

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, MAY 16, 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 May 1, 2013 - Legal No. 1597722

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- June through August 2013 Calendar - Bergosh

There were no changes to the schedule for June 2013:

June 6th Special Workshop, 3:30 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

June 17th Regular Workshop, 10:00 a.m., Room 160, Hall Center

June 18th Regular Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

June 25th Special Workshop, 3:00 p.m., Superintendent's Conference Room, McDaniel Building

There were no changes to the schedule for July 2013:

July 11th Regular Workshop, 2:00 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

July 16th Regular Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

July 23rd Special Meeting, 5:00 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

July 30th Special Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

There were no changes to the schedule for August 2013:

August 15th Special Workshop, 3:00 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

August 16th Regular Workshop, 9:00 a.m., Room 160, Hall Center

August 20th Regular Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

- Enhancing Physical Security of General Counsel's Office - Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh recalled that during the April 29, 2013 Special Board Meeting, concerns about security with regard to the location of the General Counsel's office was discussed among School Board Members and Mrs. Waters. Mr. Bergosh said he had since had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Superintendent and that the Superintendent had said he would look into the issue. Mr. Bergosh said he wanted to hear from School Board Members and Mrs. Waters on any concerns that they had on this issue. Mrs. Waters explained that being the first door people saw when coming off of the elevator had caused her office to have a lot of traffic. She said if the door to her office was open, people would come right in and interrupt her legal assistant/paralegal, Ms. Sharon

Goshorn. She said that sometimes when she and Ms. Goshorn were discussing confidential matters in their office, people would walk in even though the door was shut. If they kept the door locked, she said that presented a different problem in that staff then felt that they could not come in; and also because people would knock and Ms. Goshorn would have to get up and go over to open the door for them which was even more of a disruption. Mrs. Waters said it was really not ideal to have a confidential office in such close proximity to the elevator. She recalled that before they had moved into the McDaniel Building, there were no doors to their offices in the main hallway; rather there was only one door to Ms. Goshorn's office that was located within the open area of the School Board's suite. She said the previous set-up might be something to consider now or perhaps Ms. Goshorn and herself could move into two of the School Board Member's offices and those two School Board Members could move into their current offices. Mr. Slayton wondered if the problem might be that there was not sufficient signage for people coming off of the elevator to understand how to get to the appropriate office(s). Mrs. Waters indicated that there was sufficient signage, yet people would still open their office door anyway to ask for directions to other offices. Mr. Slayton wanted to know just how often these interruptions were occurring. Mrs. Waters said it was typically several times each day. The Superintendent said he was not sure that frequency was there. Mr. Slayton wanted to know if the interruptions were from visitors or staff. Mrs. Hightower was of the opinion that it did not matter whether it was visitors or staff who were just walking in to the General Counsel's office; she said the primary issue was that the General Counsel's office was supposed to be a secure office just like any other office/room where secure documents were located and where confidential conversations may be occurring. She believed that the primary issue was that the current location was not a secure place for sensitive information to be. It was suggested that Ms. Goshorn and Mrs. Waters could switch offices with two of the School Board Member's offices. There was however, some concern that School Board Members offices had less space than the General Counsel's current office which could present a problem in that they would not have adequate room to house all of their files, etc. Mr. Slayton noted that the doors being in the hallway presented part of the problem as they were very visible to those coming off of the elevator. He asked Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, to respond as to whether or not it would be feasible to seal the current (front facing) doors in both offices and put in a (side) door in Ms. Goshorn's office that opened directly into the open area of the School Board's suite. He believed that would eliminate the ability of people being able to see from the hallway that there was an entrance into their offices. Mr. Dennis said that without looking at that particular wall for utilities, he could not answer that question but Mr. Slayton's suggestion did seem practical. Mr. Slayton suggested that the School Board just let the Superintendent and Mr. Dennis look at the whole situation. The Superintendent said that staff could explore the two options with Mrs. Waters. Mr. Boone recalled that before they had moved to the McDaniel building, there was a door just inside the School Board's suite that entered into what was now Ms. Goshorn's office. He believed that the best solution was to have the two doors in the hallway removed and a door reinserted just inside the School Board's suite; which would eliminate there being any doors in the hallway.

- Formation of School Board Advisory Committees – Policy, Budget, Facilities, Curriculum, Oversight - Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh reminded his fellow School Board Members that he had previously addressed this issue during the April 18, 2013 Special Workshop; he said he wanted to expand the discussion on this issue during this session. He said he had looked around at what some other school districts were doing and thought he would bring this idea of the formation of School Board advisory committees as a discussion topic for the School Board, the Superintendent, and staff. He believed that one of the benefits of forming School Board advisory committees was that the School Board would have additional time for study. He noted that oftentimes something would be presented to the School Board and there was not much time before they had to make a definitive decision on the matter. He said he liked the idea of forming School Board advisory committees because it would also allow for input from constituents, teachers, parents, and maybe even students. He said it would also serve as an avenue for presentation of differing ideas and opinions. He noted that oftentimes, the School Board would receive a policy and it was really from the mindset of the people doing the work and really tailored to what was going to be the most beneficial to them. He believed that the formation of School Board advisory committees would provide an opportunity for a "third reading" of proposals before policies were enacted. He noted that legislative bodies around the country would often have a "first reading" then a "second reading" and finally a "third reading" before they voted on the matter. He said the way it was done now, although it was the School Board's policies, it was the Superintendent's committees that would formulate the policy and then bring it to the School Board. However, the School Board oftentimes did not have enough time to do a lot with the recommendation due to workshops that were constrained by time. He noted that there were obviously limitations to the formation of School Board

advisory committees, such as the committee would have only the authority to make recommendations to the School Board and of course, those recommendations would not obligate the School Board or the Superintendent in any way. He also noted that there were logistical challenges to the formation of School Board advisory committees in that a committee would require significant man-hours to complete their work and a significant amount of staff time and effort necessary to schedule, agenda, and advertise meetings. Mr. Bergosh reviewed a policy development timeline that was outlined in his Power Point [presentation](#):

- Step 1: Policy brought to School Board for first reading*
- Step 2: Policy sent to committee for their review and recommendations*
- Step 3: Committee reports to School Board/ Policy modifications made/ Differences worked out/ Second reading*
- Step 4: Reconciled version of policy advertised*
- Step 5: Final version of policy voted upon by School Board at Regular Meeting/Third reading*

Mr. Bergosh then reviewed a very detailed flow chart of his “Proposed Policy Review Process with Board Committee Input” that was included in his Power Point presentation. He also included examples of policies on committees that he had gathered from several school boards around country including, Polk County, Florida; Walton County, Florida; Wayne, Pennsylvania; Montgomery County, Maryland; and Dayton, Ohio. Mr. Bergosh pointed out that school boards around the country took on a more active role than this School Board in that they were more involved in the process of developing policy, formulating recommendations for budgets, and formulating recommendations for strategic planning.

Mr. Bergosh also included the School Board’s current policy language in his Power Point presentation:

Committees may be formed and members be appointed by the Board when deemed necessary or desirable. The duties of any such committee shall be outlined at the time of its formation; except for standing committees or as otherwise indicated by the Board, committees shall be automatically dissolved when the Board accepts a committee’s final report. Each Board Member shall be notified of all committee meetings, but shall have no vote on any committee unless the member is serving as a committee member. All meetings of Board committees shall be advertised in accordance with Government-in-the-Sunshine and open to the public. Mr. Bergosh said he realized that the argument could be made that the current language would allow for the School Board to form a committee; however, he preferred the following proposed language as it was much more prescriptive regarding the formation of committees:

Committees may be formed and members appointed by the Board when deemed necessary or desirable, if requested by a majority of the board, or if called for by the Chairman of the board. The Chairman of the Board shall recommend the appointment or removal of committee members. In making all appointment recommendations, the Chairman shall take into consideration the training and special talents of individual Board members. A review of committee appointments may be initiated by a majority of the Board. The duties of any such committee shall be outlined at the time of its formation; except for standing committees, which shall be Policy, Budget, Facilities, Curriculum, and Oversight, or as otherwise indicated by the Board, committees shall be automatically dissolved when the Board accept a committee’s final report. Each Board Member shall be notified of all committee meetings, and invited to all such meetings. The board shall, when desirable, act as a committee-of-the-whole. No Committee, including the Committee-of-the-whole, shall have legislative or administrative power.

Committee Makeup:

Each standing board committee shall consist of a minimum of three board members, one of which shall serve as chairman, two members of the community recommended to the Chairman of the Board by the Superintendent, the School Board General Counsel, and one member of the collective bargaining group, recommended by the Association president. The Chairman of the Board, Superintendent of Schools, and the one associated Assistant Superintendent (Operations, Curriculum, Finance) per committee shall be, ex officio, individual members of each such committee. The District Auditor shall be a member of the Oversight committee in perpetuity. Standing committees shall meet bi-monthly or more frequently if required. The standing committees of the board shall rotate annually and be re-constituted at the organizational meeting in November of each year.

Mrs. Moultrie thanked Mr. Bergosh for his research on this topic. She liked the idea of forming School Board advisory committees but said that she would need an opportunity to review all of the information that had just

been provided to her. Mrs. Hightower said she would agree with the formation of School Board advisory committees but only if there was a specific reason for doing so. She said Mr. Bergosh's suggestions were admirable, but said she believed that the current language already provided for the formation of a School Board advisory committee when needed. She said that from what she was hearing, it was Mr. Bergosh's desire that the School Board be a little more proactive in forming its own committees instead of just going along with the committees that were formed by the Superintendent. Mr. Bergosh responded that he would like the School Board to have its own advisory committees; rather than just having one Board Member or one Board Member representative on the Superintendent's committees. The Superintendent noted that in his opinion, the committees were not just his committees but rather both his and the School Board's committees. He said that if the School Board wanted to sit in on committee meetings, there would be absolutely no objection from him. Mr. Slayton agreed with the Superintendent's statement in that the committees were both his and the School Board's. Mr. Slayton suggested that if a School Board Member was interested in being a part of a certain committee that they let the Superintendent know because the meeting would need to be properly advertised.

Mr. Bergosh said he appreciated the discussion and would ask his fellow School Board Members to review the information that he had provided and perhaps they could provide feedback at the next monthly workshop.

- Holding Special Meetings of the School Board Monthly, Quarterly, or As Needed to Workshop Board Rule Chapter Revisions – *Bergosh*

Mr. Bergosh said this was another idea he had that was similar to the previous topic he had just discussed. He said that when the School Board was looking at policy revisions, particularly chapter revisions, it seemed like there was only a very short window of time before the School Board had to make a decision. He had been told that in the past, a previous School Board had often held special meetings to “workshop” chapter revisions. He wondered if the current School Board Members would be interested in doing something similar so that they would actually have the ability to suggest changes and then vote on those changes. Mrs. Hightower said she supported Mr. Bergosh's suggestion that the School Board hold special meetings as needed to “workshop” policy revisions. Upon inquiry by the Superintendent, Mr. Bergosh said the decision about whether or not to have a special meeting would be driven by the discussion at the board table. He noted that simple revisions based on legislative changes probably would not necessitate a special meeting; however, significant changes to policy chapters, the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, or the Student Progression Plan, probably would. Mrs. Hightower believed that the School Board already had the authority to hold a special meeting for the purpose of “workshopping” any item presented to them on an agenda. She noted that if a majority of the School Board felt like they were not prepared to move forward with an item, they could either postpone any action on that item until a later date or they could “workshop” the item at a special meeting. She agreed with Mr. Bergosh in that for simple matters there was no need to hold a separate meeting for discussion; however, a significant matter could necessitate the need for a special meeting. Mr. Slayton said that he did not think any of the School Board Members would object to holding a special meeting when necessary. Mr. Bergosh said it was his understanding that only the Superintendent or the Chairman could call a special meeting. Mrs. Hightower clarified that if necessary, a majority of the School Board could also call a special meeting.

- Drug Dog Visits this School Year – *Hightower*

Mrs. Hightower said that a principal had recently shared with her that he had not seen as much of the drug dogs this year as he had the previous year. She asked the Superintendent if the School Board was going to receive another report like they received last year that told them how many visits the drug dogs had made to the various schools throughout the School District. She also referred to a recent article in the *Independent News* that commented on the ineffectiveness of the drug dog visits. The Superintendent provided the following information regarding canine drug searches for the 2012-2013 school year:

-As of April 23, 2013, a total of 296 canine drug searches (“sweeps”) had been conducted in middle and high schools, resulting in 29 alerts by the canines (10% of all searches)

-There had been 5 arrests resulting from drugs that were found as a result of a canine alert

-There had been a number of expulsions resulting from drugs that were found as a result of a canine alert

The Superintendent said the biggest benefit of the canine drug searches was that they served as a deterrent for a student to bring drugs onto a school campus. He noted that the point of the canine searches was not necessarily to find drugs but rather to make a student think twice before bringing drugs to school. The Superintendent said that he had recently spoken with principals about the School District's Comprehensive Drug Plan. He noted that this

was the end of the third year of the Comprehensive Plan and it was his sense that the School District “had lost a little bit of energy” with regard to student engagement. He said that his charge to principals was to find a way to reinvigorate the Plan for next school year, particularly with regard to student engagement. At the request of Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent said he could provide a report comparing 2012 and 2013 with regard to not only the drug dogs, but also how many students had been suspended from extra-curricular activities due to testing positive for drugs and how many students had been arrested as a result of a canine drug alert.

- Order of Board Agenda Items – *Superintendent*

The Superintendent outlined a [proposed change in the order of Board agenda](#) items based on the requests made by School Board Members during the April 18, 2013 Special Workshop and also based on Mrs. Waters’ review of *Robert’s Rules of Order*. The Superintendent said that if there was no objection from any of the School Board Members, the new format of the agenda would become effective in July 2013. Mrs. Hightower wanted to know if *Robert’s Rules of Order* specified that the Approval of Minutes had to be a separate item from the Consent Agenda. Mrs. Waters said that the outline provided in *Robert’s Rules of Order* did not have a Consent Agenda section; rather that was a section that the School Board had always had as a part of its New Business. Because minutes were not considered New Business, it was her opinion that the Approval of Minutes should not be combined into the Consent Agenda which consisted of new business items. There was no objection from any School Board Members as to the new format discussed.

- Substitute Pay – *Superintendent*

The Superintendent said that a few months ago there was a task force that worked on substitute teacher strategies. He said the task force had created some strategies about increasing the pay for substitutes but he had never mentioned it during an open meeting because the School District was involved in bargaining with employees and he wanted to wait until that process was had concluded before bringing it as a discussion topic. He said that Dr. Alan Scott, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services, would present the task force recommendations, which were outlined on a [handout](#) that had been provided to School Board Members. He noted that the salary schedule had not been changed at that point but if the School Board Members had no objections to the suggested salary schedule changes, then it would be submitted for the School Board’s approval to be effective as of the new school year. Dr. Scott said that one of the recommendations from the task force was to take a look at the rate of pay for the School District’s substitute teachers. He said the task force had looked at the rate of pay in surrounding counties, including those counties in Alabama that bordered Escambia County, FL as well as Santa Rosa County and Okaloosa County. He said the task force discovered that for basic substitute teacher pay the School District had the lowest rate of any of the surrounding counties. The task force unanimously agreed that the School District needed to readdress the rate of pay for its substitute teachers.

Change the salary schedule for substitute teachers:

Conditional subs : \$58.43 per day (\$7.79* per hour)

A.A degree subs: \$65.00 per day (\$8.67 per hour)

BA degree subs: \$75.00 per day (\$10.00 per hour)

Long-Term subs: \$150.00 per day after the 20th day (\$20.00 per hour)

Current rate of pay for beginning teacher \$22.8748 per hour

**It was noted that \$7.79 per hour was the current minimum wage*

Dr. Scott said that if the School Board had no objections to the suggested salary schedule changes for substitute teachers, then these changes would be submitted for the School Board’s approval as part of the Miscellaneous Salary Schedule. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, Dr. Scott confirmed that the suggested salary schedule changes would put the School District competitive with surrounding counties. Mrs. Hightower said that she would really like for substitute teachers with a B.A. or B.S. degree receive \$80.00 per day.

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 5:15 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair