

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
JULY 20, 2004

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: Barbara J. Sharpe, chairman; Tina Turner Pinkoson, vice-chairman; Jeannine M. Cawthon and F. Wesley Eubank, members; W. Daniel Boyd, Jr., superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board. Virginia S. Childs, member, was absent due to airline travel delays.

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

APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson                      Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved to approve the minutes of June 15, 2004, as presented.

The question was called.                      Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson                      Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of July 20, 2004, as presented.

The question was called.                      Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

BOARD MEMBER/  
SUPERINTENDENT  
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Sharpe welcomed Dr. Boyd back to the school district as superintendent of schools.

Dr. Boyd thanked the Board for its confidence and noted that it is truly a dream come true to return to the Alachua County school district, his home county since 1959, to continue his service to the public school system. As superintendent of schools, he pledged to the Board his constant effort to do the best he can to enable Alachua County to be the best in public education that it can possible be. He thanked the staff members for their diligent efforts, professionalism and dedication, and looks forward to working with everyone.

Mrs. Pinkoson thanked staff for the report on exit interviews. Looking at the data, about 27% of the teachers left because of jobs elsewhere. She again wanted to let teachers and personnel know that they are a priority to the Board, and the Board is aware of these numbers. This Board will do whatever it can to make sure salaries in Alachua County are competitive with other counties.

Mrs. Sharpe noted that Mrs. Childs is on her way after being stranded

in Boston and will, hopefully, arrive soon.

CITIZEN INPUT

The following requests/suggestions/concerns were presented to the Board:

- A substitute teacher requested the opportunity to interview for a fair chance of a teaching assignment in her field.
- Concern was expressed regarding the required instruction law (infusion of 18 specific points in the primary and secondary curricula for the state). Feels this law has been complied with by only five of 67 counties, and that children of all cultures need to know all the cultural history. Also, feels this material has been blocked from being enacted.

Chairman Sharpe requested that the Superintendent meet with staff for an update on the history of this concern.

- It was pointed out that middle-sized counties have no lobbyists and how important it is to have someone on staff to attend legislative sessions.

PRESENTATION(S)/  
REPORT(S)

**Budgeting/Financial Update**

Mr. Keith Birkett, deputy superintendent, presented a brief overview of the budget workshop held 7/15/04 that included the 2004-2005 budget challenges; annual health insurance premiums; estimated additional compensation; and millages and the impact on the taxpayer.

**Oasis Charter School Update**

It was noted that at the last Board meeting the report reflected a general fund balance of a negative \$19,206. The current unaudited financial statement shows a tentative fund balance of \$9,252 in the operating fund. May and June expenditures were less as school ended early. There is a slight negative of \$3,907 in the special revenue fund, which will go away when they accrue the revenue that will be due them in their federal program. Oasis is showing a fund balance of \$12,098 in capital outlay; overall they are showing about \$17, 443, and adding the \$4,000 that will be made up in special revenue will bring the fund balance to about \$21,000. Last year they began the year with a fund balance of \$53,000 and ended the year, anticipated at \$9,200. This next year they will not receive any startup funds. In July and August their financial status will increase because there will not be any distribution of funds. A proposed budget was presented by Oasis.

The Oasis principal informed the Board that recruitment started July 1 and 60 students are enrolled. They are confident they will exceed this number students. They will meet with School Board staff on a regular

basis to discuss expenditures and profit for the 2004-05 school year.

Mrs. Pinkoson looking at part 2 of the plan, questioned 3 teachers for 60 students and was informed that the principal will also help teach.

Chairman Sharpe noted that the Board is glad to see the school moving in a positive direction but would like to continue the updates at each Board meeting. The district will continue to provide technical assistance.

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

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PUBLIC HEARING--  
CODE OF STUDENT  
CONDUCT

Mrs. Kathy Black, director, Student Services, presented proposed changes to the Code of Student Conduct--to add additional language which will clarify the district's expectation related to dress code; addition of language that will notify parents and students of administrative option to exclude students from extracurricular activities; and a recommendation to return to the language of the 2002-03 with modifications for clarity as it relates to cell phones.

The Board was presented the following information: Estimated hours and personnel cost for additional phone coverage at the schools for students to have use of a phone to call out and parents to call in; a copy of a draft rule from Senate Bill 184 for student use of cellular phones; school based information by level on cell phones; and e-mail from students and parents.

Mrs. Cawthon pointed out that the total cost to man the schools at the middle and high schools would be \$134,000.

Mrs. Black noted that the Discipline Committee has 24 members that represent the community--administrators, teachers, counselors, and a range of professionals, including law enforcement. Each year they review district data and information that comes from the school base related to cell phone and any other topic to modify and make changes to the Code to benefit students and parents.

There were four areas of concern found at each school level--classroom disruption; lost or stolen phones and the time spent in locating them; visibility (which 100% of the schools reported cell phones visible and in use during school hours); and cell phone misuse.

Mr. Eubank noted that legally the student can have a cell phone, but the problem is the disruption caused by cell phones. There is a need to teach students responsibility and accountability. He would propose

putting some teeth in the current student Code of Student Conduct. Make the consequences along the lines of if you disrupt the class, you lose the use of your cell phone for a period of time, maybe six weeks for the first time; the second time, the student loses the phone for the rest of the school year. Make the consequences severe for violating the rule. If students use an electronic device to cheat, he would suggest making this a level IV offense. This Code addresses wireless communication devices. He has heard of disruption with MP3 players and game boys, and maybe this should be broadened to electronic devices. It is the disruption we are trying to eliminate, not necessarily having a cell phone. Feels there are problems with allowing cell phones only in the car.

Mrs. Cawthon feels making the consequences more severe so that it will be less desirable to abuse the use of the cell phone is the way to go. Feels parents should talk with their students and take responsibility for them and explain that it does not help them educationally.

Mrs. Pinkoson feels it is also important that we are consistent from school to school in enforcing the Code, because just as important as these cell phones is the dress of the students. The students have to take responsibility for themselves, and they need to understand extracurricular activities are a privilege and can be taken away. We have to be firm and enforce the Code.

Mr. Eubank noted there are also requirements in legislation having to do with notice to students, etc., and we should be consistent with F.S. 1006.07(e).

The staff attorney responded to Chairman Sharpe that the statute allows the student at any level in the system the right to possess a phone and at the same time gives the school board the duty to regulate it. There is very little legislative guidance to help the board make decisions about how to proceed. Feels the Board can go a long way to reasonably regulate and severely sanction misuse of phones by students while on campus or at school activities.

The staff attorney also replied to Mrs. Sharpe that communication, staff training, uniformity, consistency and enforcement throughout the district would allow school staff to carry out the monitoring of cell phones without additional personnel; and compliance with policy would assure accountability.

A citizen suggested making restrictions tough enough so that teachers will have the best opportunities to teach and the students the best opportunities to learn.

Mr. Eubank agreed totally with comments on the dress code.

A parent commented that the current policy has worked generally well for the students. We owe it to our students to teach them how to use technology responsibly. The safety of our students has become much more important to parents—there are not as many payphones around today. Let our students use their phones and use them responsibly.

A parent disagrees with the proposed revisions; believes parents and students have a right to contact one another before and after school; an issue of access to parents or authorities in emergency situations; and safety reasons.

Deputy Superintendent Sandy Hollinger read the following into the record on behalf of Board Member Ginger Childs.

*Should the parent responsibility handbook from transportation be included in the Code of Student Conduct as an addendum?*

Mrs. Pinkoson wants the students to hear and hear that cell phones will not be present from the minute they walk into that door or get on that school bus; you don't see that cell phone, it is off, and once it is seen, it is gone.

Mrs. Cawthon reiterated the need to stress to parents to take the responsibility of teaching and encouraging their students to do the right thing.

Mr. Eubank thinks if the Board, Superintendent and Deputy Superintendents let the administrators and teachers know we are going to enforce the rules and that we are behind them, they will appreciate it and will know the rules have teeth and will enforce them.

Chairman Sharpe requested that the information presented and proposed be pulled together for Board review prior to the meeting on the third.

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

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PRESENTATION(S)/  
REPORTS (S) (cont'd)

**Update on Student Achievement Data**

Dr. Mel Lucas, director, Testing, provided a brief overview of basic concepts about adequate yearly progress (AYP) and how Alachua County students are doing districtwide with respect to federal goals. The NCLB is a federal law that allows money to flow from

Washington to all the schools in the nation, and in the NCLB law is a component called AYP, which is the accountability component and where our test scores are used to see if our district and our schools meet the federal goals for achievement.

Making AYP is based on the percentage of students in each of 8 sub-groups scoring Level 3 or higher on the FCAT Reading and Mathematics. The math and reading goals get higher every couple of years. Only one (Leon) of 67 counties made AYP in 2004.

Dr. Lucas reviewed Alachua County's sub-group performance projected into the future compared to increasing AYP goals.

- White and Asian students, at current levels of performance will meet AYP goal into 2010;
- Hispanic students meet goal into 2007;
- African American students, as a group, are not meeting the current goal, nor are our students with disabilities;
- Economically disadvantaged and limited English proficiency students will not meet the goal in 2005 if improvements in performance are not made;
- Our students' performance in Math is similar to the Reading performance.

Chairman Sharpe noted that this is a huge achievement gap. As president of the Florida School Boards Association, the one thing she wanted was for all 67 counties to try to come up with a way to bridge this gap. She knows that it stems from day one--when students come to school, some of them don't even know their names or their parent's name; they are coming to school so unready; they are so far behind when they get here it is so hard to catch up; therefore, it is incumbent upon us to figure out ways to bring these children up. Leon County is very similar to ours. Let's find out what they are doing and apply it to us.

Dr. Lucas noted that as daunting as these escalating goals appear, it is possible for our district to make AYP. Through a provision in NCLB called "Safe Harbor," a 10% reduction in number of non-proficient students in any sub-group not meeting the goal, will satisfy the AYP requirement. He feels this goal is very, very challenging but one we can believe in and work toward.

Mrs. Sharpe believes we must match teachers with students that are struggling. Learning styles need to be matched with these students.

Mrs. Pinkoson is bothered that the individual child gets lost in this formula. Come up with strategies and plans to make sure that we do

decrease that percentage by 10% every year. We have to make a difference in the 0-3 year level and bring them in at a higher level so that optimal learning can take place. It is discouraging for teachers and students and the schools that do not make adequate progress.

Dr. Gunnar Paulson, president, ACEA, informed the Board that New Mexico instituted Kindergarten Plus a couple of years ago. They have had amazing results, and a Kindergarten Plus bill came before the senate last week. May want to look at some information on this.

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENT(S)

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved the superintendent’s recommendation to appoint Mr. Thomas Scott Ward as Chief Financial Officer, effective August 2, 2004.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved the superintendent’s recommendation to appoint Dr. Joan Longstreth as Director of Personnel, effective July 21, 2004.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

SCHOOL NAME CHANGE

High Springs Elementary and Spring Hill Middle Schools are being combined into a K-8 school. A survey was conducted for a new school name among the faculties, staff, and parents of both schools. The newly combined School Advisory Council selected the name “High Springs Community School” from suggestions considered. The consensus was that this name most accurately portrays the vision of the school family.

Motion by Mrs. Cawthon

Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved the administration’s recommendation that the K-8 school be named High Springs Community School as recommended.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

AUDIT REPORT NO. 2004-206, ALACHUA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONAL AUDIT JULY 1, 2002, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2003

Mr. Birkett noted there were no comments in the area of Food Service special revenue funds, however, there were seven comments in the area of capital projects. These areas include Financial Condition; Equity in School-Level Funding; District School Capital Outlay Tax; Capital Outlay—Contractor Insurance Requirements; Facility Inspections; Charter School Inspections; and Monitoring Bus Drivers’ Driving Records. These issues are being addressed and taken care of at this time.

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson

Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved the administration's recommendation to accept Audit Report No. 2004-206 and that it be filed as a part of the public records of the Board.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

POTENTIAL  
WITHDRAWAL FROM  
FLORIDA SCHOOL  
BOARDS' INSURANCE  
TRUST (FSBIT)

Mr. Dave Hotary, director, Risk Management, noted that the governing document for FSBIT requires that participants wishing to explore alternative proposals provide advance notice prior to September 1 of the year preceding the potential withdrawal.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved the administration's recommendation to notify FSBIT of the potential for withdrawal for the 2005-2006 fiscal year and authorize the chairman to sign the notification letter.

Mr. Eubank noted that from time to time we need to explore other options as there may be other ways to better suit our district at possible lower costs.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

AUTHORIZATION OF  
CONSULTANT TO  
ASSIST WITH SEEKING  
ALTERNATIVE  
PROPOSALS—  
PROPERTY &  
CASUALTY PROGRAM,  
2005-2006 FISCAL YEAR

Mr. Hotary suggested that it may be timely to take a comprehensive look at what we have. Does it meet the district's needs or should changes be made to assure protection. Less coverage would result in cost avoidance and lead to reduced costs. It may serve our best interest to have someone come in and talk about different plans, other alternatives of participating in someone else's trust, and about our claims and reducing them. The analysis might indicate the need for different coverage, and we would be prepared to write a request for proposals (RFP) that would meet the district's needs. This analysis could be accomplished and presented in a series of workshops

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the use of a consultant to seek alternatives to the district's Property & Casualty Insurance Program.

Mr. Eubank feels this item goes hand in hand with the previous item. He understands that FSBIT is a preset coverage and if we go out and bid an identical coverage, it would come in at a higher rate. Whereas if

we have one that is more individualized it could be cheaper. But the significant thing is if we can come up with a plan that saves 1%, this saves \$50,000 a year. This is why it is important to do a thorough job.

Chairman Sharpe agreed that the Board should have a workshop to go through the process and expressed concern with going beyond the first part with the workshop and then bring it back to the Board.

Mr. Eubank thinks a staged approach is a good way to look at it now.

The Chairman clarified that this recommendation only takes step one.

Mr. Hotary indicated that would be the start and there would be time to bring another item back to the Board.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

SCHOOL MEAL PRICES,  
2004-2005

Mr. Eldon Chambers, director, Food Services, noted that at this time school meal prices will remain at the current rate, but may be reviewed later in the year after the close out for 2003-04. For the record those prices are elementary, \$1.50; secondary, \$1.65; reduced price universally is \$.40; breakfast for all is \$1.00; reduced price is \$.30. The district would like to pilot a second tier lunch option for \$2.00 in the secondary schools. Economically needy students would be able to select the optional meal as well as paid students. P. K. Yonge School meal prices are breakfast, all grades, \$1.00; lunch \$1.75 for elementary, \$2.00 for secondary; and \$2.50 for adults.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved to approve the current meal prices as stated; the pilot for a second lunch option in the secondary schools; breakfast and lunch adult meals offering a variety of combinations at various prices; and meal prices as presented for P.K. Yonge School.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

REVISION TO POLICY  
7.14, TRAVEL EXPENSE  
REIMBURSEMENT—  
FIRST READING

This revision will reflect the Board's intent to reimburse employees and other authorized persons for travel expenses at specified levels consistent with recent revisions to Section 112.016, Florida Statutes.

Motion by Mrs. Cawthon

Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved to schedule a public hearing August 3, 2004, to consider the revision of Policy 7.14.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

STUDENT CASES

**Student Case No. 04-16-X**

The student initiated a fight with another student in the cafeteria. The school resource officer and the assistant principal intervened and were both hit by the student. The student's actions constitute a serious breach of conduct and Level IV violation of the Code of Student Conduct. A hearing was held on June 15, 2004.

Motion by Mrs. Cawthon

Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to enter a Final Order adopting and approving the Hearing Agent's Recommended Order dated June 30, 2004, which assigns the student to the Horizon Center at least until January of the 2004-05 school year, until such time as the staff at the Center determines, in accordance with their practices, that the student is ready to return to the zoned school.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

**Student Case No. 04-17-X**

The student was in possession of and ignited a firework explosive in the hallway of the school, which constitutes a serious breach of conduct and Level IV violation of the Code of Student Conduct. A hearing was held on June 8, 2004.

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to enter a Final Order adopting and approving the Hearing Agent's Recommended Order dated June 15, 2004, which a-reassigns the student to the Horizon Center at least until January of the 2004-05 school year, until such time as the staff at the center determines, in accordance with their practices, that the student is ready to return to the zoned school.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to approve the Consent Agenda as described in items 1-28. (See Supplementary Minutes)

Mr. Eubank stated that as part of the new statute that allows the removal of everything under a \$1,000 from the tangible property inventory, included on the droppage report are 4,248 personal

computers, which represent \$3.7 million dollars. His concern is the ability to keep track of these computers, and Mr. Utley has indicated by memo that the district has software that will enable support staff to upgrade and configure computers over the district network. The software creates a database of all the computers for a particular school or administrative center.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

CITIZEN INPUT (cont'd)

There was no additional citizen input.

BOARD MEMBER/  
SUPERINTENDENT  
REQUESTS

Mrs. Sharpe noted that this district has so much history and asked if there was any way that it could be put together while employees are around that could be helpful.

Mrs. Barbara Gallant suggested an oral report and volunteered to be part of a committee to pull this together.

Mrs. Sharpe thanked Mrs. Gallant for volunteering to head up a committee. Superintendent Boyd assured the Chairman staff will work with Mrs. Gallant to make sure the oral history project is done right.

It was also noted that Howard Bishop Principal Jeff Charbonnet did his thesis on the history of the school district, which is on file at the Matheson Center and would be a good starting point.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.