

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, DECEMBER 9, 2010

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Special Workshop at 3:00 p.m., in Room 160, at the J.E. Hall Educational Services Center, 30 East Texar Drive, Pensacola, Florida, with the following present:

Chair: Mr. Gerald W. Boone Vice Chair: Mr. Bill Slayton

Board Members: Mr. Jeff Bergosh
Mrs. Linda Moultrie
Mrs. Patricia Hightower

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

Meeting was advertised in the Pensacola News Journal on December 1, 2010 - Legal No. 1498420

[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

- Document Review Process – topic submitted by Jeff Bergosh [Handout provided to Board Members]

Mr. Bergosh initiated a discussion regarding the document review process that was previously discussed at the September 30, 2010 Special Meeting. At that meeting, the Board granted the Superintendent's request to have the Coordinator of Board Affairs to review agenda documents prior to agenda publication so that his staff would have an opportunity to correct any errors prior to publication. The objective of this discussion was to determine 1) if any progress had been made with regard to the quality of documents submitted for the Board agenda and 2) whether the assistance of the Coordinator was still necessary. After lengthy discussion, the Superintendent advised that the assistance of the Coordinator was no longer necessary; instead, the responsibility for reviewing agenda documents would rest solely with the Assistant Superintendent for each division.

On a separate, but related issue, it was clarified that that the document review conducted by the General Counsel would pertain only to legal sufficiency and not to accuracy in terms of punctuation, grammar, formatting, etc.

- Request for Update on Progress of Establishment of School Board Members Web Page – topic submitted by Jeff Bergosh [Handout provided to Board Members]

NOTE: At the April 15, 2010 Special Workshop, Mr. Bergosh requested that a webpage be established for the School Board. Mr. Bergosh reiterated his desire for the establishment of a School Board webpage that would include at the minimum, information specific to each Board Member, links to Board meeting agendas and videos, and links to maps and school listings for Board Member's geographical district. The Superintendent advised that Mr. Bergosh's previous request had been forwarded to Ms. Janice Courson, a Web Design teacher at Tate High School. Ms. Corson and her students would be handling this "project" and over the next several months would be gathering information for the webpage from each Board Member.

- Update on Florida School Boards Association (FSBA) Conference –*topic submitted by Patty Hightower*
Mrs. Hightower gave a brief update on the topics discussed during the recent Florida School Boards Association Conference (November 30-December 3). Topics included, but were not limited to: potential changes to the Florida Retirement System (FRS), the concept of on-site wellness clinics, Race to the Top grant requirements, and the impact of healthcare reform.

- Autism Presentation – *topic submitted by the Superintendent*
Ms. Susan Byram, Executive Director of Autism Pensacola, Inc., gave a brief presentation on “Kids for Camp” - a learning lab designed to meet the learning needs of children diagnosed with autism while training teachers in the best practices for instructing such children.

- District’s Drug Testing Policy* – *topic submitted by the Superintendent*
[Handout provided to Board Members]
Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director-High School Education, presented a proposal for a random drug testing policy that was developed by a committee comprised of District staff (including level directors and several principals), the Board’s General Counsel, parent and student representatives, and community members. The proposed policy would authorize the random drug testing of any student electing to participate in school athletics, extra/co-curricular activities, and on-campus parking. Mrs. Spooner briefly reviewed the various components outlined in the proposed policy, including: confidentiality, participation eligibility, annual consent to random drug screening, withdrawal from activity, selection of students for testing, process for calling students for screening, collection of samples, sanctions, and appeal procedures. She noted that the emphasis of the proposed policy was on deterrence and remediation rather than punishment of students who test positive for drug use/abuse. The Superintendent advised of his intent to bring the Board, at the January 18, 2011 Regular Meeting, permission to advertise the proposed policy. In the meantime, the Superintendent asked Board Members to thoroughly review the proposal and alert him as to any major concerns or any suggested changes.
**NOTE: If adopted by the School Board, the random drug testing policy would be included as part of the “enforcement” component of the District’s Comprehensive Drug-Awareness Plan and would be implemented at the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year. The purpose of the plan was to prevent illegal drugs from being present on Escambia school campuses by enlisting the efforts of all departments, programs, and stakeholders – especially students. The three elements of focus would be: prevention, enforcement/consequences, and support.*

- Overview of the Race to the Top Grant – *topic submitted by the Superintendent*
[Handout provided to Board Members]
Staff began a presentation regarding the Race to the Top Grant; however, due to time constraints, a vast majority of the presentation was postponed until the December 10, 2010 Regular Workshop.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

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

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the Special Workshop adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair