

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 3, 2004

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: Barbara Sharpe, chairman; Tina Turner Pinkoson, vice-chairman; Jeannine Cawthon, Ginger Childs, and Wes Eubank, members; Mary L. Chambers, superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board.

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

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved to approve the minutes of January 20, 2004, 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 January 14, 2003, as presented.

Delete Action Item I.8., Student Case No. 04-03-X; and delete from Attachment B, Page 3, the fourth name from the bottom.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Cawthon announced that Duval Elementary School received the 2004 Distinguished Title 1 Schools Award. Only two schools in the state of Florida received this award for closing the achievement gap between student groups.

Mrs. Pinkoson acknowledged the recent report on the AP monies.

Superintendent Chambers announced that February 6, 2004, has been proclaimed as School Crossing Guard Appreciation Day. She urged the community to express their appreciation and support for crossing guards.

Chairman Sharpe reported that on Monday, January 26, 2004, she spent the day at Prairie View Elementary School with Representative Ed Jennings for "Take Your Legislator to School Day," and Board member Wes Eubank visited Mebane Middle School with Representative Larry Cretul. The statewide event was coordinated by

the Florida School Boards Association to give lawmakers a deeper understanding of the value of public education.

RECOGNITION(S)

Black History Month

Superintendent Chambers recognized former Deputy Superintendent John Dukes, Jr., for his contribution of 50 years of dedicated service and commitment to the students of the Alachua County school system.

CITIZEN INPUT

The following requests/concerns/information were presented to the Board for consideration:

- Several Prairie View Elementary School parents and faculty members urged the Board to keep Prairie View open.

Mr. Eubank urged the public to stay to hear the update on Prairie View Elementary School at the end of the agenda.

(Citizen input continued at the end of the meeting.)

SCHEDULED AGENCIES

ACEA

Dr. Gunnar Paulson, president, Alachua County Education Association (ACEA), expressed support of the Prairie View faculty. He also noted the predicted low enrollment at Metcalfe Elementary School, due to rezoning, and urged the Board to meet with the faculty and staff to address their concerns.

Mr. Jim Robinson, staff attorney, assured the Board that staff is dedicated to this task and will meet with both faculties next week to discuss and address concerns related to reappointments, timelines and impact bargaining.

Chairman Sharpe noted that it is very important and takes everyone working together for the common good and benefit of all employees so that the district can be the best that it possibly can be.

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

PUBLIC HEARING--
POLICY 5.11, SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE
ZONES/AREAS/CHOICE

Mr. Robinson reported that the following amendments to School Board Policy 5.11 are proposed to address new development in the west and the continuing problem of school overcrowding.

The first amendment is the addition of the following sentence in paragraph (1) after the statements concerning the definition of crowded schools and the publication of school capacity data:

“The Superintendent shall recommend to the Board the adoption of enrollment caps for all schools in the District, with priority given to schools determined to be crowded.”

This amendment, combined with the second amendment, provides for the establishment of enrollment caps for schools and the assignment or reassignment of students out of their assigned zone to address overcrowding.

The second amendment complements the first amendment by modifying subparagraph (2)(f) as follows:

(f) ~~The Board reserves the right to~~ may assign or reassign students to alternative schools- or programs located in or out of their assigned zones to direct transfer of a student for the health, safety, or welfare of the students, other students, or staff; to relieve crowded schools or avoid school crowding; or for other purposes the Board may determine necessary or appropriate under the circumstances to special programs designed to assist the students.

Mrs. Childs requested that a notice be posted on the district’s website informing new residents to contact the Zoning Office for attendance zone information.

Several Board members suggested placing “Closed” signs on school campuses that are over capacity.

The following concerns/requests were presented during the Public Hearing:

- The Board was urged to place language in the policy that clarifies and limits the Board’s broad authority to reassign students based on capacity.
- A Prairie View faculty member welcomed head start classes as long as they do not interfere with a strong elementary education, and urged the Board to allow Prairie View Elementary School to remain as it is for one year to allow for the development of strong programs that would be well received.
- The Board was urged to ensure and provide the necessary resources for eastside schools.
- A Metcalfe faculty member expressed concern with the low enrollment due to rezoning.

Mr. Eubank stated for the record that there was never any plan to close

Prairie View, and the Board is 100% behind sending necessary resources where they are needed.

Mrs. Childs stated that the Board deeply cares about Prairie View and also noted that the Board never had any plan of closing Prairie View. The Board voted to change the use of the facility because it was underutilized and wanted to utilize it in a strong educational manner.

Mrs. Sharpe agreed that the Board is looking for what is best for the children, but due to no students being zoned to Prairie View, the community is under the impression that it will close.

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

PRESENTATION(S)/
REPORT

Budgeting/Financial Update

A Budgeting/Financial Update was presented on the 2004-2005 Governor's Proposed Budget of \$26.4 billion, which represents a \$1.26 billion or 5.0% increase.

The Board was also provided with a copy of an Ethnic/Economic Breakdown by school for 2003-04 and estimated 2004-05 school year.

Mr. Eubank pointed out that the ethnic/economic breakdown information, provided to the Board this morning, does not indicate a significant increase in numbers.

Mrs. Childs felt the Anchor Center should be pulled out from the list and dealt with in a separate way. Including the Center would have a false affect on the overall numbers because those students have very difficult economic situations.

Chairman Sharpe expressed concern that the Board should have been made aware of the ethnic/economic breakdown information prior to taking on the rezoning plan, and there is no excuse for not having this information. She noted that she has continually been asking for information and it should have been provided earlier.

Staff also updated the Board on the Oasis Enrichment Academy Charter School, which continues to have financial difficulties.

The principal of Oasis Enrichment Academy informed the Board that additional grant funding from various sources is expected in February, and an increase in enrollment is also expected. Oasis staff will be meeting with district officials this week to review concerns.

Chairman Sharpe thanked staff and requested that the Board continue to be provided with updates on a regular basis.

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

Mr. Keith Birkett, deputy superintendent, reported that negotiations with Career Service Personnel have concluded for 2003-2004 school year, with tentative agreement reached on all outstanding items. This year's negotiations were limited to re-openers and those items related to salary. The amendments to the 2001-2004 contract reflect changes in the grievance, management, special area, and leave sections of the contract. Also included are amendments to the salary schedule footnotes, which are part of the salary negotiations and relate to computer operators, supplements and stipend amounts. In relation to salary, the resulted agreement provides for an overall increase to salary and benefits of approximately \$738,000. Under specific agreement, career service personnel with one to 23 years of continuous service will be placed on the salary schedule under the same formula as those employees with 24 years or more of continuous service were placed during the 2002-03 school year. In addition to the completion of the experience credit award, the schedule will be increased by one percent.

Motion by Mrs. Childs

Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve ratification of amendment to the 2001-2004 Collective Bargaining Agreement for Career Service Personnel.

Dr. Paulson reported that the ratification vote for Career Service was 984-Yes, and 11-No. He also noted that a recommended salary schedule for teachers has been handed in and major items have already been agreed upon.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF 2003-
2004 SALARY
SCHEDULES

Mr. Robinson provided the Board with a summary of the major salary schedule changes for Career Service, Professional/Technical, Administrative and Other Compensation. The Teacher salary schedule is still pending completion of negotiations.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt the Career Service (bargaining unit members), Professional/Technical (non-bargaining unit members), Administrative, and Other Compensation Salary Schedules for 2003-2004 as presented.

Mrs. Pinkoson referred to page 32, Substitute Teachers, and pointed

out that they have not had a pay increase since 1998 and requested staff look into this matter at some point in time.

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

NEW JOB DESCRIPTION FOR ASSISTANT TO SUPERINTENDENT FOR COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL RELATIONS—FIRST READING

Mr. Robinson stated this person will serve as the Superintendent’s liaison with schools and the community, assist the Superintendent with the development and improvement of community and school relations, assist in interaction with individuals and groups to facilitate problem-solving and dispute resolution, and serve as a member of the Superintendent’s senior leadership team. This position is a pay grade 5, under the administrative salary schedule.

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved the administration’s recommendation to schedule a public hearing at 6:30 p.m., February 17, 2004, to consider the new job description for Assistant to Superintendent for Community and School Relations.

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

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT/TRIM CALENDAR

Motion by Mr. Eubank Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved the administration’s recommendation to approve the 2004-2005 Tentative TRIM Calendar, establishing July 22, 2004, 3 p.m., as a Special Board meeting for approval of the Tentative Budget for Advertising; August 3, 2004, 6:30 p.m., for the public hearing and adoption of the Tentative Budget and Millage; and September 7, 2004, 6:30 p.m., for the public hearing and adoption of the Final Budget and Millage.

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

AMENDMENT TO POLICY 5.11, STUDENT ATTENDANCE ZONES/AREAS/CHOICE—SECOND READING

A public hearing was held January 20, 2004, to consider an amendment to Policy 5.11 that would provide that the Board may adopt other exceptions (in addition to the exception in favor of students entering the final grade) in connection with its adoption of attendance zone changes.

Motion by Mr. Eubank Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the administration’s recommendation to adopt the amendment to Policy 5.11, Student Attendance Zones/Areas/Choice, as presented.

Mr. Eubank noted that during the rezoning process high school

principals were contacted regarding the possibility of the current ninth graders remaining, and they indicated they would accept them.

Mr. Robinson stated that the district will be looking at the numbers as they come in and are prepared to hold and conduct a weighted lottery, which would be done with the help of an independent party and would be scientifically sound, survive scrutiny and would take all those that have applied within that class and apply the elements from the choice criteria. Staff intends and desires that these students stay without resorting to the random selection process.

Mrs. Childs stated that she philosophically agrees with this process, but expressed concern with the “grandfathering” option vs. school overcrowding. She pointed out that the new zoning plan would not be in place for at least three years by allowing the grandfathering option and inquired how this dilemma would be solved.

Mr. Robinson reported that the magnet program deadline is February 13 and staff will assess these applications, consult with principals and meet with the Superintendent to make an informed decision and determine if schools can handle these students.

Mrs. Pinkoson reminded parents that the deadline to submit applications for magnet programs is February 13.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1
Yes: Mrs. Cawthon
Mrs. Childs
Mr. Eubank
Mrs. Pinkoson
No: Mrs. Sharpe

AMENDMENTS TO
SPECIAL PROGRAMS
AND PROCEDURES FOR
EXCEPTIONAL
STUDENTS DOCUMENT
FOR 2003-2004—
SECOND READING

A public hearing was held January 20, 2004, to consider amendments that reflect required changes in state and district procedures and to extend the document for 2003-2004.

Motion by Mrs. Eubank Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the administration’s recommendation to approve the amendments to the Special Programs and Procedures for Exceptional Students Document for 2003-2004.

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

SCHEDULE WORKSHOP
ON BEST PROGRAM

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the administration’s recommendation to schedule a workshop on the BEST program February 17, 2004, 4-5 p.m.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved to approve the consent agenda as described in items 1-7, with the deletion of the fourth name from the bottom on Attachment B, Page 3. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

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

DISCUSSION ITEM—
PRAIRIE VIEW
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
UPDATE

Mrs. Sandy Hollinger, deputy superintendent, provided the Board with information related to Prairie View Elementary School:

- Prairie View Elementary School will become a magnet school called Prairie View Academy.
- The magnet school will be open for enrollment to all K-5 students in the Gainesville area. **All current Prairie View students may attend.**
- Transportation will be provided.
- The school will have three foundations: (1) scholarship (2) leadership and (3) community service.
- All students who attend Prairie View Academy will be required to wear uniforms and follow the student dress code.
- All faculty and staff will wear uniforms to “model” the community focus of the school.
- There will be a parent-to-school contract and a school-to-parent contract entitled *Commitment to Excellence*. The contract will focus on the partnership between home and school to ensure the success of each student.
- Applications will be ready the end of February.
- Deadline for applications will be March 31. If the school’s enrollment is not filled, applications will still be accepted.
- Parent and community communication will be well publicized with parent meetings and individual parent conferences.

Mr. Eubank thanked staff for their efforts and felt that this is a positive change that will enhance the quality of education for all students at Prairie View.

Mrs. Childs also thanked staff and expressed support for school uniforms and noted that after evaluation, consideration should also be given to transferring this practice to other schools.

Mrs. Pinkoson stated that the Board continues to work to build community trust. She is aware that change is difficult, but as the district continues to go through this process, the change will be embraced and it will be the best it can possibly be. She also pointed out that the Board will ensure that Metcalfe is utilized to its greatest potential.

Mr. Eubank offered a challenge to the community and the Board—assist with scholarships. He intends to provide a scholarship and will seek community assistance to provide a scholarship for one classroom.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that this proposal is a good addition, but she still wants the students to stay at Prairie View because there is space to have both programs. She noted that this item would need to be placed on the agenda to allow current Prairie View students to continue to attend Prairie View. She is concerned that some students will be very confused if these students do not have the help that they need to stay where they are and if that is an understanding rather than an assumption.

Mr. Robinson explained that current Prairie View students would have a preference to stay in the magnet program at Prairie View. He assured Mrs. Sharpe that every effort will be made to inform current Prairie View parents and students of their options.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that she would be happy to provide assistance to students in filling out their intent forms.

CITIZEN INPUT (cont'd)

- Prairie View parents and staff expressed support for the proposed magnet program.
- The Board was urged to ensure that the Prairie View Magnet program is what the community wants.
- The Board was urged to have full discussion regarding the Superintendent selection prior to making a motion.
- Support was expressed for keeping Prairie View open on behalf of Representative Ed Jennings.
- Supportive of school uniforms.
- Suggested the development of a Sports Magnet Program.
- The Board and district were urged to schedule a meeting with Prairie View parents and faculty to discuss specifics of the proposed Prairie View Academy.
- Supportive of improving east side schools.
- Suggested after school program scholarships.
- Metcalfe staff and parents requested that a representative from the Board visit Metcalfe and discuss concerns.
- A Prairie View staff member requested the formation of a task

force composed of community, parents, staff and a limited number of administration and School Board members to help implement this new magnet program.

- Concerned that no students are zoned to Prairie View.
- Concerned with a large head start program at Prairie View.
- The Ministerial Alliance expressed their support of the proposed magnet program at Prairie View and offered their assistance and resources to provide updates and education.
- The Board was urged to provide equality for all students in Alachua County and improve dialogue with parents and the public.
- Concern was expressed that many Prairie View parents do not have phones in order for information to be provided.
- Due to major concerns, the Board was urged to delay the zoning plan in order to allow for more careful planning prior to implementation. Additional recommendations will be presented at the Planned Citizens meeting in March.
- Direct communication with the public was suggested.

Superintendent Chambers assured the public the Board never voted to close Prairie View. Discussions have always focused on different options and what was best for the school and community. Time was needed to survey parents and solicit input. The intent has always been to make Prairie View a more viable school. She felt it was unfortunate that misinformation went out to the public and encouraged Prairie View staff and parents to be involved and continue to offer their assistance.

Dr. Chambers assured the Metcalfe faculty that district staff will visit to address their concerns.

Chairman Sharpe expressed her belief that school uniforms are a great benefit to students.

The public was informed that the choice deadline of February 13, 2004, does not apply to Prairie View students. All current Prairie View students are eligible to continue to attend Prairie View if they so choose. If parents desire to apply for another program at another school, the February 13, 2004, deadline would apply.

Mr. Robinson informed the public that all Prairie View students have been rezoned; what is being proposed is a program of instruction, if implemented, which would permit those students to remain at Prairie View under a preference that would be given to them as existing students, with details to follow.

Chairman Sharpe suggested an amendment to rezone current Prairie

View students to remain at Prairie View, and make the process as simple as possible.

Superintendent Chambers stated that she will provide clarifying statements at the next board meeting so that Prairie View parents and students will understand the new changes.

Chairman Sharpe stated that there has been a lot of turmoil because of the Prairie View situation. She believes that in the future if something of this magnitude should come up again, the public should be made aware so that they will have an opportunity for input before it gets so far along. As a School Board member she was not aware until the meeting at Kanapaha, which was the second of three public hearings. A process must be established to include everyone before these decisions are made. Need to ensure that everyone is involved because if not, it causes too much unrest, and preventative measures should be taken.

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mr. Eubank requested Superintendent Chambers allocate \$8,000 to \$10,000 to install software that would prevent obscene email from invading the system.

Chairman Sharpe reminded the Board of the Informal Board meeting on Thursday, February 5, 2004, 9:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.