

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, MARCH 10, 2011

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. Gerald W. Boone Vice Chair: Mr. Bill Slayton

Board Members: Mr. Jeff Bergosh
Mrs. Linda Moultrie
Mrs. Patricia Hightower

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

Meeting was advertised in the Pensacola News Journal on February 26, 2011 - Legal No. 1512633

[General discussion took place among Board Members, the Superintendent, and staff throughout this meeting.]

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Boone called the Special Workshop to order at 3:02 p.m.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- Foreign Language in Elementary Schools – *Gerald Boone*

Mr. Boone said that an individual had approached him on several occasions about the possibility of providing foreign language in elementary schools. Mrs. Hightower said that the greatest challenge to such an initiative had always been the lack of elementary teachers who had the ability to teach a foreign language. The Superintendent advised that the new Global Learning Academy would offer a “language lab” with the opportunity for students to learn Spanish and/or Mandarin Chinese. He noted that this “language lab” could serve as a pilot initiative before any consideration was given to furthering foreign language offerings to other elementary schools. As an alternative approach, Mrs. Hightower suggested the possible development of elementary-level foreign language curriculum that could be provided through Florida Virtual. Mr. Bergosh noted that the use of on-line technology to provide such curriculum was probably the most cost-effective approach for implementing such an initiative.

- Proposed May 26, 2011 Joint Meeting with County Commissioners Regarding Re-Drawing of District Voting Lines – *Patricia Hightower*

NOTE: *This issue was previously addressed during the February 10, 2011 Special Workshop. (See: Minutes, February 10, 2011 Special Workshop: Open Discussion - County Voting Boundaries)*

Mrs. Hightower initiated a follow-up discussion about the proposed May 26, 2011 Joint Meeting with the County Commissioners regarding the re-drawing of District voting lines. It was noted that the purpose of the Joint Meeting would be to review all information related to the redistricting process and to determine whether the School Board wished to align their voting district boundaries with those of the County Commission. Mr. Boone was tasked with contacting the County Commission to arrange the Joint Meeting.

- Status of Sale of Brownsville Property – Patricia Hightower

NOTE: This issue was previously addressed during the February 10, 2011 Special Workshop. (See: Minutes, February 10, 2011 Special Workshop: Open Discussion – PATH Program Initiative)

At the request of Mrs. Hightower, the Superintendent provided a brief update on the proposed sale of the former Brownsville Middle School property to Mr. George Hawthorne, Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of Diversity Program Advisors, Inc. The Superintendent said he last spoke with Mr. Hawthorne after the February 10, 2011 Special Workshop and at that time, Mr. Hawthorne said he was trying to secure the appropriate financing for the purchase. Since that time, numerous attempts to reach Mr. Hawthorne had been made without any calls having been returned. Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, advised that the School District had yet to receive any substantive proof that Mr. Hawthorne had obtained the financing required to present a contract to the School Board.

Prior to adjournment, the Superintendent advised the Board that during the course of this workshop, Mr. Hawthorne had made contact with the District to confirm that he was still interested in purchasing the property and to advise that he was still trying to obtain the necessary financing.

- Questions Regarding District Honor Points Policy – Bill Slayton

Upon inquiry by Mr. Slayton, Mrs. Carolyn Spooner, Director-High School Education, confirmed that the Student Progression Plan had been revised in November 2010 to indicate that honors points would be awarded for Level 3 Career and Technical (CTE) courses. She said the change was prompted by a “movement” across the State to encourage students to take upper level CTE courses. Mr. Slayton said he was supportive of awarding honors points for Level 3 CTE courses; however, he was concerned that there would be some students who had taken the class last year who did not receive honors points, while there would be students taking the class this year who would receive honors points. He noted that this could potentially have an “ill-effect” on graduation positions for 2011.

- START – Toledo Plan/Teacher Evaluation – Superintendent

Ms. Karen Owen, Director of Staff Development, gave a brief PowerPoint® presentation outlining the START program (Successful Teachers Assisting Rising Teachers). Mr. Slayton said his only concern with the START program, had to do with the “placeholder” teacher who would serve in the Consulting Teacher’s classroom while the Consulting Teacher was involved in START. He asked “how do you guarantee that a principal can find another teacher (“placeholder”) to replace that teacher’s (Consulting Teacher) years of experience and possibly his/her level of certification?” Mr. Bergosh was very supportive of the START program, but said his primary concern was the cost for implementation. Upon inquiry by Mr. Bergosh, the Superintendent confirmed that membership with the Union would have no affect on who would be selected for the Consulting Teacher positions.

- In-House Credentialing – Superintendent

Mr. Steve Sharp, Manager-Safety, Security and Emergency Operations, gave a brief PowerPoint® presentation outlining a recommendation to reinstate in-house fingerprinting for contractors, not-for-profits and School District employees.

- Focused Curriculum Plan – Superintendent

[Handouts provided to Board Members]

Various staff provided status reports on the focused curriculum goals for each grade-level.

- State of Division Reports – Superintendent

Due to time constraints, discussion on this topic was postponed to the March 11, 2011 Regular Workshop.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. Boone called for public hearing; however, there were no speakers.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the Special Workshop adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Superintendent

Chair