

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, JANUARY 17, 2013

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. Jeff Bergosh Vice Chair: Mrs. Linda Moultrie

Board Members: Mr. Gerald W. Boone
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 December 18, 2012 - Legal No. 1585851

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- February 2013 Calendar - Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh asked Board Members to review the meeting schedules for February and March. There were no changes made to the schedules. Mr. Slayton wanted to know how many of the Board Members planned to attend the February 5th parade at Westgate. Mr. Slayton and Mr. Boone were the only Board Members that said they were certain of their attendance. Mr. Bergosh said that he was not sure but he was going to try to make it. Mr. Bergosh said that Mrs. Linda West, Coordinator of Board Affairs, had pointed out that the proposed budget calendar had listed February 15th and March 15th as tentative dates for budget update meetings. Mr. Bergosh noted that typically in past, those updates were scheduled for an hour before the regular monthly workshops; he asked if School Board Members wished to do the same for these updates. Mrs. Hightower questioned whether staff would have any indication at that time as to what the projected budget would be. Mr. Terry St. Cyr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Services, said he believed that the budget calendar with regard to the February 15th meeting was for the purpose of determining whether or not the School Board wanted to provide their budget priorities and that was typically the routine piece on that cycle where the School Board would get into that type of discussion. The Superintendent said that what he had done in the past was used his overview time in the regular monthly workshop to bring any updates on the budget. He was not sure what information staff would know about the budget at that time. He did note that the School District had received information that very day about the Florida Retirement System (FRS) ruling that at least settled that issue in terms of what those liabilities would be. However, he said that they still did not know what the Governor's budget would look like or what the House and Senate budgets would look like as that information probably would not be available until March or April. Once that information was received, the Superintendent said that staff would update the School Board. Mr. Bergosh said that if Mr. St. Cyr had something that he wanted to bring to the School Board, he could simply add it to the regular monthly workshop agenda instead of the

School Board calling a separate special meeting. Mrs. Hightower said that she appreciated the District Master Calendar but sometimes some of the things that the School Board Members have on their calendars are not on the District Master Calendar so she was still not real clear about what gets posted to the District Master Calendar and what does not. She also noted that there were some things on the District Master Calendar that were not complete such as the LDI Dinner that was scheduled that very night yet the District Master Calendar did not indicate the location of that event. She said there were also some events that were listed multiple times. Mrs. Hightower asked if Mrs. Cathy Irwin, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, was still the person who was responsible for posting events to the District Master Calendar. The Superintendent said that Mrs. Irwin was still the person responsible and with regard to the LDI Dinner, it was possible that she had posted that event at a time when the location had not yet been determined and then she apparently neglected to go back and add that information. The Superintendent said that he would ask Mrs. Irwin to be a little more careful with that. Mrs. Hightower said that she knew that posting events to the District Master Calendar was a very time consuming task to try to keep up with everything that was going on in the District, but she noted that a tool that was not accurate was not a good tool to have. Mr. Bergosh agreed.

- Status Update Request: Escambia County School District's Anticipated Dollar Amount of B.P. Oil Spill Settlement/Setting Prioritization for Spending of Such Proceeds - Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh said he would pull this item. He said he had requested that Mrs. Waters bring the School Board an update on the B.P. Oil Spill Settlement; however, after speaking with Mrs. Waters he found it would be a good idea to pull this item and have her give the School Board an explanation as to what she thinks is the best course of action. Mrs. Waters said that she had been in contact with Mr. Brian Barr and his staff at the law firm of Levin, Papantonio and that they were preparing this week, a number of presentments which was essentially a "Christmas list" of everything that could possibly be attributed to the acts of the defendant. Mrs. Waters said she wanted Mr. Barr to discuss that with the School Board and that it would be appropriate to schedule an Executive Session for that purpose so she would schedule that just as soon as Mr. Barr's staff was available.

- Standardized Commission Rate Percentage(s) for Sale of School Board Properties - Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh said that this was another item that he was going to pull. He asked the Superintendent if he wanted to address this issue and noted that he and the Superintendent had discussed this issue. The Superintendent said that he did not have a standardized commission rate discussion; however, he was prepared to talk about moving forward with the real estate RFP which was a topic later on this agenda that had been submitted by Mr. Slayton. The Superintendent noted that in December, there was an RFP for real estate services on the School Board's agenda that was pulled back because of some questions about how staff had presented the information. The Superintendent said he asked Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, and Mr. John Dombroskie, Director of Purchasing, to go back and reconvene the evaluation committee. He noted that with the RFP, the School District was attempting to obtain real estate services and was trying to get multiple companies to be able to assist. He pointed out that only two companies had submitted proposals, obviously with different prices. He gave an example of Company A that would sell property for the School District at a commission rate of 5% and Company B that would do so at a rate of 3%. The Superintendent said his objective was to protect the interest of the School District and so obviously, he would want to make sure that the company with the lower rate could be used to sell property. He said that the evaluation committee would reconvene and look at the proposals that had been submitted by the two companies and would then designate one of the companies to be a primary provider for each type of service (i.e., selling property, leasing property) based on the lowest rate in the proposals; therefore, if Company A had the lowest rate for selling real estate, they would be designed the primary and if Company B had the higher rate, they would be designed as the secondary. The Superintendent said he intended to present the evaluation committee's data to the School Board and to the two companies so that when the RFP was presented in February for the School Board's consideration, it would be clear which company would be designated as primary and secondary for each type of service based on the rates that each company provided in their proposals. Mrs. Hightower expressed some

concern that \$35,000 could be spent by the real estate firm without the School Board having any say. She realized that the \$35,000 was within the limits of the Superintendent's statutory spending limit but she felt as if the School Board might need to have more involvement in what was happening with regard to real estate services. The Superintendent said history would show that spending had never even come close to that amount in the past. Mrs. Hightower requested any activity beyond a sale that had been done while Scoggins had been the School Board's realtor. Mrs. Hightower requested that the contract specify the statutory language with regard to the Superintendent's spending limit rather than listing an actual amount of \$35,000. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, Mr. Slayton said that the Superintendent's proposal had clarified his major concerns on this issue.

- Enhancing Protection of Students and School Properties - *Bergosh*

Mr. Bergosh said he would postpone this topic until later in the workshop as it would "dovetail" with an item that the Superintendent would be discussing.

- Real Estate Contract/RFP – *Slayton*

This topic was addressed under the heading of "Standardized Commission Rate Percentage(s) for Sale of School Board Properties."

- Update on Second 9 Week First Grade Reading Retention Results - *Slayton*

Mr. Slayton noted that several months ago the School Board had received a document that gave them an idea of how the School District was doing in its efforts to have all first grade students reading on grade level in terms of the potential number of students who would not be able to progress to the second grade based on results from the first nine weeks of school. He wondered when the School Board might be receiving an update on that information as it related to the results from the second nine weeks. He also wanted to know if the School District was prepared for the number of students that could possibly be retained at the end of the school year. The Superintendent believed that the School District would be prepared as it would at any time with regard to the retention of students. He noted that it was a staffing issue whether a child progressed to the second grade or remained in the first grade and it would not make a difference in terms of the number of teachers. He said that the results from the second nine weeks grading period were not yet available as there had been some problems with the assessment of students in terms of the FAIR testing. He said that Florida had experienced many issues with FAIR testing in December and that school districts including Escambia County, had been unable to complete FAIR testing prior to the Christmas holidays. He noted that the test window had been extended to the end of this week so there were some schools that had been giving the test even as late as this week. The Superintendent said that once all of the data was available, the parent-teacher conferences would begin for only those first grade students who were at-risk of retention. He said that staff would compile an update that would include the number of students who were at-risk of retention and the number of parents of at-risk students who had actually participated in a parent-teacher conference. The Superintendent believed that the conferences would probably start at the beginning of February and once all of the information was available, he could either send the update to School Board Members via email or he could bring the information as a topic of discussion for the February Special Workshop. Mr. Slayton and Mrs. Moultrie both indicated that they would prefer that the information be presented during the February Special Workshop so that the topic could be discussed.

- Human Resources School Board Agenda Items – *Superintendent*

Dr. Alan Scott, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services, gave a brief review of the changes that were being made to the process for submitting and displaying Human Resource items on the School Board's monthly agenda. Dr. Scott explained the new process which would eliminate the lengthy listing of employee names on the face of the School Board's agenda and would instead involve a generic

agenda item listing with the detailed list of employees names provided as the backup documentation. He said the new process would be implemented beginning with the February Regular Meeting agenda items.

- School Security – Superintendent

At this time, Mr. Bergosh addressed his earlier topic entitled “Enhancing Protection of Students and School Properties.” Mr. Bergosh said he had submitted this topic in response to the tragic shootings that took place on December 14, 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Since that day, Mr. Bergosh said he had been doing a lot of thinking about and researching of the issue of school security. The Superintendent interrupted so that he could advise School Board Members to be non-specific in their discussion about school security so as not to compromise the safety of students. He noted that school security was one of the few areas which Florida Statute would allow for discussion in a closed-door session. Mr. Bergosh continued on topic by narrating a PowerPoint® [presentation](#) that posed the question, “What can we do in the short, near, and long term to protect students and property and how can we pay for it?” Mr. Bergosh presented the following suggestions for the Superintendent’s Task Force to consider:

Short –Term

- *Half-Cent Sales Tax allocation for school site hardening (badge access doors, fencing, alarms with panic buttons, etc.)*
- *Pull-back and reassessment of other large, currently contemplated general revenue expenditures district-wide.*
- *Commission a professional, independent district-wide security assessment from a firm/entity specializing in this field with a report to Board and Superintendent’s task force at a closed meeting.*
- *Immediate and sustained lobbying effort to secure additional funds from Tallahassee for security.*

Near-Term

- *Expand the SRO Program, if possible and if under same cost sharing protocol as existing agreement(s)*
- *Armed, trained security personnel?*
- *School Police Force?*
- *Site based personnel given training, mental counseling, and if qualified, license to carry concealed weapon?*
- *Continued, sustained lobbying effort to secure additional state funds from Tallahassee and Washington DC for security enhancements and personnel*

Long-Term

- *Advocating for the funding of sustainable long-term effective security measures that protect students and property*
- *Sustained lobbying efforts to secure continuing funds from Tallahassee and Washington DC for security*
- *Modeling successful practices from districts nationwide*

Mr. Bergosh responded to general questions posed by Board Members about the information outlined in his presentation specifically related to the case study that he had included with regard to the Tulsa Oklahoma School District police force. Mrs. Hightower said she appreciated the research that Mr. Bergosh had done in regards to the topic of school security.

The Superintendent then addressed his topic of “School Security.” He said the School District was attempting to take a thoughtful, methodical approach to the issue of school security by forming a Campus Security Task Force comprised of representatives from the School District, from local law enforcement agencies, and from the community. The Superintendent said that he would be asking the Campus Security Task Force to consider his proposal for the establishment of a School Marshal program under the direction of local law enforcement agencies. Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, reviewed a [handout](#) that he had provided to Board Members that outlined information about the Campus Security Task Force, including the team composition, team mission and objectives, process summary and rationale, and communication plan.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

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

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair

PENDING BOARD APPROVAL