

**WORKSHOP MEETING – DECEMBER 9, 2010**

The School Board of Okaloosa County met in Workshop Session on December 9, 2010, in the School District Administration Building, 120 Lowery Place, SE, Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

**PRESENT:** Rodney Walker, Chairman

Cathy Thigpen, Vice-Chairman

Cindy Frakes

Chuck Kelley

Melissa Thrush

Alexis Tibbetts, Superintendent

C. Jeffrey McInnis, Esq., Attorney to the Board

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m., the purpose of the meeting being to review Agenda items, thereby expediting the Regular Meeting. Items may be considered in random order to accommodate visitors and presenters. Routine items not discussed during the Workshop were reviewed prior to the meeting with no further questions or comments by the Board.

The Chairman made the following changes to the Agenda: Visitors item #1 was deleted, Update on Base Housing; Consent #24F was deleted, Termination of Employee #xxx-xx-1947; Consent #6 was deleted, Request to advertise a public hearing for revision of School Board Policy 4-42 Head Lice; added as Consent #28C(3), SA# 11-91 Miracle Strip Officials Association, Officials for Basketball Shootout, Choctawhatchee High School; added as Consent #29, Authorization for Superintendent to enter into agreement on behalf of Baker School with the State of Florida Division of Forestry to provide site improvement work on district property adjacent to the Baker School campus and allow the Division of Forestry to recover their expenses by selling timber cut and removed from the site.

Mr. McInnis informed the Board of receipt of an invoice from Resolutions in Special Education, Inc., Julie Weatherly, in the amount of \$140. The Board previously authorized and entered into a representation agreement with Ms. Weatherly to provide legal and/or consultative services with respect to Exceptional Student Education matters. He asked that the Board clarify that legal services under that agreement with Ms. Weatherly are authorized not just for one particular matter, but rather with respect to any ESE matters when deemed necessary by District staff in consultation with him. The Board acknowledged that was their understanding of the approved agreement.

Mrs. Scallan stated that the Report on Significant Financial Trends and Findings is a report that the Auditor General requires all school districts to place on the agenda for information only. The report shows a compilation of all the significant findings from all of the districts in the State of Florida. Okaloosa School District was not cited; however, the information is useful in insuring that the District is doing things correctly so that it will pass the audit next year.

Steve McLaughlin presented an update on the AP/IB/AICE Initiative. Data shows an increase in the number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses since 2006, as well as an increase in the number of AP exams passed since 2006. Graphs were presented showing the increased number of IB exams taken and passed since 2006, as well as the increased number of AICE exams taken and passed since 2007.

An overview was given showing an increase in the number of students taking and passing exams in the various subject areas. A further breakdown was provided showing the number of students and percentage of qualifying exams by race and gender since 2005.

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Mr. McLaughlin anticipates growth in the AICE program as Crestview High School and Choctawhatchee High School will join Niceville High School and Fort Walton Beach High School in offering AICE courses.

Mrs. Thigpen asked Mr. McLaughlin for a breakdown by school of AP courses offered and the percentage rate of qualifying exams.

Information was presented regarding the savings in college tuition to families with each qualifying AP/IB/AICE and dual enrollment grade. Dr. Tibbetts explained that students earn college credits with each qualifying AP/IB/AICE and dual enrollment grade, and that this year the rigor at the middle school level has increased by requiring students to take at least one honors course.

There was discussion concerning the State requirement for Districts to implement advanced programs, then reducing the funding for the programs, and the affect the advanced courses have on school grades from the State.

Ms. Thrush asked who is responsible for the cost of the AP exam if the student has committed to taking the exam but then does not take it. Mr. McLaughlin responded that if a student does not take an AP exam the District will recover the cost, with the exception of a \$13 re-stocking fee. In previous school years, advanced placement exams have been administered to the majority number of students that were projected to take the exams.

Ms. Thrush stated that although the dual enrollment program is a great opportunity for many students, she expressed concern regarding the dual enrollment program taking FTE funds from the high schools. Dr. Tibbetts responded that staff is working on a dual enrollment program in the high school setting that is based from a model that was in place in the past, wherein a high school teacher with a Master's Degree will be paid from the FTE generated by the students in the dual enrollment class.

Mrs. Frakes clarified that on Page 5 of the Minutes from the November 8, 2010 Board Meeting, that as a result of all the input at the meeting with the BP Task Force in Tallahassee, changes were made in a portion of the policy on how the Task Force would receive claims.

Ms. Thrush commented that while visiting schools, DLP projectors in some of the classrooms had not been installed, and that there are times the equipment is purchased with capital discretionary funds but there are not funds to mount the hardware due to wiring and new electrical needed for installation. She stated that she has observed classrooms where the projector is on the teacher's desk that is close to the wall, rather than in the middle of the classroom, due to lack of funds to mount it on the ceiling.

Ms. Noechel responded that because of the infrastructure at some of the facilities, equipment cannot be mounted on the ceiling, but at the facilities where the equipment can be mounted, the cost of the ceiling mounts and everything needed for installation is included in the quote. She asked that Ms. Thrush get with her to determine the schools Ms. Thrush referenced where installation of equipment may be needed.

Mrs. Thigpen stated that there are some teachers that prefer to keep the projectors on their desks so they can move it around as they change the arrangement of their classrooms. She commented that she would expect that before a school requests capital funds from a Board member that they know what is in place to take care of the extra costs that might be associated with the item.

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Ms. Thrush expressed concern in which capital discretionary funds are spent and asked if some of the discretionary expenditures should be reviewed on more of a cost and benefit basis. She stated that with the current economic times, the School Board's discretionary capital dollars are important, especially as schools have had to make sacrifices in their budgets.

Mr. Walker responded to Ms. Thrush that she could present a recommendation to the Board to change the procedure in which capital outlay funds allocated to Board members are spent. He stated that currently each board member receives capital funds to be spent at their individual discretion on projects that schools otherwise could not afford. The funds are not confined to each Board member's district, and needs at all the schools are evaluated to determine the priorities. He stated that he depends on each Board member to look thoroughly at the areas in which to expend their funds. Mrs. Thigpen added that Board members depend on principals to relay the most critical needs in their schools.

Mr. Kelley added that the expenditures from the capital discretionary funds are for facility needs that would otherwise not be completed because they are not large enough to be included on the five-year capital outlay plan.

With regard to the request to advertise revision to School Board Policy 4-42, Head Lice, Ms. Thrush stated her concern with allowing students to return to class without examination by clinical staff. She commented that the District is clinically sending the student home because a medical professional has found lice on them, yet under the policy the student is allowed to return to the classroom once the school has been provided with documentation that the head lice are being treated. She suggested that revision to the policy state that the student is allowed to return to class when the same clinic staff that sent the student home has examined the student and finds no lice.

In response to Ms. Thrush's suggestion, Mrs. Handzo stated that the section of the policy in which Ms. Thrush referenced would be re-addressed prior to requesting advertisement for revision. According to the Department of Health, as long as students have been treated and the nits are no longer live, the student can attend school. She stated that the District's goal with this policy is to make sure that students do not miss classroom instruction time. She clarified that the current request for advertisement presented for Board consideration was for revision due to change in clinic personnel, and that the District continues to follow the Department of Health guidelines. The Chairman stated that the request to advertise revision to School Board Policy 4-42, Head Lice would be pulled from the agenda for further review.

With reference to course adoptions, Mrs. Frakes asked if there are enough students to make a full class in the piano keyboarding course. Ms. Tallman responded that that there is a large interest in the course; however, the number of students is not available at this time as students have not registered for classes. Mrs. Frakes stated, for the record, that if there are not enough students registered to fill the class, then the course should not be offered. Ms. Tallman agreed with Mrs. Frakes comment.

Ms. Thrush commented that revision to the attendance requirements at the elementary level in the Pupil Progression Plan addresses excused and unexcused absences, but does not address the tardy issue for elementary students which she believes should be addressed. After talking with principals, it is her understanding that if an elementary student arrives at school mid-afternoon they are considered tardy, not absent; however, there is not a data entry field in AS400 for a specific time to be entered and it becomes complicated when calculating FTE.

Dr. Tibbetts explained that this matter will be discussed with elementary school principals later today, as it is currently being addressed. Elementary schools are scheduled by period in the computer and that when a student has missed more than

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one-half of class time for a particular subject, they will be considered absent for that subject, and the specific time in which the student arrives will be documented.

In response, Mrs. Hendricks stated that the revision for the Board's consideration at this time is the first step in clarifying tardy absences at the elementary level, and staff is working with MIS on the programming issues so that data entry for tardy and absences at the high schools are consistent with that at the elementary schools.

Mrs. Frakes inquired about the District's participation in the Purchasing Consortium. Mr. Norris responded that the Purchasing Consortium is another tool for the District to use statewide. The Consortium will email bids on certain products and the District will tag onto that bid if it is the best price. Their prices are usually higher than the District's because they are getting bids for the entire state of Florida, and those vendors build in a higher factor for transportation and shipping cost, whereas the District receives a geographical price which may be shipped without transportation cost because of the closeness in proximity. The District also has the benefit of volume discounts, direct ship and no warehouse fees when using the State of Florida bids and contracts that are statewide. He stated that the Purchasing Department monitors the market consistently in order to obtain the best prices.

Dr. Tibbetts added that the superintendents had expected the Purchasing Consortium would encourage Districts to buy items in bulk; however, the savings have not been significant. She stated that the District supports the local vendors when there is not a savings through the Consortium.

Dr. Bill Smith explained that Resolution 10-10 is for the Sale and Disposal of the McGriff Street Property. In June of this year, Resolution 10-05 was approved by the Board declaring the McGriff Street property as surplus. Staff completed a facilities spot survey for the disposal of that property which was approved by DOE and the Commissioner of Education. A request for solicitation of bids for the property was publically advertised and posted and one bid was received in October of this year. Following Board approval, staff negotiated with the bidder, Beulah First Baptist Church, and has agreed on a proposed sales price. Dr. Smith provided information to the Board with cost proposals for abatement of environmental issues and demolition costs.

Mr. McInnis explained that two appraisals were completed in December 2009 and one was significantly higher than the other. It was requested that Humphrey & Associates, Inc. review their appraisal to determine whether it was still current or if there was any change in market values since December 2009, and the same was asked of Teel & Waters Real Estate Co. of their appraisal. An updated appraisal from Teel & Waters has been received and the Superintendent's recommendation for the sale is based upon that appraisal. Humphrey and Associates, Inc. are currently reviewing their appraisal and it is not known whether an updated appraisal will be received from them prior to the Board meeting Monday evening. The updated appraisal from Humphrey & Associates, Inc. will be provided to the Board upon receipt.

Mr. McInnis informed the Board that there is a 30 foot portion of the McGriff Street property that was leased to Beulah First Baptist Church for a term of 99 years under a lease dated October 1, 1980. This portion of property is in the proposed sale contract to be quit claimed to the church if the Board chooses to sell them the other property; however the Board may also choose not to quit claim the 30 foot portion of the property and simply choose to leave the 99-year lease in effect for that portion of the property. The property that is under the 99-year lease was a part of the parcel of land originally donated to the School District by the adjoining church for the construction of a school.

Mr. McInnis asked Mrs. Scallan to provide an overview of the Refunding and Revenue Bonds transaction to the Board. He informed the Board members that Jerry

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Ford, the financial advisor for the District regarding this transaction, would be present at the Board meeting Monday evening to answer further questions.

Mrs. Scallan explained that the issuance of Revenue Bonds, Series 2011 would provide funding for the completion of roofing replacement at Choctawhatchee High School and Lewis School. She addressed questions from the Board members regarding the procedure of entering into a bond agreement and the process as it relates to the District. Mrs. Scallan explained that the source of funds for the repayment of the bonds would be pari-mutuel revenue. In the event that the School District does not commit that revenue source for debt repayment, then it is subject to being eliminated either by the State and/or Okaloosa County.

There has been a similar bond issue in place in the School District, to generate additional capital funds, since 1985 which was refunded in 1994 to generate new capital funds like this refunding will do. This is a common financing practice across the state to maximize these pari-mutuel funds for capital projects.

Responding to questions from Ms. Thrush regarding the cost of the air handling units for the chiller piping replacement project at Choctawhatchee High School, Dr. Bill Smith stated that the units cost approximately \$38,000 and the Board previously approved an owner direct purchase because of the timeframe for them to arrive before the winter break. In response to Ms. Thrush's question regarding the source of funding, Mrs. Scallan responded that the units were purchased through capital outlay funds via purchase order directly by the District in order to save the District sales tax, and so that that they would arrive before the winter break. Ms. Thrush inquired about completing the project on a time and materials contract. Dr. Smith stated that time and materials task orders are usually written for individual vendors, not for complex projects that require multiple vendors. Since this project has various parts to it, it would be very difficult to keep up with reimbursement of time and materials with a number of vendors. Dr. Smith stated he would provide Ms. Thrush with a breakdown of the construction cost of this project which he believed would be helpful in addressing her concerns.

Mrs. Thigpen stated that she enjoyed spending Educational Support Professional Day in the culinary arts classroom at Richbourg School.

Karen Peek, OCEA President, addressed the Board members and the Superintendent with concerns regarding the affect that impending changes in class schedules will have on class size second semester. Ms. Peek stated that it is her understanding that an increase in the number of students in core subject classes is the result of schools having to cut certain classes in the second semester because there were not enough students enrolled to fund them. She stated that the local teachers have expressed concern about classes being overcrowded which is against the State of Florida constitutional amendment.

Mr. Walker stated that Okaloosa County was in compliance with the class size law in October and that the District will continue to abide by the class size amendment.

Dr. Tibbetts responded that the schools are continuously trying to meet class size; however, the principals have a finite amount of money and some principals over-projected their budgets. She stated that schools are doing everything possible to meet class size requirements.

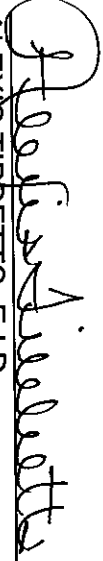
Mrs. Frakes stated that there is the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, and the spirit of the law intends for the District to continue to meet class size once it was met in October, not to lay off teachers and then overcrowd the classrooms. She requested that the Superintendent provide the Board with a report showing enrollment and class size numbers at the first Board meeting in January. Dr. Tibbetts clarified that no teachers had been laid off at this time. Mr. Kelley expressed concern on the affect the

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change in class schedules would have on students in the middle of the year. Mrs. Frakes noted that it was mentioned at the most recent FSBA meeting that there will be one more year of a struggling economy, and the economic indicators are forecasting that things will start to improve after next year.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Jan Crawford, Recorder

  
ALEXIS TIBBETS, Ed.D.  
SUPERINTENDENT AND  
CORPORATE SECRETARY

  
RODNEY L. WALKER  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD