

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, FEBRUARY 11, 2010

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Special Workshop at 3:00 p.m., in the Board Room, at the Dr. Vernon McDaniel Building, 215 West Garden Street, Pensacola, Florida, with the following present:

Chair: Mr. Gerald W. Boone Vice Chair: Mr. Jeff Bergosh

Board Members: Mrs. Linda Moultrie
Mrs. Patricia Hightower
Mr. Bill Slayton

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

Meeting was advertised in the Pensacola News Journal on February 2, 2010 – Legal No. 1447965

[General discussion took place among Board Members, the Superintendent, and staff throughout this meeting.]

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Boone called the Special Workshop to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- Northwest Florida Gang Control – *topic submitted by the Superintendent*
Escambia County Sheriff David Morgan, Lieutenant Dale Tharp, and Sergeant Rick Vinson addressed the current state of gang activity in the Pensacola area, the impact of gang-related crime, and Sheriff Office’s intent to launch a public awareness campaign on protecting children from gang activity.
- Warrington Middle School Flight Academy Plan – *topic submitted by the Superintendent (Handout provided)*
A brief PowerPoint® presentation was given regarding the plan to establish a Flight Academy at Warrington Middle School beginning with the 2010-2011 school year. It was noted that detailed information regarding this proposal was included in the backup documentation for Item V.A.7, *Establishment of Warrington Middle School Flight Academy*, on the February 16, 2010 Regular Board Meeting agenda.
- Legislative Update – *topic submitted by the Superintendent*
The Superintendent introduced Mr. Juhan Mixon and Mr. Jim Hamilton of Mixon and Associates consulting firm. (Mixon and Associates is the consulting firm that would provide legislative consulting/lobbying services on behalf of the Superintendent, the School District, and the School Board.) The Superintendent and individual School Board Members addressed their concerns with regard to various legislative topics including: class size, Bright Futures scholarships, the Transparency Act, the “tax swap”, the Standards Bill, and Florida’s economic development.

- Energy Managers Presentation – topic submitted by the Superintendent
 Staff gave a brief PowerPoint® presentation entitled *Energy Management Services-2009 Fiscal Year Review*, which included information on the following topics: bill analysis process; 2009 year in review; 2006-2009 program review; and future goals. (NOTE: *This presentation was provided in response to a request made by Mrs. Hightower during the January 14, 2010 Special Workshop, for a presentation regarding the procedures that are followed when a school facility was closed, specifically regarding the issue of continuing or terminating utilities.*)

- Unemployment Compensation – topic submitted by the Superintendent
 (Handouts provided)
 Ms. Dawn Ramirez, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Coordinator, provided information regarding unemployment compensation, including the number of claims filed against the District in 2009, reasons why an individual may receive unemployment compensation and reasons why the District's unemployment cost is higher than years past.

- Discussion on Class Size/Impacts on Our District if not Amended – topic submitted by Jeff Bergosh
 Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, the Superintendent confirmed that the School District was not prepared to comply with the final phase of class size implementation for the upcoming 2010-2011 school year. In order to comply with the current language of the 2002 Class Size Amendment, additional teachers would have to be hired at a cost of nearly \$12 million, which would place an extreme financial burden on the School District; and if unable to comply, the School District would incur a penalty of approximately \$1.4 million. It was noted that Senator Don Gaetz (R-Niceville) and Representative Will Weatherford (R-Wesley Chapel) had proposed an amendment to the 2002 Class Size Amendment that would add some flexibility into the final phase of class size implementation by allowing schools to continue using school averages to comply with the 2002 Class Size Amendment.

- Drug Dog Searches in Escambia Schools – topic submitted by Jeff Bergosh
 As part of a comprehensive approach to combating the presence of drugs on school campuses, Mr. Bergosh suggested the possibility of increasing the frequency of canine drug searches. He noted that if canines from the Escambia County Sheriff's Office (County) or the Pensacola Police Department (City) were not available as often as needed, there were companies that the School District could contract with for such services. In response to Mr. Bergosh's concern about the frequency of canine drug searches, Mr. Steve Sharp, Manager-Safety, Security and Emergency Operations, pointed out that both the County and the City had recently begun to conduct canine drug searches at area schools on a more regular basis. At the request of Mr. Bergosh, Mr. Sharp stated that he would consult with representatives from the County and the City with regard to establishing a schedule for such searches. In addition, Mr. Sharp would provide Board Members with data sorted by location, regarding the recent number and frequency of searches, the number of drugs detected, and the number of drug-related arrests.

- Update on Brownsville Property – topic submitted by Linda Moultrie
 Mrs. Moultrie noted that in December 2009, she had inquired as to what costs the District was incurring while the former Brownsville Middle School building/property remained vacant, yet to-date, she had not received that information. Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, stated that he would provide a spreadsheet detailing the monthly operating costs (i.e., utilities) for maintaining that facility.

- Vacant School District Buildings/Properties
 At the request of Mrs. Moultrie, Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, stated that he would provide a listing of all vacant buildings/properties that were for sale by the School District.

- Drivers Education Courses for Summer School – *topic submitted by Bill Slayton*

Upon inquiry by Mr. Slayton, Mr. Paul Fetsko, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, confirmed that drivers education courses would be offered during summer school, but would be limited to probably only two or three sites.

III. PRESENTATIONS

-None

IV. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. Boone called for public forum; however, there were no speakers.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair