

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
July 1, 2008

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: Janie Williams, Chairman; Tina Pinkoson, Vice-Chairman; F. Wesley Eubank, and Eileen F. Roy, members; W. Daniel Boyd, Jr., Superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board. Member Ginger Childs was absent.

Mrs. Williams called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES      Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson                      Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved to approve the following minutes, as presented:

- June 10, 2008, Informal Board Meeting
- June 10, 2008, Long-Range Planning Workshop
- June 17, 2008, Budget Workshop
- June 17, 2008, School Board Meeting

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

ADOPTION OF AGENDA      Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson                      Seconded by Mrs. Roy

Moved to adopt the July 1, 2008, meeting agenda as presented.

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

BOARD MEMBER/  
SUPERINTENDENT  
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Superintendent commended teachers and administrators on their high level of professionalism during this time of dealing with the difficulties that have resulted from legislative shortfalls. He then reported on the following recent actions:

Music and Art programs have been reduced by half; teacher reassignments are almost complete, are based on the seniority system, and have been made in conjunction with the ACEA.

Media Specialists have been reduced in middle and elementary schools to one per school and all teachers have been placed.

Prairie View Academy has been closed as a Choice K-5 program, students are being reassigned to their home-zoned schools and teachers have been placed in elementary schools in their area of certification.

As a result of state budget cuts, two citizen initiatives have emerged. One is the Friends of Alachua County Public Schools Elementary Arts Program. The group's goal is to raise \$850,000, to continue the elementary Art and Music programs at the level it was prior to the budget cuts. The Gainesville Community Foundation is handling the donated funds, which can be collected through July 10, 2008, after which time school staffing must be completed.

Dr. Boyd commended community members for their commitment, particularly noting the leadership of Susan Johnson, retired art teacher, and Sandra Clifton, music teacher.

The second initiative is a community group that will advocate for a one-mill property tax increase on the November ballot, to maintain school programs and services. The first meeting will take place on July 17, 2008, 6 p.m. in the Kirby-Smith Building, Conference Room E. Mr. Martin McGriff has agreed to serve as chairman.

Dr. Boyd reported that the news from Washington, D.C., implies that the federal government will continue to fund the Medicaid Reimbursement Grant. If this bears out, school nurses could be returned to their schools through April 2009.

Mrs. Williams expressed the Board's distress over the budget decisions that have had to be made.

Mrs. Roy referred to the Friends of Alachua County Public Schools Elementary Arts Program, and stated that, even if their effort falls short of the \$850,000 goal, she is still looking for ways to supplement those funds, and avoid the music/art cuts. Mrs. Roy stated that the Board was first told of it on June 17 and she doesn't think they had sufficient time to consider alternatives.

Mr. Eubank reported that just before the meeting began, an email was received from the Florida School Boards Association, informing the Board that Florida has been selected to participate in a differentiated accountability pilot for No Child Left Behind, and that Medicaid Reimbursement was approved, but will be funded only through April 1, 2009.

Mrs. Pinkoson cautioned that, if nurses funding is restored, the public must know that budget concerns still exist. Regarding Board information on music/art reductions, she stated that the Board has been working on budget concerns since January, and music/art has been one of the potential areas of reduction, though one that the Board didn't want to consider. She stated that passage of the millage is vital to being able to offer needed programs.

Mr. Eubank concurred with Mrs. Pinkoson that reducing music and art has been on the list of possibilities, but the Board never thought it would actually come to that. With more cuts expected, maintaining programs will become more difficult, unless the millage passes.

Mrs. Williams stated that the public needs to know that the funds raised for music and art are for this year only. To continue the programs, the millage must pass.

Ms. Jackie Johnson, Public Information Officer, introduced new intern, Ms.

Miaya McCray. Ms. McCray, a product of Eastside High School, will work with the Public Information Office, the Volunteer Office, and the Alachua County Public Schools Foundation.

CITIZEN INPUT

A retired art teacher who is spearheading the community fundraising effort to reinstate the full music and art curriculum addressed the Board to explain the procedures involved with the fundraising effort. She stated that this effort will buy time until other avenues can be implemented to permanently restore art and music.

A retired music educator encouraged the public in the fundraising efforts to restore full music and art programs.

A citizen is hoping for an increase in public officials visiting the Inside Africa exhibit at the Florida Museum, but reported an error in the Abolition of Slavery display.

A professor of vocal music spoke in support of music and art, reviewing the lifelong benefits of music.

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PUBLIC HEARING --  
PROPOSED  
AMENDMENTS TO  
2008-09 CODE OF  
STUDENT CONDUCT

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

Mrs. Kathy Black, Director, Exceptional Student Education, reviewed the proposed changes to the 2008-09 Code of Student Conduct, including changes in designation of infraction Levels, to coordinate with the state system.

A teacher reviewed problems she has encountered with students using cell phones before and after school and requested that this use be prohibited. She was pleased with the other Code changes.

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

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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 – 10.

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

REQUEST FOR RENEWAL  
OF CHARTER  
APPLICATION FOR  
DESOTO HIGH SCHOOL

Approval of the renewal of the charter application for Desoto High School was tabled at the June 17, 2008, School Board meeting. Dr. Sandi Anusavice, Director, Secondary Curriculum, reported that the school directors have made a decision to discontinue the school and have therefore withdrawn the application. No further action is required.

APPROVAL OF CHARTER  
SCHOOL RENEWAL  
CONTRACT—

The proposed charter school renewal contract, approved by FSIATech on June 16, 2008, follows the School Board's standard template, and provides for a term of 10 years, until June 30, 2018.

FLORIDA SCHOOL FOR  
INTEGRATED  
ACADEMICS AND  
TECHNOLOGIES AT  
GAINESVILLE, INC.  
(FSIA TECH)

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the charter school renewal contract with FSIA Tech, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

NOMINATION OF  
A. Q. JONES TO THE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF  
HISTORIC PLACES

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Roy

Moved the Superintendent's recommendation authorize staff to proceed with the nomination of A. Quinn Jones to the National Register of Historic Places.

Mr. Eubank believes this is a noble idea, but with the budget situation, the timing is wrong for the District to expend the funds. He suggested that, since the school is in the city, the City could proceed with the nomination. Otherwise, the project would have to wait, although separate research might be required later, making it more expensive, according to Mrs. Debbie Gallagher, staff member who is working on the nomination. Mrs. Roy agreed with asking the City to proceed, since they have had less of a budget impact than the School Board. Mrs. Pinkoson concurred.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Roy

Moved to table the item until the first meeting in September, to allow time for a response from the City of Gainesville.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

CITIZEN INPUT

A teacher affirmed the importance of the November millage proposal, but felt the District hasn't followed through on its promises to keep cuts from the classroom. She registered various comments and criticisms concerning the budget and stated that art and music programs need to be restored.

Mr. Eubank briefly commented, including that the Back-to-School Teacher's Rally is not paid for with District funds.

Mrs. Roy suggested that the businesses that fund the Back-to-School Rally should be contacted regarding the music/art situation and ask them to apply their money to that fund, rather than the Rally. She stated that many teachers are too busy to attend.

BOARD MEMBER/  
SUPERINTENDENT  
REQUESTS

Mrs. Roy stated that because the budget situation is so fluid, she would like another budget workshop or update to be held, a chance for Board members to suggest means of cutting the budget, other than reducing art and music. She doesn't feel the Board looked hard enough in other areas before making this decision. She expressed gratitude concerning the community effort to raise funds for art and music. Even if the entire \$850,000 isn't raised, she would like to use whatever the amount, plus other funds that can be found, to make up the difference and reinstate the

full art and music programs.

Mrs. Pinkoson stated that the decision to reduce art and music programs did not come lightly. No Board member thought it would come to that, and the Board wanted to keep cuts from the classroom, but it was not known that state cuts would ultimately be so severe. Mrs. Pinkoson stated that, with a great deal of discussion, five Board members instructed the Superintendent to reduce art and music programs. She feels having another workshop would give false hope, and the decision was too hard to make in the first place.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.