

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
October 21, 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; Ginger Childs, F. Wesley Eubank, and Eileen F. Roy, members; W. Daniel Boyd, Jr., Superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board.

The Lincoln Middle School Band performed, under the direction of Mr. Todd Eckstein.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Motion by Mrs. Childs Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2008, School Board meeting, as presented.

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

ADOPTION OF AGENDA Mrs. Williams announced that Mr. Eubank will not be in the Boardroom but has joined the meeting by phone.

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Dr. Boyd brought to the Board's attention that he has revised his recommendation on Item I.1., Application for Imagine Charter School.

Mrs. Williams announced that Recognition Item E. has been deleted and Consent Items 6 and 7 have been pulled for questions.

Moved to adopt the October 21, 2008, meeting agenda as presented.

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

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Pinkoson urged the public to support the School Board's one-mill referendum, reporting that the Governor has warned of another 10% cutback for next year, on top of the \$14 million that has already been cut. This would result in more program and support staff cuts.

Mrs. Roy congratulated Buchholz, GHS and Santa Fe High School marching bands on taking first, second and third place, respectively, out of 23 participants in the Echos of Excellence Super Regional competition. She also urged support of the one-mill referendum, noting that it will support middle school bands, which prepare students for our excellent high school bands.

PRESENTATION—LEED
SILVER CERTIFICATION
– LOFTEN HIGH
SCHOOL CLASSROOM
AND MULTIPURPOSE
BUILDING

Mr. Ed Gable, Executive Director, Facilities, reported to the Board on the success of the District's 'flagship' building at Loften High School. The District received the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certification for the Loften building, only the third such award in the state of Florida. Project staff was introduced and the Board was presented with the award.

CITIZEN INPUT

Dr. Gunnar Paulson, ACEA president, thanked the Board for their leadership on the one-mill referendum. He advocated for passage of the millage and stated that the Citizens for Strong Schools committee is committed to ongoing support and advocacy for public schools to hold a greater priority to the legislature. He reviewed the duties of the millage oversight committee.

Mrs. Pinkoson thanked Dr. Paulson for his referendum support and assured the public that the Board has no alternative funding sources. She expressed her belief that having no children in school is not a valid reason for not supporting schools.

Superintendent Boyd expressed to the community that the administration, teachers, and support personnel are working hard together on this initiative. He believes that the public will show its support of the school system when it votes on November 4.

Mrs. Childs noted that, since the District is prohibited from spending money on this initiative, there has been a strong fundraising effort by the Citizens for Strong Schools committee. She particularly expressed appreciation to the Alachua County Education Association, under the leadership of Dr. Paulson. She concurred with Mrs. Pinkoson's comments, pointing out that the community depends upon a vital public education system to draw people to the community, noting particularly the needs of the University of Florida.

PUBLIC HEARING --
2008-2009 PUPIL
PROGRESSION PLAN

The regular Board meeting was recessed and a Public Hearing convened to consider the proposed revisions to the 2008-2009 Pupil Progression Plan.

There were no public comments.

Concerning acceptance to Magnet Programs, Mrs. Childs stated that she would like to see students who have completed Alachua County curriculum given preference over students who have not.

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

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, with items 6 and 7 being pulled for discussion.

The question was called on the Consent Agenda as presented.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

Mrs. Childs requested that an indirect cost (suggested 5%) be added to future bus-use agreements, to help offset the cost of future bus replacements. She also wanted to include an indirect cost to Food Service contracts. Upon consensus of the Board, Dr. Boyd will bring information to the Board at a later date.

APPLICATION FOR
CHARTER SCHOOL –
IMAGINE SCHOOL AT
ALACHUA,
LLC CHARTER SCHOOL

Mr. Gable responded to questions from Mrs. Roy pertaining to the SFHS roof replacement. He explained the process by which a design architect is selected, based on the Consultants Competitive Negotiation Act. As a former principal, Mrs. Childs commented on that role, as it pertains to the committee selection procedure.

The charter application for the Imagine School at Alachua, LLC Charter School was tabled at the October 7, 2008, School Board meeting.

The Superintendent recommends that the application for Imagine School at Alachua Charter School be removed from the table. If the item is removed from the table, the Superintendent's revised recommendation is that the Board approve the application, with the understanding that the non-profit organizational status must be resolved prior to conclusion of charter contract negotiations. The Charter contract will be brought back to the Board for approval.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved to remove the application for Imagine School at Alachua Charter School from the table.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

At Mr. Eubank's inquiry as to whether the contract would be updated to avoid the type of problems encountered with Love to Learn Charter School, Staff Attorney Tom Wittmer stated that it would.

Mrs. Roy stated that the printed material disseminated to the citizens of the Town of Tioga by Imagine School was offensive to the Alachua County school system, in that it implies the Alachua County Public Schools has no vision or purpose and excludes parent participation. Mrs. Williams concurred.

School representatives responded to Mrs. Childs' questions concerning:

- The source of the Imagine brochure, noting that the Gator logo is used.
- Proof of 501(c)3 status. (Back-up data will be provided.)
- What is unique about Imagine Charter School.

Mrs. Childs cautioned parents to carefully consider the benefits of what is offered in the public schools that can't be provided at Imagine, before they make a decision that can affect their children for the rest of their lives.

The Imagine representative emphasized that the passion of those that established the school is the lower demographic, which is what most of their schools serve. However, when they go to a community, they must look at where there is a need for seats; in Alachua County that is west of I-75. He stated that they would welcome the opportunity to develop a school in east Gainesville.

Mrs. Childs stated that she could support efforts to reach out to the lower-

demographic areas, but it appears Imagine is going after a demographic that already has the opportunity for choices. The result will be to take money from the public schools to serve those students

Mrs. Roy questioned the company's efforts for low socioeconomic students, since they generally do not come from high-growth areas. It was reported that a school in downtown St. Petersburg has been opened, where there is a diverse population, and it will be a Title I school. Mrs. Roy expressed concern about the amount of money returned to the parent company, questioning the non-profit status. The Imagine representative pointed out that the parent company provides services similar to the District services provided to the public schools.

Mr. Eubank stated that 12% per student is significantly higher than is paid for Alachua County's District services.

Mrs. Pinkoson commented on Imagine changing state-assessed grades because of their differing way of assessing gains. She stated that she will not vote to approve without seeing a 501(c)3 and would not approve a school that she does not believe is a good option for parents. The Imagine representative presented their viewpoint and methods of student assessment.

Superintendent Boyd pointed out that the recommended motion has been amended. He reviewed the history of Charters, stating that originally there were to be a specific number of charter schools in a county and they would meet specific innovative needs. Since then, local School Board authority has been obviated by the establishment of the Florida Schools of Excellence Commission.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Roy

Moved to approve the application, with the understanding that the non-profit organizational status must be resolved prior to conclusion of charter contract negotiations and that the Charter contract will be brought back to the Board for approval.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1

Yes: Childs
Eubank
Roy
Williams

No: Pinkoson

Mrs. Childs wanted to be sure it is publicized to parents that if they choose to participate in any charter school, the School Board has no responsibility and no authority.

The Imagine representative recognized that they do not have the trust of the School Board but will try to earn it.

CITIZEN INPUT

A citizen of the Town of Tioga commented on the value of neighborhood schools and the restrictions placed on school boards for building new schools.

At a question from Mrs. Roy, the citizen replied that the Town of Tioga is making property available for Imagine.

In response to a question from recently elected Board member Mrs. Barbara Sharpe regarding why the Chancellor-Beacon Academies closed and whether Imagine is an offshoot of the Edison Project, the Imagine representative provided background.

**DISCUSSION –
SCHEDULE CAPITAL
OUTLAY WORKSHOP**

A Capital Outlay workshop was scheduled for November 25 at 10:30 a.m., immediately following the presentation by the Alachua County Energy Conservation Strategies Commission.

**BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS**

Mrs. Roy commented on the great accomplishment of the LEED-certified Loften High School building and congratulated Mr. Gable and all involved. She reported that, due to fuel price adjustments, the District's electric costs this year will be \$500,000 more than was budgeted. However, because of conservation measures which would include the LEED building, the funds will be available to pay this higher bill.

Regarding the Love to Learn Charter School, Mrs. Childs inquired as to whether there has been any progress on the District pursuit of recouping funds that were spent after the Board's decision to close the school. Dr. Boyd stated that he is working with the Board and staff attorney, and the matter will be pursued as far as legally possible.

Mrs. Pinkoson requested that Congressman Larry Cretul be contacted concerning education budget cuts.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.