

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, OCTOBER 10, 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 (*arrived at 3:10 p.m.*)
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 September 27, 2013 – Legal No. 1609516

I. CALL TO ORDER/ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- Presentation by the Pensacola Young Professionals – Hightower

Mr. John Pfeiffer, Pensacola Young Professionals (PYP), narrated a brief PowerPoint [presentation](#) outlining results from the PYP's 2013 Quality of Life survey. [Mr. Pfeiffer provided each School Board Member and the Superintendent with a hard copy of the presentation but noted that it could also be accessed via penscolayp.com.] Mr. Pfeiffer's presentation focused on the specific results that were pertinent to the School District.

(Mr. Boone arrived at 3:10 p.m. during discussion of this topic.)

- October and November 2013 Calendar – Bergosh

There were no changes to the School Board's October schedule:

Special Workshop, October 10th, beginning at 3:00 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center
Regular Workshop, October 11th, beginning at 9:00 a.m., Room 160, Hall Center
Regular Meeting, October 15th, beginning at 5:30 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

There were no changes to the School Board's November schedule:

Special Workshop, November 14th, beginning at 3:00 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center
Regular Workshop, November 15th, beginning at 9:00 a.m., Room 160, Hall Center
Regular Meeting, November 19th, beginning at 5:30 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

The following meeting was also scheduled:

Organizational Meeting, November 19th, beginning at 5:00 p.m., Room 160, Hall Center

- Strategic Plan Process – Bergosh

Mr. Bergosh recalled that the School Board had received a Strategic Plan document the previous month and the discussion at that time was that perhaps a special session should be scheduled for School Board Members to discuss the plan and provide input to the Superintendent and his staff.

The Superintendent recalled that in the past, School Board Members had expressed concern that they had not been given an opportunity to provide input at the beginning of the planning process. He pointed out that last month's discussion on the Strategic Plan was actually the initial opportunity for School Board Members to provide input. He further clarified that the document that was provided was actually last year's Strategic Plan and noted that the planning committees had not yet met as they were awaiting input from the School Board. In answer to questions posed by Mr. Bergosh and Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent advised that the committees would not be able to set targets/goals until they had received their end of year data from the 2012-2013 school year.

The following suggestions were made by School Board Members:

Mrs. Hightower suggested that the document should not only reflect the goals for the business aspect of the School District, but should also address the goals for satisfying all stakeholders (i.e. parents, teachers, employees, students).

(Page 2) Mrs. Hightower suggested that Algebra should be addressed since it would be a "key piece" in assessing the quality of the School District's education.

(Page 2) Mr. Bergosh suggested that for clarity, a note should be added to indicate what type of measurement scale was used (i.e., 5-point, 10-point).

(Page 3) Mrs. Hightower and Mr. Bergosh suggested that a goal for "closing the achievement gap between races" should be added.

Mrs. Hightower also suggested that each school using positive behavior support (PBS) should be listed somewhere in the plan.

Mr. Bergosh suggested that graduation data should be reported using the federal graduation rate since that was the reporting mechanism that the State was now using.

The Superintendent said that all suggestions mentioned during this session would be presented to the planning committees for their consideration. At the request of Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent said he would advise the School Board of all committee meetings once scheduled. Mrs. Hightower's thought was that each School Board Member could attend a different planning meeting thereby putting them "at the table" as the committees were going through the planning process.

- Alarm Systems for Schools Using Half Cent Sales Tax Funds - Boone

Mr. Boone recalled that there had been several break-ins at schools throughout the District. It was his understanding that the Facilities Department had begun to install alarm systems in some of the schools and would continue to do so as long as funds were available. Mr. Boone inquired as to the possibility of using the Half-Cent Sales Tax to fund additional alarm systems. The Superintendent advised that the School District had actually developed an efficient and economical way to install and monitor additional school alarm systems using existing employees. He noted that help from local law enforcement, along with monitored alarm systems had helped dramatically reduce the instances of burglaries and vandalism. The Superintendent said he would prefer to conserve funds from the Half-Cent Sales Tax for other more costly school security needs (i.e., fencing, surveillance systems).

- Low Enrollment at Woodham Middle School - Boone

Mr. Boone was concerned with the low student enrollment at Woodham Middle School. He was also concerned that the Woodham campus was too large for such few students. The Superintendent acknowledged that Woodham was one of the District's smaller middle schools, but noted in fact, that Warrington was now the smallest. He advised that part of the enrollment problem at Warrington was a direct result of its school grade; yet District-wide there had been some shifting due to population changes or school choice created by school grades and/or career academies. Mr. Boone believed that it would be a better use of district facilities for West Florida High School to occupy the Woodham campus. One of his primary concerns was that there were certainly parts of Woodham's campus (i.e., classrooms, athletic facilities) that were either underutilized or not used at all due to the low student enrollment. Mr. Bergosh agreed that the Woodham campus was better suited for West Florida High School especially with its athletic facilities which included a football field, tennis courts, track and two gymnasiums which were things that the current West Florida campus was lacking. Mr. Slayton also believed that the Woodham campus had an abundance of facilities more suitable for a high school that would meet the needs of West Florida. Neither Mr. Slayton nor Mr. Bergosh understood why School District administration had not taken a strong look at the possibility of relocating West Florida to the Woodham campus. The Superintendent said he was not opposed to looking into the possibility of the suggested relocation; however, he believed that the biggest challenge would be determining what would be done with the middle school students currently attending Woodham. He cited several issues with moving Woodham students to the current West Florida High School campus, including the fact that there would then be middle school age students on a campus with adults; such a situation would most likely necessitate a change in the design of the current West Florida campus. Mrs. Hightower said she would be willing to consider a possible relocation. The Superintendent noted that he and his staff would need ample time to look into the matter before bringing forth a recommendation to the School Board.

- Next Steps for Low Performing Schools - Hightower

Mrs. Hightower requested that School Board Members be provided with a report outlining the data from each assessment that was conducted by each of the low performing schools so that School Board Members could review the data themselves and determine whether those schools were making progress. The Superintendent advised that a total of three (3) assessments would be conducted. The first "baseline" assessment had already been conducted, a second assessment would occur prior to the Christmas holidays, and the third and last assessment would occur late February in

preparation for the FCAT. Mrs. Hightower said that if possible, she would also like to receive any information the Superintendent received that showed whether or not those schools were being successful in the areas of student engagement and parental involvement. At the request of Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent agreed to provide, at the special discussion workshop in January, a report showing the first and second assessments for each low performing school.

- Update on Parent Conferencing in Low Performing Schools – Moultrie

Upon inquiry by Mrs. Moultrie, the Superintendent advised that the School Board would be receiving reports similar to that which was provided the previous year regarding parent conferences for first grade students. He clarified that the first report would reflect data for all schools not just those that were considered low performing, as the parents of all first graders were required to attend a conference after the first nine weeks grading period; after that, conferences would only be required for those parents of students who were at-risk of retention. Mrs. Moultrie also wanted to know if there were community liaisons working with the low performing schools. The Superintendent responded that there were liaisons working with most, but not all of those schools. Staff noted that the following low performing schools were currently working with a community liaison: Montclair Elementary, Global Learning Academy, C.A. Weis Elementary, Lincoln Park Elementary, and O.J. Semmes Elementary. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Moultrie, the Superintendent confirmed that the liaisons, for the most part, were working out of the schools. Mrs. Moultrie wanted to know if the liaison for Lincoln Park Elementary was working at the school itself or at the McMillian Center. The Superintendent clarified that the liaison had an office at the McMillian Center but spent much of his time at the school. Mrs. Moultrie wanted to know what days the liaison was scheduled to be at the school. Mrs. Marcia Nowlin, Director of Title I, said that although the liaison was at the school quite often, he did not have a set schedule. She noted that he was working with the school but he was also working on the school's connection with the community and therefore, he also participated in collaborative community activities at the Wedgewood Community Center. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Moultrie, Mrs. Nowlin advised that there had been a survey conducted with parents and their preference was for community education classes (i.e., GED courses, and career preparation courses) to be held at the community center than the elementary school.

- Update on Security Task Force – Moultrie

At the request of Mrs. Moultrie, Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, provided a brief update on the Security Task Force. Mr. Dennis advised that the task force had completed their work product; however, because of the sensitive nature of much of the material, the Superintendent's executive staff would need to discuss the appropriate way to provide that information to the School Board. He said it was imperative for the task force to present the details of that work product to School Board Members without divulging those details to the public. The Superintendent reminded the School Board that a discussion of security mechanisms internal to the School District could be held in an "out of the Sunshine" executive session type meeting. He noted that such a meeting would be more productive if it was held after all assessments for individual schools had occurred. The Superintendent said the task force's work product could be distilled into a generic portion that could be shared with the public while secure details would be reserved for the School Board only. Upon inquiry by Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent said that a general presentation could probably be made at a workshop in either November or December while a separate meeting to share secure details with School Board Members could be scheduled at a later date.

- Local Capital Outlay Projects from Property Sales – *Superintendent*

Due to time constraints, the Superintendent chose to postpone discussion on this topic until the October 11, 2013 Regular Workshop.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. Bergosh asked if there were members of the audience who wished to address the School Board during Public Forum; however, there were none.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair

PENDING BOARD APPROVAL