

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, AUGUST 15, 2012

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Regular Workshop at 8:00 a.m., in Room 160, at the J.E. Hall Educational Services Center, 30 East Texar Drive, Pensacola, Florida, with the following present:

Chair: Mr. Bill Slayton Vice Chair: Mr. Jeff Bergosh

Board Members: Mr. Gerald W. Boone
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 July 30, 2012 - Legal No. 1571775

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Slayton called the Regular Workshop to order at 8:00 a.m. On behalf of the School Board, Mr. Slayton thanked representatives of Chick-fil-a (Nine Mile Road location) for providing breakfast for those attending this session and also for their continued partnership with the Escambia County School District.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- August and September Calendar - *Slayton*

School Board Members reviewed their schedules for August and September; no changes were made. School Board Members also reviewed their schedule for October. It was decided that the October 11th Special "Open Discussion" Workshop would be canceled and the October 12th Regular Workshop would be rescheduled to October 9th, beginning at 8:00 a.m. It was noted that the October 9th Regular Workshop would include an "open discussion" segment. The Superintendent was to confirm the availability of Room 160 for the October 9th Regular Workshop.

- 2013 FSBA Legislative Platform Proposal (due to FSBA by August 24) – *School Board*

Mr. Jim Hamilton, Mixon & Associates was present for the discussion on this item. At the request of the Superintendent, Mr. Hamilton provided a brief update on and responded to questions about various legislative matters. School Board Members appeared to be in agreement with majority of the document entitled *2012 FSBA Legislative Platform (As Ratified on 12/1/11) – Priorities for the 2012 Legislative Session*. Mr. Bergosh however, did express disagreement with the following items:

- *Make the necessary changes to Florida's current tax laws in order to position Florida to join the Streamlined Sales Tax Governing Board so that Florida may collect the state sales tax due from online and remote sales*
- *Expand access to high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten programs for three- and four-year old students through the federal prekindergarten Race to the Top initiative (Federal Issue)*

Mr. Bergosh also suggested the addition of a platform item with regard to banning texting while driving. He noted that texting while driving had caused many accidents, some resulting in injuries or even deaths, every year. Each School Board Member and the Superintendent expressed support for the addition of this item.

At this time, the following item was handled:

Update from A.A. Dixon Charter School (Item VIII.1)

Reverend LuTimothy May, Executive Director and Dr. Wendy Bennett, principal were present for this update. [NOTE: *Copies of Dixon's report for August 2012 were provided to Board Members prior to this meeting.*] It was noted that Dr. Bennett would serve as principal for Dixon Charter School, however, Dixon's administrative team also included two other veteran school principals: Ms. Linda Scott and Mrs. Modeste McCorvey. Dr. Bennett began her update by noting that Dixon's employees had spent the past 30 days getting ready for the opening of school. She then offered updates on the following topics:

-*Waiver Request*: Dixon planned to move forward with a "Request for Waiver" (in compliance with Chapter 2010-194, Laws of Florida)

-*Facilities Improvement and Materials Upgrades*: Volunteer and donors from local businesses, churches, community groups, the U.S. military, Dixon staff and parents, and the community at-large had assisted with improvements and upgrades. Surplus furniture had been secured through the School District's surplus opportunity.

-*Media Center*: A local church took on the media center as a special project. A small stage and puppet theatre were special features of the media center.

-*Staffing*: As indicated in a prior report to the School Board, Dixon had terminated all staff but had then extended an invitation for those individuals to reapply for employment. This was done to ensure that the staff at Dixon was the best that could be obtained from the available pool of applicants. Hiring considerations included prior performance, FCAT learning gains and other monitoring assessment data analysis. Attention was given to hiring "highly qualified" teachers and teacher assistants.

-*Curriculum*: The Dixon "arts" focus would be brought forward with both art and music classes during the school week.

-*Rebranding*: As part of Dixon's rebranding, the Board approved a change of the school's name. It was believed that the new name, Dixon School of the Arts, would better reflect the school's intended focus on cultural arts. The rebranding would also include a new core and encore curriculum.

-*Finances*: No financial report was provided; however, it was noted that the school's finances had been audited and that audit would be provided to the School District within the next week.

-*Executive Director (new position)*: It was reported in the minutes from Dixon's Board of Directors Meeting on July 2, 2012, that Reverend LuTimothy May had resigned from his duties as Board Chair and that LaStacey Hendrieth had been accepted as the new Board Chair. It was also noted that Reverend May was offered and had accepted the newly created position of Executive Director. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, Reverend May said that he believed the new Executive Director position would be a paid position.

At this time, the following item was handled:

Update from Newpoint Academy (Item VIII.2)

Mr. John Graham, Director of Newpoint Academy, briefly reviewed the school's plan to improve grades in the 2012-2013 school year. [NOTE: *This plan was outlined in the school's report for August 2012; copies had been provided to School Board Members prior to this meeting.*] Mr. Graham said that the plan would be reviewed and revised as necessary throughout the school year. Mrs. Hightower noted that it was reported in the minutes from Newpoint Academy's Board of Directors Meeting from June 19, 2012, that the Board of Directors had agreed to submit an elementary school application to School District. With regard to the application for an elementary school, the Superintendent reminded Mr. Graham that Newpoint Academy (middle school) had received a school grade of "F" school grade for the previous (2011-2012) school year. He cautioned against any thoughts of expansion into elementary school, until such time as Newpoint's middle school had improved its academic performance. Upon inquiry by the Superintendent, Mr. Graham said that the school's finances had been audited and the audit would be provided to the School District by the specified deadline.

The Regular Workshop was recessed at 10:15 a.m. and reconvened at 10:35 a.m. with all School Board Members, the Superintendent and Mrs. Waters present.

III. COMMENTS FROM SUPERINTENDENT

First Day of School (2012-2013 School Year) – August 20, 2012

The Superintendent reported that employees were busy preparing for the start of the new school year. He said "one of the biggest struggles" in preparing for the first day of school had been with the Grounds Crew in that the crew was short on personnel and that inclement weather had made it very difficult to cut the grass at the various schools. He noted however, that weather permitting, the Grounds Crew would continue to work through the weekend to ensure that each school's appearance on the first day of the new school year was as good as it could be. Mr. Slayton reminded the Superintendent that he had previously requested that staff look into the possibility of employing assistance from local law enforcement agencies with regard to dealing with the entrances to schools on opening day. (*See: Minutes, September 15, 2011*) The Superintendent said that both city and county law enforcement agencies, as well as the city fire department, would be assisting the School District during the first week of school at some of the most problematic school zones such as Pine Meadow Elementary, Beulah Elementary, N.B Cook Elementary, and Cordova Park Elementary.

Pine Forest High School NJROTC Building

Several School Board Members commented on the "beautiful" new NJROTC building at Pine Forest High School. School Board Members had recently toured the new facility during the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony that was held on August 14, 2012.

Update on Repairs to Damage at Escambia High School

At the request of Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent provided a brief update on the progress of repairing the damage caused by an arson fire on July 3, 2012 at Escambia High School (EHS). While repairs to the damage were not yet completed, the Superintendent said that EHS was "ready" for the first day of school on August 20, 2012. He advised that the classroom that suffered the most damage was still under construction, as well as the classroom next to it. The Superintendent said that Escambia could "tolerate the loss of the two classrooms at this point without any difficulty" as their student enrollment had declined slightly. It was noted that a temporary wall had been set up to keep students out of the construction zone. The Superintendent said that the cost to repair the damage had risen to nearly \$1 million (original estimates were approximately \$500,000). He noted of course, that the School District's insurance would cover the majority of the cost.

IV. PROPOSED ADDITIONS OR REVISIONS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT RULES

Notice of Intent to Adopt Amendments to the School District of Escambia County Student Progression Plan

2.5 *Acceleration/Assessment/Resource Allocation/Retention/Promotion/Student Progression for Grade 3*

2.5.4 *Student Progression for Retained Grade 1 and Grade 3 Readers*

Any Grade 1 remediated student who is not reading on grade level by the end of the year MUST be retained and placed in a program that is different from the previous year's program and takes into account the student's learning style. Retained Grade 1 students must be provided with intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate specific reading deficiencies, as identified by a valid and reliable diagnostic assessment. Intensive intervention must include effective instructional strategies and appropriate teaching methodologies necessary to assist these students in becoming successful readers. These interventions will help students read at or above grade level and be ready for promotion to the next grade.

Each school must conduct a review of each Grade 1 student who is not reading at grade level and who does not meet the criteria for a Good Cause Exemption for Promotion. The review will address additional support and services needed to remediate the identified areas of reading deficiency.

Mrs. Moultrie referred to the major change in the Student Progression Plan that had to do with mandatory first grade retention. She believed that anytime there was a “change of that magnitude” that would greatly impact the schools, it was important to communicate, in every way possible, the change to the parents and the community. Mr. Bergosh strongly supported the mandatory first grade retention but said he would also like to see the School District “carry that same logic” to eighth grade because he was convinced that there many eighth grade students “making the jump to ninth grade” who were not prepared to do so. He also wanted to follow-up on a discussion from a previous School Board Workshop about the consequences for parents of struggling first graders who did not attend the required parent-teacher conferences. Mr. Slayton asked that the School Board be kept apprised as to whether or not parents were attending those conferences. The Superintendent clarified that the parent-teacher conferences would be required at the end of each nine week grading period. He said that during the conferences, teachers would offer parents ideas on how to help their child at home. He also said that staff would periodically update the School Board as to the number of first graders falling into this category. Mrs. Hightower requested that School Board Members be given the percentage of parents that were actually attending the parent-teacher conferences as she wanted the School Board to be aware of how many parents were taking advantage of the opportunity to learn how they could help their child. The Superintendent said that staff would work on creating a mechanism for collecting that data in a way that would not encumber the teacher.

3.12 *Promotion and Retention*

3.12.3 *Promotion*

- A. *Students who fail one (1) or two (2) required core courses are promoted to the next grade. Students must recover all failed core courses prior to exiting middle school and entering ninth grade. The core courses are language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. Students do not retake any course in which a passing grade of sixty (60) or above is earned.*
- B. *Students who fail three (3) or more required core courses are retained in the current grade. Students must recover all failed core courses prior to exiting middle school and entering ninth grade. The core courses are language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. Students do not retake any course in which a passing grade of sixty (60) or above is earned.*

Mr. Bergosh noted that he had talked about this matter during previous School Board Workshops, but wanted to again mention that he believed the School District's policy was "weak" with regard to the promotion of students from middle to high school. His concern was that a student with poor performance in middle school would still be advanced to ninth grade and that many of those rising ninth graders were not prepared to succeed in high school. Mr. Bergosh wanted School Board Members to consider increasing the requirements in an effort to ensure that middle school students would be ready for promotion to high school. He noted that other school districts in Florida, North Carolina, and Wisconsin had more rigorous advancement requirements for eighth graders than did the Escambia County School District.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Curriculum and Instruction

4. Agreement with the University of West Florida (UWF), Institute for Innovative Community Learning (ICL), and the School District of Escambia County

Mr. Bergosh advised that he would abstain from voting on this item at the August 21, 2012 Regular Meeting due to a potential conflict of interest.

7. Florida Inclusion Network Grant 2012-2013

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Moultrie, the Superintendent confirmed that all schools, including charter schools, were eligible for the services provided under this grant.

B. Finance

3. Resolutions to amend District School Budget:
 - a) Resolution 11 – General Operating Fund

Mr. Bergosh was curious about the increase in the budget for School Recognition Funds (3361). The Superintendent clarified that the Florida Legislature had increased the allocation per student by \$25.

8. Financial Status Report: Employee Benefit Trust Fund

Mr. Bergosh was curious about the overhead cost for the last month in that it had "nearly doubled" in amount. Mr. St. Cyr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Services, said that the expense entry listed for "overhead allocation" as of June 30, 2012 was simply an adjustment made to include all overhead costs (i.e., salaries and benefits, square footage of office space, utilities) that had not been accounted for in the financial statements at the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Kevin Windham, Director of Risk Management, said the staff member who prepares these statements attempts to estimate the overhead allocation amount at the beginning of the fiscal year and that the entry made for June 30, 2012 is an end-of-the-year adjustment to "book" the actual costs incurred.

C. Human Resource Services

1. Instructional/Professional
 - e. Resignations/Retirements/Other

Mrs. Moultrie questioned whether the School District kept track of the reasons why an individual had resigned. Dr. Alan Scott, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services, said that the Human Resource Services department did conduct exit interviews with those individuals yet, they do not always provide, nor were they required to give, a specific reason for their resignation.

g. Special Requests

2. Approve Rodney A. Ford to receive his regular hourly rate of pay funded by Title I, Part A, to manage SES program requirements beyond regular work hours (training monitors and facilitators, record keeping and reporting requirements, etc.) at McMillian Community Learning Center – Title I, from July 30, 2012 through April 30, 2013, a total of 570 hours.
3. Approve Edward G. Seitz to receive his regular hourly rate of pay funded by Title I, Part A, to manage SES program requirements beyond regular work hours (training monitors and facilitators, record keeping and reporting requirements, etc.) at McMillian Community Learning Center – Title I, from August 13, 2012 through March 31, 2013, a total of 465 hours.

Mr. Bergosh questioned the necessity of the additional work hours requested in Item V.C.1.g.2 (570 hours) and Item V.C.1.g.3 (465 hours). Dr. Laura Colo, Assistant Director of Title I, explained that the additional work hours were necessary each year in order for these employees to manage the many SES program requirements during a very compressed timeframe. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, Dr. Alan Scott, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services, confirmed that both Rodney A. Ford and Edward G. Seitz were full-time employees that were paid from the Instructional Salary Schedule. Ms. Colo confirmed for Mr. Bergosh that both employees would submit timesheets indicating the amount of time actually spent managing the SES program requirements. She clarified that the hours listed in both of the requests were an estimate of the maximum amount of hours that each employee may need to work each week and not necessarily indicative of the actual hours that would be worked.

2. Educational Support Personnel
 - a. Appointments

Mrs. Hightower said she would discuss with the Superintendent at a later time, a concern she had about the proposed promotion of an employee who had almost been terminated in the past.

3. Risk Management
 - a. School Resource Officer Agreement, City of Pensacola Police Department
 - b. School Resource Officer Agreement, Escambia County, Florida Sheriff's Office

Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, Mrs. Waters confirmed that the writing of the agreements with these local law enforcement agencies had been done in collaboration with the School District. It was noted that the verbiage in these agreements was similar to the verbiage in the agreements from the prior year. Mr. Bergosh said he noticed that the agreement with the Pensacola Police Department indicated that if there was a conflict between the School Board's rules and the PPD's rules, that the PPD's rules would override; he noted that he did not find similar verbiage in the agreement with the Escambia County Sheriff's Office (ECSO). He also noted that the agreement with the PPD listed the school resource officer names and salaries whereas the agreement with the ECSO did not. Mrs. Moultrie advised that such information was probably not included in the agreement with the ECSO because of its larger workforce and the possibility that the assignment of school resource officers could change from time to time.

Mrs. Moultrie advised that she would abstain from voting on Item V.C.3.b at the August 21, 2012 Regular Meeting as she was a current employee of the Escambia County Sheriff's Office.

D. Purchasing

6. Annual Renewal: Sophos Computer Virus Protection Software Agreement

Mr. Bergosh questioned the purchase of the Sophos Computer Virus Protection Software at the cost of \$63,500 as he was not sure that it was necessary to spend the money for this software when there were other anti-spam software programs that were much less expensive or even available for free. Mr. Tom Ingram, Director of Information Technology (IT), explained that the Sophos software program was actually workstation anti-virus software and that the School District actually had a separate “spam” filter that was used which ran about \$25,000 a year. He said that prior to this year, the program was blocking between 90-95% of the email that was bound for district email addresses; however, this past year that number had dropped to approximately 85-90% blocking. He said the problem with a free program was that it did not have the enterprise management capabilities that the School District needed for virus protection at the desktop operating system level. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, Mr. Ingram said that the IT Department had been very satisfied with the performance of the Sophos Computer Virus Protection Software.

8. READ 180 Next Generation for District High Schools

Description of Purchase: *READ 180 software is an intensive, adaptive intervention program designed to meet the needs of students where reading achievement is below the proficient level. The newest version of READ 180, READ 180 Next Generation, applies research and validated practice to address the needs of adolescent struggling readers. This software program incorporates elements of new information technology to further advance teaching and learning for the 21st Century. This instruction reflects the increased reading, writing, and critical thinking demands on students in preparation for college, careers, and beyond. It will be utilized by our most struggling ninth grade readers (those making level 1 on FCAT 2.0). Supplier Name: Scholastic, Inc., Saint Charles, IL Amount of Purchase: \$163,714.00*

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education, said that READ 180 Next Generation was piloted the previous school year (2011-2012) at Pine Forest High School (PFHS). She said that this newest version of READ 180 was tied to the common core curriculum and there was a much improved version with more rigor than the previous version. She said that students in the class at PFHS that had piloted the program last school year had shown incredible learning gains.

E. Operations

1. Facilities Planning

A. Miscellaneous

2. First Amendment to Lease Agreement for a Portion of the former Edgewater Elementary School

Description: *Request Board approval of First Amendment to Lease Agreement between the School Board of Escambia County, FL and S.L. Jones Christian Academy, Inc. for a portion of the former Edgewater Elementary School extending term for one (1) year through August 31, 2013. Amount: \$81,768.00 per year*

Mr. Bergosh questioned whether the new monthly lease amount would allow the School District to also capture the amount currently in arrears. The Superintendent began by noting that S.L. Jones Christian Academy had been a “good tenant” for the School District as they had taken “good care” of the leased premises. He noted that the Academy had “simply gotten themselves in a situation like many people in this economy where they found they could not quite afford what they had obligated themselves to however, they had never backed up from their obligations and they had been forthcoming about that.” He said it was the intent of the Academy to still try to purchase the leased

premises but in the meantime, the School District was simply extending the term for one additional year so that the Academy could continue school operations for the 2012-2013 school year.

F. Student Transfers

-No items discussed

G. Internal Auditing

1. Inventory Adjustment Reports for forty-six (46) cost centers

Mr. Bergosh commended the schools and centers that were inventoried in the last period, noting that of those forty-six cost centers, only four were found to have missing inventory assets.

2. George Stone Financial Aid Operational Review

Mr. David Bryant, Director of Internal Auditing responded to Mr. Bergosh's concern about the information outlined in the review report for George Stone Financial Aid operations. Mr. Bryant began by clarifying that this was not an audit, but rather an operational review that was actually requested by the new principal of the George Stone Center, Mr. Thomas Rollins. Mr. Bryant said that Mr. Rollins had asked the Internal Auditing Department to document the financial aid process; to ensure staff was completing all required procedures as it related to financial aid; and to determine whether the entity had an adequate management control system for measuring, reporting, and monitoring the financial aid process. Mr. Bryant said that as is standard for any operational review, the Internal Auditing Department would follow-up with George Stone within six months of the School Board's acceptance of the review report.

3. 2011-2012 Food Service Procurement Review

Mr. Bergosh referred to the following paragraph in the review report: *Overall, it appears proper competitive bid procedures were followed and adequate documentation exists to comply with federal regulations. It also appears the District has either addressed the findings and recommendations related to procurement made in the Office of Internal Auditing's prior year review or has accepted the risks associated with not implementing the recommendations.* Mr. Bergosh questioned the meaning of the phrase "has accepted the risks associated with not implementing the recommendations." Mr. Bryant explained that if the Internal Auditing Department made a recommendation that management chose not to implement, then management was essentially accepting the risks associated with not implementing the recommendation.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

-None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Items from the Board

-No items submitted

B. Items from the Superintendent

1. Student Recommendations

1. Recommend that the previous recommendation of expulsion for student number 12-43-561 for the remainder of the 2011-2012 school year and all of the 2012-2013 school year be rescinded and the student be allowed to return to regular school placement for the 2012-2013 school year.

Mrs. Hightower referred to the backup documentation for this item which indicated that student number 12-43-561 would be trying out for the football team at his regular high

school. Mrs. Hightower noted that at the time this student was originally recommended for expulsion in December 2011, he was an eighth grade student. In reviewing the student's grades, she was concerned about his eligibility to play football upon return to regular school placement. Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High Schools, confirmed that as per the rules of the Florida High School Athletic Association, if a student had been promoted to the ninth grade, they were eligible to participate in an athletic program for the first semester of that ninth grade year; however, at the end of the first semester, if the student had not maintained at a least a 2.0 grade average, then the student would no longer be eligible to participate. The Superintendent wanted to be sure that School Board Members understood that the recommendation that this student's expulsion timeframe be reduced was because the student had "earned" that recommendation.

- C. Items from the General Counsel
 - No items submitted

VIII. COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

- 1. Update from A.A. Dixon Charter School

This item was handled earlier in the meeting.

- 2. Update from Newpoint Academy

This item was handled earlier in the meeting.

IX. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. Slayton called for public hearing; however, there were no speakers.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Regular Workshop adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair

PENDING BOARD APPROVAL