

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, JANUARY 17, 2014

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Regular Workshop at 9:00 a.m., in Room 160, at the J.E. Hall Educational Services Center, 30 East Texar Drive, Pensacola, Florida, with the following present:

Chair: Mrs. Linda Moultrie Vice Chair: Mrs. Patricia Hightower

Board Members: Mr. Jeff Bergosh
Mr. Gerald W. Boone
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 January 3, 2014 - [Legal No. 1615672](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Moultrie called the Regular Workshop to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. COMMENTS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent noted the following changes that had been made to the January 21, 2014 Regular Meeting agenda since initial publication: Item V.a.1.b. ADDED and AMENDED, Item V.b.3.A.3. DELETED, Item V.b.3.A.4. AMENDED, Item V.b.3.A.7.b. AMENDED, and Item V.b.3.C.1. ADDED.

Updated Discovery Education Data

The Superintendent noted that prior to the Christmas holidays, he had provided School Board Members with data from Discovery Ed; however, that data did not include all of the early grades so he provided the handout that contained the additional data. The Superintendent said he was hearing from most teachers that Discovery Ed was a “real game changer” because teachers now had a reliable valid measurement in real-time as they were working with students. [Test A was administered in September 2013 and Test B was administered in December 2013] Data from the first two tests shows that every grade in every subject measured (reading, math, and science) had shown an increase, although as to be expected, some of those increases were not as dramatic as others. He said the key point was that students had made progress from one assessment to the next in every grade (K through 8). He also pointed out that the support of this software product was primarily due to the high correlation with the FCAT. It was noted that a third assessment, Test C, would be administered early in March; the Superintendent said he would provide the results of that assessment shortly after the Spring Break holidays.

III. MINUTES

- a. 10-07-13 Special Workshop
- b. 12-12-13 Special Workshop
- c. 12-13-13 Regular Workshop
- d. 12-17-13 Regular Meeting

Mrs. Moultrie noted that all of the School Board's meeting minutes were now current. She asked if there were any questions or concerns regarding the minutes as listed; however, there were none. Mr. Bergosh took a moment to thank Mrs. Holley DeWees, Administrative Recording Secretary, for her efforts in reaching out to all of the School Board Members regarding the minutes listed on this month's agenda.

IV. COMMITTEE/DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

-No items discussed

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

-No items submitted

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. PROPOSED ADDITIONS OR REVISIONS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT RULES

1. Rule(s) Adoption

AMENDED/ADD

- b. Notice of Intent to Adopt ~~Amendments~~ to the District School Board Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures (SP&P)

Mrs. Hightower wanted to know if the term "amendments" had also been removed from the original item that the School Board approved for advertisement at the December 17, 2013 Regular Meeting. Mrs. Waters confirmed that the term "amendments" had been included in the item that was previously approved for advertisement. She did not believe there was a problem as far as the term "amendments" being included in the advertisement yet removed from the adoption. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, the Superintendent confirmed that the only change that had been made to this item was the removal of the term "amendments" from the Notice of Intent and that no changes had been made to the actual document (SP&P). The Superintendent confirmed that the SP&P had not changed since it was previously approved for advertisement at the December 17, 2013 Regular Meeting.

2. Permission to Advertise

- a. Notice of Intent to Advertise Naming the football stadium at Northview High School the Tommy Weaver Memorial Stadium

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Moultrie, the Superintendent confirmed that the proper procedures had been followed with regard to this request. He noted that Northview's school advisory council (SAC) had been involved in the process and the request itself came from the Northview community. It was noted that Mr. Tommy Weaver was the late husband of Mrs. Gail Weaver, principal of Northview High School. The Superintendent thought it important to note that Mrs. Weaver had nothing to do with this request; rather the request came from a group of citizens within the community.

b. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Curriculum

B. Continuous Improvement

2. Escambia County School District Strategic Plan 2013-2014

Quality

Goal Q.2 – To improve attendance and discipline of students

Q.2.2. – ~~Create an environment for instruction that will result in a reduction in the number of incidents of out-of-school suspensions.~~

Out-of-School Suspensions

2009-10 BASELINE: 10,311 incidents

2011-12 TARGET: 8,070 incidents

2011-12 ACTUAL: 8,485 incidents

2012-13 TARGET: 8,061 incidents

Reduce the number of students who are suspended from school.

2012-13 BASELINE: 3,800

2013-14 TARGET: 3,700

Mr. Bergosh said he believed that the strategic plan school not only account for the number of out-of-school suspensions but also the number of in-school suspensions. [It was noted that strategy Q.2.2. did not account for in-school suspensions but rather out-of-school suspensions only.] Mr. Bergosh's primary concern was that it would be difficult for parents to determine if student discipline had improved by only showing the number of in-school suspensions yet not also showing the number of in-school suspensions. He believed the strategy should be to reduce both the number of students who are suspended from school by out-of-school suspension and in-school suspension. Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director of High School Education, first clarified that the strategic planning committee for "quality" had decided to change the measurement from *incidents* to *students* as there were some students who accounted for a number of incidents and thus the committee wanted to be able to determine whether the number of students was being reduced. Mrs. Spooner also explained that in-school suspension was a strategy used by principals in order to keep students in school; the committee thought that principals might not be so inclined to use that strategy if the School District began to monitor the number of in-school suspensions. The Superintendent said the number of in-school suspensions was accounted for in each school's behavior management plan. He noted that the priority for the strategic plan was to find appropriate ways to reduce the number of out-of-school suspension. Mr. Slayton disagreed with Mr. Bergosh that the number of in-school suspensions should be tracked in the strategic plan; he commented on the benefit of principals having the option to use in-school suspensions as a "tool" for managing student discipline. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, the Superintendent confirmed that the number of in-school suspensions was tracked by school and that information could be compiled if a School Board Member wished to review that information. Mrs. Hightower requested that School Board Members receive a report at the end of school year on each school's success with improving student discipline.

2. Finance and Business Services
 - A. Finance
 3. 2014-15 Class Size Compliance Plan

Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, the Superintendent confirmed that the School District had been “slightly” out of compliance with the class size mandate by about 21 FTE. The Superintendent noted that all elementary schools were in compliance; however, middle and high schools were not. He advised this proposed class size compliance plan for the next school year was required for the appeal that had been filed with the DOE. Mr. Bergosh recalled that over the past several years, the School District had received a small amount of money from the penalties assessed to those school districts that were out of compliance with the class size mandate; he wanted to know if being out of compliance this year would impact the School District ability to collect its portion of those penalty fees. The Superintendent responded that whether or not the School District received those funds would depend on the DOE’s ruling on the School District’s appeal. Mr. Bergosh wanted his fellow School Board Members to know that he had taken a special interest in this issue as he did not believe the current penalty process was equitable. His concern was that many school districts, such as Escambia County, had made great efforts and expended much of their funds in order to meet the class size mandate while other school districts had done a “halfway job” at meeting compliance; for those school districts there was essentially no penalty other than a fee that was just small fraction of what those school districts would have been required to spend in order to meet compliance. Mr. Bergosh reported that there was a movement afoot in the Legislature that would change the class size calculation to school level rather than classroom level. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, the Superintendent confirmed that the School District would have met class size for the current school year had the calculation been made at the school level rather than classroom level. The Superintendent pointed out that charter schools were currently measured on class size at the school level; it was his belief that regular public schools should be measured the same. Mr. Bergosh agreed that class size compliance for regular public schools should be calculated the same as charter schools.

4. District School Board of Escambia County, Florida Audit Report: Federal and OMB Circular A-133 Compliance for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, Mr. Terry St. Cyr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Services, confirmed that the backup documentation for the audit report did not include a copy of the independent auditor’s management letter; he planned to submit that letter along with the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) as part of the School Board’s February Regular Meeting agenda. Mr. Bergosh wanted to know who had authored the management responses to the audit findings. He remarked that the response to the finding regarding annual facility inspections was quite terse. (The management response Mr. Bergosh referred to: *The District plans to address and perform annual inspections in the 2014 fiscal year according to prior practice.*) Mr. St. Cyr said he had authored the responses and he did not believe the responses were “terse” and noted that he had reviewed the responses with the auditor and the auditor had no issue with any of the responses.

Mrs. Hightower referred to the auditor’s finding regarding the timely review of bank reconciliations. (Finding: *Condition – During our testing of cash, we noted that monthly*

bank reconciliations were not being reviewed by management in a timely manner.) Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, Mr. St. Cyr explained that bank statements were reconciled constantly. He clarified that the auditors had made a comment about the bank reconciliations because staff had gotten “excessively” behind on the bank statements during the conversion to the Skyward software during the 2013 fiscal year. The Superintendent advised that the reconciliation of bank statements was now current. Mr. St. Cyr clarified that the reconciliation of the School District’s many bank statements was constant in that it was a daily process. Mrs. Hightower wanted to know School Board Members would know that those reconciliations were being done in a timely manner if not for the auditor’s report. Mr. St. Cyr said they probably would not know. The Superintendent noted that the matter of the bank reconciliations was previously addressed with the School Board at a Special Meeting in July 2013; at that time the School Board was aware that staff had fallen behind with bank reconciliations during the Skyward conversion. The Superintendent said it was his understanding that since that time, staff had been keeping up with the bank reconciliations. Mr. St. Cyr once again explained that the reconciliation of bank statements was part of his staff’s routine schedule; he noted however, that reconciliations would always be a couple of months behind “real time” simply due to the nature of the reconciliation process. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Moultrie, Mr. St. Cyr said the auditors probably would not have cited the School District had the bank reconciliations only been three or four months behind.

C. Budgeting

3. Scrap List I for January 2014

Mr. Boone said he noticed there were quite a few computers listed on Scrap List I for January 2014. He wondered if there had been any organizations request obsolete functional computers. Mr. Tom Ingram, Director of Information Technology, said that to his knowledge, there was only one (1) outstanding request for obsolete functional computers; however, the School District had not discarded any obsolete functional computers since the summer.

3. Human Resource Services

A. Instructional/Professional

7. Special Requests

- a. Approve Donna Harper to serve as President of EEA for the term of January 2, 2014 through June 30, 2014, pursuant to Article IV, Section 4, Paragraph A of the Master Contract between the Escambia County School District and EEA.

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Moultrie, the Superintendent confirmed that the six (6) month term for Donna Harper to serve as President of EEA was correct; the shorten term was due to the fact that Ms. Harper was, in accordance with the EEA bylaws, only filling the position until the next election. It was noted that the former President of EEA, Ms. Kathy Breakall, had recently retired.

- d. Approve Lynn S. Hood to receive her regular hourly rate of pay funded by Reading Allocation, to work as an instructor for CRISS Training on January 30, 2014 and February 20, 2014, for two days, 8 hours per class and from January 27, 2014 through March 3, 2014, 16 hours preparing, follow-up and evaluation, for a total of 32 hours.

Mrs. Hightower felt that the wording on this request was confusing in that it appeared that Lynn S. Hood would be paid twice for work that would be done on January 30th and February 20th but also from January 27th through March 3rd (which included January 30th and February 20th). The Superintendent clarified that Ms. Hood would not be paid twice; rather she would be paid for performing different duties: (1) instruction and (2) preparing, follow-up and evaluation.

c. ITEMS FROM THE BOARD

-No items submitted

d. ITEMS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

2. Student Discipline

- A. Recommend that, in accordance with Florida Statute 1006.09(2), student discipline number 14-10-951 will be allowed to return to regular school placement based on previous felony charges being reduced to misdemeanors.

Mr. Bergosh recalled that School Board Members had recently received a memorandum outlining a number of students who had received a changed of placement. While he recalled receiving similar memorandums in the past, it seemed as though, with this month in particular, there were many more students (approximately 20) receiving a change of placement than there had been in the past. He wondered if there might be some way of accounting for that on the School Board's agenda perhaps as a sub-heading entitled "Change of Placement" under Item V.d.2., Student Discipline so that the public would be aware of the number of the students who were being recommended for change of placement. He also requested an explanation regarding what seemed to be an increase in the number of students receiving a change of placement instead of expulsion for what appeared to be major offenses (i.e., drugs). The Superintendent said the committee's decision to recommend a change of placement would depend on the offense and taking into consideration the age of the student and the student's history of grades, attendance and discipline. He noted that change of placement was a way for a student to still be removed from the regular school and moved to an alternative setting but not expelled so it essentially gave them an opportunity to - that it was a possible for a student receiving a change of placement to earn their way back to regular school. Mr. Darriel White, Court Liaison, added that the committee reviews each student's case on an individual basis; if a student was recommended for change of placement it was because the committee did not feel that it didn't rise to the nature to bring it to the School Board as a recommendation for expulsion. Mrs. Hightower and Mr. Slayton disagreed with Mr. Bergosh's suggestion of listing the "change of placement" items on the agenda.

e. INTERNAL AUDITING

1. Inventory Adjustment Reports for twenty-one (21) cost centers

Mr. Bergosh said he appreciated that the response letters from principals to the Director of Internal Auditing were detailed and courteous. Mrs. Hightower said she was very impressed with the inventory adjustment reports, especially for those cost centers that had no audits findings at all. Mr. David Bryant, Director of Internal Auditing, said he too was pleased with the results of the audits, noting that the School District's loss ratio was incredibly low. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, Mr. Bryant confirmed that number of "missing/lost" items including all items that could not be located

whether that was due to theft, fire, flood, stolen, etc. He said that he would be working with the Superintendent's staff on a mechanism for separating those items that were missing and those that had been stolen; if separated the number was expected to drop even lower.

f. ITEMS FROM GENERAL COUNSEL

-No items submitted

VII. PUBLIC FORUM

Mrs. Moultrie called for public forum. The following speaker(s) requested to address the School Board:

Carissa Bergosh, School Liaison Office (SLO) – Pensacola Naval Air Station, informed the School Board that Trevor Romain, author and illustrator of children's self-help books, would be visiting Pensacola the week of February 10th and the week of May 5th to talk about the effects of deployment on military children. Mr. Romain was scheduled to visit the following the schools: Blue Angels Elementary, Hellen Caro Elementary, Navy Point Elementary, Pleasant Grove Elementary, Beulah Elementary, and Bailey Middle.

Update on Fingerprint Process for District Employees

[NOTE: *This topic was previously addressed at the January 16, 2014 Special Workshop.*] Dr. Alan Scott, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource Services, reported that the implementation of the Morpho Trust Fingerprint System had been postponed once again after developers discovered more technical problems with the pre-release review. Dr. Scott said that Mr. Keith Leonard, Director of Human Resource Services along with staff from the School District's Information Technology (IT) department would be meeting (via telephone) with representatives from Morpho Trust to discuss the matter; a revised "go live" date for on-line registration would be communicated to all School District employees as soon as possible. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent confirmed that "final payment" for the software had yet to be made to Morpho Trust.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Regular Workshop adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair