

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
August 19, 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 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. Turner

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the minutes of August 5, 2003, and Special Board Meeting July 31, 2003, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Ms. Turner

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of August 19, 2003, as presented.

Delete Action Item H. 6., Student Cases.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Sharpe volunteered at Hidden Oak Elementary on opening day and commended teachers, staff and parents for an excellent opening. She announced that she received a letter from Nova Southeastern University informing the Board of the "*Education Express III*," a bus tour scheduled September 15-17, 2003. The theme is "*The Journey to Excellence*," which recognizes schools that have worked hard to improve student achievement for all their students. Mebane Middle and Buchholz High schools have been chosen to participate.

Mrs. Childs reminded the Board that the Junior Achievement Bowl-a-thon will be held August 23, 2003.

Superintendent Chambers thanked everyone involved with helping to make the opening day of school a success. She also announced that the district has been notified of two large reading grant awards pending Board approval.

CITIZEN INPUT

Several citizens addressed the Board with the following suggestions:

- Page 5, Item 3., Zoning Exceptions, first sentence, grammatical correction to read: “Under Enrolled Schools. The student’s parent, legal guardian, other person with primary legal custody, or an adult student, may request attendance at a school that has a projected enrollment below projected capacity. A transfer may be granted if the requested school has sufficient capacity.”
- Page 5, Item 5., Zoning Exceptions, replace with the following new language: “Students Entering Senior Year. If a change in primary legal residence occurs after the beginning of a student’s junior year, application may be made for a zoning exception to permit the student who completes the junior year at a particular school to complete the senior year at that school.”

Mrs. Sharpe made the following comments for the record:

Madam Chair, please indulge me for a few seconds, or more. Madam Superintendent, I would like my comments to be recorded in the minutes verbatim, and also be placed in the archives of the School District of Alachua County, so as to be remembered.

I believe that the proposed policy that we are about to vote on has the serious potential to lead to an even more inequitable distribution of low socio-economic status students than we presently have. Helping all students to achieve is inherently bound to this factor. Our rezoning policy should be based on a solution to our present socio-economic inequalities to solve classroom capacity problems.

Research has consistently shown that “taken together, being poor and attending schools with classmates who are poor, constitutes a clear “double handicap.” (Sociologist James Coleman, University of Chicago).

Economically separate schools are laden with distinct inequalities. As analyst David Rusk says, and I agree that: “All children in America should have a right to attend a solidly middle-class public common school.” Not a right to middle class parents, or a right to live in a middle-class neighborhood, or a right to a middle-class income lifestyle, but every child in these United States, Alachua County School District included, whether rich or poor, white or black, Native American, Latino or Asian, should have access to the good education that is best guaranteed, by the presence of at least an equal amount of a middle class student-body.

We as a school district, as a School Board, should not allow Alachua County’s District Schools to remain and become even more segregated by economic status.

Neighborhood assignment without consideration of the diversity of socio-economic status if allowed, can be a source of great unfairness to all poor people in general and all poor students in particular.

In Coleman's report, a report on "Equality of educational opportunity," he stated that the educational resources provided by a child's fellow students, are more important to his/her achievement than are the resources provided by the School Board. Dozens of studies before and after reached similar conclusions.

"Economic integration represents the new frontier of school desegregation." If we truly want to help our low-income students to achieve, then, don't isolate them. We need diversity in our schools. The isolation of students whether by race or socio-economics is not conducive to student achievement for any student. I believe that all students benefit from a healthy mix. District lines need to be drawn to ensure that all schools will have a mix of rich as well as economically challenged, or poor students.

Most of us know for sure that neighborhood schools are not the answer. We also know that our maps show that neighborhood schools mean segregated schools. Economically or otherwise. The correction of our defacto segregated school system should begin with a policy that addresses this situation fairly and squarely, that is, if we are as serious about equality in this district as we say we are. Our elementary schools need us to do what is right, as opposed to doing what is popular.

It concerns me very much when our policy avoids the word ensure socio-economic diversity. It does have a line paren(e) socio-economic diversity in school enrollments, but when you look at pg (3) #3, you wonder if it actually means much, I think not.

If we're talking dollars and cents in all of this, no budget should ever be balanced on the backs of our students.

It is my responsibility as a board member to address the zoning policy in a fair and equitable manner, because it is right to do so. While I do not have a personal horse in this race, I believe that I have upward toward 29,000 little ponies to take care of.

Finally, I believe that if we do not learn from history, it is doomed to repeat itself.

I cannot support the proposed zoning policy as it is presented here

tonight. I have to be able to sleep at night.

Thank you.

Mr. Eubank expressed support for magnet programs at elementary schools, which would attract higher socioeconomic students to the east, and ease overcrowding of westside schools.

Superintendent Chambers stated that the district and Board would like to replicate achievements and enhance many areas and are committed to creating as much diversity as possible on a voluntary basis.

Mrs. Childs stated that she agrees with Mrs. Sharpe's philosophy, but pointed out Duval's achievement, which was due to the teachers and staff working hard to motivate those students, and it paid off.

Mrs. Sandy Hollinger, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, informed the Board that a survey will be sent to school advisory councils and PTA's in September to determine parental preferences for magnet programs at the elementary level. She assured the Board that magnet programs have been very successful and highly effective, and believes that with good planning and feedback from parents, the programs will be a success.

Motion by Mrs. Childs

Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved to amend the motion to include the recommended changes as presented.

The question was called on the amendment.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1

Yes: Mrs. Cawthon

Mrs. Childs

Mr. Eubank

Mrs. Turner

No: Mrs. Sharpe

The question was called on the original motion as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1

Yes: Mrs. Cawthon

Mrs. Childs

Mr. Eubank

Mrs. Turner

No: Mrs. Sharpe

AMENDMENTS TO THE A public hearing was held August 5, 2003, to consider amendments to

2003-2004 PUPIL
PROGRESSION PLAN—
SECOND READING

the 2003-2004 Pupil Progression Plan.

Motion by Mrs. Turner

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration’s recommendation to adopt the 2003-2004 Pupil Progression Plan as amended.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

FINAL BUDGET
AMENDMENTS 2002-
2003

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Turner

Moved to approve Budget Amendments Nos. 20, 21, and 22 as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF
RESOLUTION NO. 03-03
GENERAL OBLIGATION
REFUNDING BONDS
SERIES 2003

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the administration’s recommendation to adopt Resolution No. 03-03 entitled, “A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE OF NOT EXCEEDING \$40,000,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION REFUNDING BONDS, SERIES 2003, OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA, FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING THE COST OF REFUNDING CERTAIN OUTSTANDING GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE DISTRICT; CONTAINING OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO SUCH REFUNDING BONDS, AUTHORIZING A NEGOTIATED SALE OF SUCH REFUNDING BONDS, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

PROPOSED NEW/
REVISED JOB
DESCRIPTIONS—FIRST
READING

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved to schedule a public hearing for 6:30 p.m., September 2, 2003, to consider the proposed new job descriptions for the positions of Payroll Manager, Construction Inspector for Safety (to new title of SREF Inspector), and the System Support Specialist, Information Resources.

Mr. Robinson assured the Board that these positions were included on the organizational chart.

Mr. Eubank made the following suggestions:

- The SREF Inspector is a new title for an old position, which includes some additional requirements such as fire/safety

inspector certification. His understanding is that this position has been empty for a significant period of time due to the lack of applicants, which leads him to believe that this position is probably not competitive in the Gainesville market and he recommends a change in pay grade.

- The Safety Coordinator and SREF Inspector position, will allow for cross training due to similarities in duties and responsibilities.
- Believes the responsibilities of the Safety Coordinator position in relation to the responsibilities of the new Payroll Manager, are equal if not greater and requested staff review the Safety Coordinator position and move it from an Administrative position to a Professional/Technical position.
- Require Safety Coordinator position to be certified as a safety professional.
- Human Resources department develop a definition of a Bachelor's Degree, due to the variety of internet offerings.

Dr. Gunnar Paulson, ACEA president, expressed concern with the Safety Coordinator and urged the Board to make this position Professional/Technical rather than administrative.

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 1-16, as presented. (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

Mrs. Childs made the following requests:

- A discussion item to review the district's current purchasing policy, which sets the dollar limit on purchases. Currently up to \$25,000 is permitted without Board approval, which may need to be lowered.

Mr. Eubank requested that when departments/schools closeout purchase orders, rather than rolling those funds over, move any unspent funds to the general fund for the Board to decide how to allocate.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.