

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, FEBRUARY 13, 2014

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: 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 28, 2014 - Legal No. 1618135

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Moultrie called the Special Workshop to order at 3:00 p.m. It was noted that the primary purpose of this Special Workshop was open discussion and presentations.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- February 2014 and March 2014 Calendar – Moultrie

February 2014 - There were no changes to the School Board's schedule of workshops/meetings for February 2014.

March 2014 – It was the consensus of the School Board to change the date and time of the March Regular Workshop to March 13, 2014, beginning at 1:00 p.m.; the change was made so that School Board Members could attend the “Food For America” event at Northview High School on March 14, 2014.

(NOTE: The March Regular Workshop was previously scheduled for March 14, 2014, beginning at 9:00 a.m.) The School Board also decided to cancel the March Special “Open Discussion” Workshop that was previously scheduled for March 13, 2014, beginning at 3:00 p.m. An “open discussion” segment would be included on the agenda for the March 14, 2014 Regular Workshop.

- Update on “Closing the Gap Task Force” – Moultrie

Mrs. Moultrie gave a brief report from the “Closing the Gap” task force which included the following points of interest:

- *Initial meeting was held on February 5th at the Marie Young Community Center*

- 15 of the 17 members attended
- Members were tasked with coming up with suggestions for the name, purpose, and mission statement for the task force
- The target is to identify at least one (1) action item that could be considered for implementation or actually implemented by June 2nd
- Future meetings would be held the first and third Wednesday of each month
- Next meeting was scheduled for February 26th at the Marie Young Community Center

Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, the Superintendent confirmed that minutes from each meeting of the task force were being kept by the School District's Title I office; School Board Members were to be added to the distribution list for those minutes. At the request of Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent said those minutes would also be posted to the School District's website for public access.

- Update on Concerns Expressed by Citizens at January 21, 2014 Board Meeting/Public Forum Regarding Baseball Facility/Handicapped Access at Pine Forest High School – Moultrie

Mrs. Moultrie requested an update on concerns that were expressed by citizens during the public forum segment of the January 21, 2014 Regular Meeting regarding handicap accessibility of the baseball facility at Pine Forest High School. At the request of the Superintendent, Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, reported that the evaluation of that site had been completed, a contractor had been secured, and the work would be split into two phases: phase I, which would begin on February 17th and should be completed within three (3) to four (4) days, would consist of a drop-off pad and access point sidewalks and phase II, which should be completed by the first week in March, would include revisions to the lavatory facilities, ramp pitch, ADA compliant commodes, rails, and appropriate signage. The Superintendent clarified that only those issues that were identified in the evaluation as ADA accessibility issues were being addressed at this time. Mrs. Moultrie asked that the School Board be notified upon completion of the two phases. Upon inquiry by Mr. Boone, Mr. Dennis said he would have the appropriate staff look into the need for addressing possible ADA accessibility issues at other schools throughout the District.

- NSBA Leadership Conference and Advocacy Institute, Washington, DC – Hightower

Mrs. Hightower provided a quick briefing from the NSBA Leadership Conference and Advocacy Institute that she attended February 2nd through February 4th in Washington, D.C. (Mrs. Hightower noted that all the "bullet points" from the conference would be available for School Board Members to review in the School Board Office.) Her primary point of discussion concerned the NSBA's "Stand Up 4 Public Education" campaign. Mrs. Hightower said the FSBA was embracing that initiative and she hoped that the Escambia County School District would do so as well. She referred those who were interested to the www.standup4publicschools.com website for additional information.

- Addressing High Teacher Turn Over Rate at Some Schools – Bergosh
[Handout provided]

Mr. Bergosh said he wanted to once again discuss with his fellow School Board Members, an idea that he had previously discussed with them in September 2012. Mr. Bergosh noted that the School District continued to experience high teacher turnover at some schools, especially those schools in the inner city. It was his belief that the School District desperately needed to find a way to provide inner city schools with more continuity and more consistency with regard to teachers. Mr. Bergosh suggested the possibility of

offering additional money to those teachers who remained at certain schools after a certain number of years. His thought was that perhaps schools would be able to retain teachers if those teachers knew that by remaining at that school for a number of years they would eventually be making more money. The Superintendent pointed out that teacher turnover was not always about money; oftentimes, a teacher would leave a school as a result of a spouse's military transfer or some other "life circumstance" that required them to relocate out of the community. The Superintendent said there was no question that teacher turnover was a big issue for some schools in the District; however, he believed the bigger issue facing the District, was the lack of qualified candidates coming out of teacher education programs as that was directly impacting the District's ability to meet the overall demand for quality teachers. The Superintendent said he would not discuss Mr. Bergosh's specific proposal; instead, he would ask the School District's negotiator to present that proposal to the Union.

- Migration Away from Windows XP, April 2014 Deadline – *Bergosh*

Mr. Bergosh wanted to know the School District's plan for migrating away from the Windows XP operating system since Microsoft's support for Windows XP would end on April 8, 2014. Mr. Tom Ingram, Director of Instructional Technology, said that about 80% of the School District's Windows computers were currently running Windows XP, while approximately 20% were running Windows 7. He thought it important to note that IT staff was not always able to apply security patches to every workstation; there were a number of workstations running district-wide that did not have security patches as the School District did not have the equipment nor the personnel to apply security patches in every one of those cases. Instead, Mr. Ingram said that IT staff applies security patches on an as-needed basis when problems arise. He noted that the School District also had three (3) devices that assisted IT staff with identifying security problems and that those devices would continue to run in the future and would help IT staff locate problems on those computers that were still running Windows XP. Mr. Ingram pointed out that all Windows computers in the School District had and would continue to have virus protection in place; and many of the problems that IT staff finds on Windows computers were often related to Java or Flash which would continue to be updated as well. Mr. Ingram said that IT staff would update what they could before the April 8, 2014 deadline. He noted that the School District would still have access to those security updates even after April 8, 2014 so additional computers could be updated if necessary after that time. Mr. Ingram then addressed the School District's plan to actually upgrade computers that were licensed for Windows XP to Windows 7. He said the School District had been purchasing computers with Windows 7 licenses for about four (4) years; at this time, about 80% of the School District's modern computers were capable of running Windows 7 and Windows 7 was installed on about 2,000 of those computers thus far with approximately 6,000 to go. He said school-based technology coordinators and IT staff were working hard to get as many of those computers updated to Windows 7. Moving forward, Mr. Ingram said that the School District would continue to purchase computers with Windows 7 and eventually the problem would go away. By next year, he said only about 20% of the District's modern computers would be running Windows XP and those would eventually be phased out as they were discontinued in use.

- Syllabus for Middle School Personal Development Course – *Boone*

Mr. Boone said a constituent had expressed concern regarding some of the information outlined on the syllabus for a middle school personal development course. The Superintendent and Mr. Steve Marcanio, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, explained that the 7th grade personal development course was required by Florida Statute; the course did include a component on human sexuality; however, parents were given the option (by way of a letter from the School District) for their child to opt out of that

particular part of the course. If a parent preferred that their student not participate in the part on human sexuality, the student would be moved to an alternate location (possibly the media center or another classroom) and given an alternate assignment. Mr. Marcanio provided School Board Members with a packet of information including a copy of the School District's Student Progression Plan (specifically the section that addresses the personal development course) and the state frameworks for the personal development course curriculum.

- Strategic Facilities Overview – *Superintendent*
[Handout provided]

Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, handout listing all the sales tax projects for the past seventeen (17) years across over fifty (50) sites and centers. (NOTE: School Board Members had recently requested that they be provided a listing of all sales tax projects to-date.) Mr. Dennis then narrated a brief PowerPoint® presentation entitled [Strategic Facilities Overview](#) which consisted of the following segments:

- Major District Wide Facilities Challenges
- Strategic Overview
- Benefits

Mr. Terry St. Cyr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance, discussed the possibility of acquiring financing through a bond issue to provide the necessary cash flow (totaling approximately \$55-60 million) needed to address the needs of every school/center. Mr. St. Cyr noted that sales tax was bondable per Florida Statutes; if the sales tax referendum was passed by the voters in November, the bond issue could run the length of the current referendum and also the renewal portion of the referendum (for a total of about 13 years).

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Mrs. Moultrie called for public hearing; however, there were no speakers.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair