Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to accept the Amended Contract of Employment for the Superintendent which will run through September 30, 2004.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved to approve the consent agenda as described in items 1-13, with items 9 and 10 being pulled for separate vote under items 3 and 4, respectively. . (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

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

CITIZEN INPUT (cont'd)

There was no additional citizen input.

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mr. Eubank noted there was a survey that came out from OPPAGA for the best financial management practices that went to teachers. He still feels a need to have a similar climate survey for employees by an outside agency.

Mrs. Childs requested the following:

- That it be reiterated to all employees that the Board was elected to represent all citizens in the county and all employees should feel comfortable to speak with Board members, and they should not be prohibited from speaking to Board members.

- If we are not able to get the gas we need for our diesel buses, as a result of a war with Iraq, we need a plan for notifying the public as to why buses may not be running the routes.
- A report, once school is out, of the types of diplomas awarded this school year--certificate of attendance, special diplomas, standard diplomas, college ready diplomas, and university ready diplomas. She would like this on a longevity study to look back over the past five to ten years. Also, add the GED to this report.
- A report on the amount of money setting in accounts that are not internal accounts at the school sites.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that it is important to note that some students start out and finish school not wanting to go to college. She feels it is important to figure out ways to enhance the vocational programs, and let the community know what programs, including magnet programs, the district is offering students.

Mr. Eubank stated that the district has been operating for sometime without a staff attorney. The attorney level has been placed lower than it should be and the degree supplement of \$2500, compared to the supplement of some teachers, which would triple that, should be reviewed. He requested the superintendent come back with recommendations on repositioning the attorney's position.

Superintendent Chambers noted that she has interviewed a possible candidate who is potentially interested in the position as staff attorney. She would like to come to the Board with a recommendation at the next school board meeting, included in that a change in the pay grade to the level discussed previously.

Chairman Cawthon reminded the Board there is a joint meeting with the County Commission 9-11 a.m., Thursday, March 20, 2003, in the Alachua County Administration Building, Jack Durance Auditorium, Room 209.

There will be an Executive Session at 11:30 a.m. at Kirby-Smith Center.

Superintendent Chambers acknowledged that tonight is Dr. Bill Cliett's last School Board meeting as he will be retiring in a couple of weeks. She and the Board thanked him for everything he has done for kids and the school system.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.