

WORKSHOP MEETING – AUGUST 9, 2012

The School Board of Okaloosa County met in Workshop Session on August 9, 2012 in the School District Administration Building, 120 Lowery Place, SE, Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

PRESENT: Rodney L. 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 9:10 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: Consent item #38C(3) was deleted; added as Consent item #39, Surplus of bleachers from Etheridge Stadium at Choctawhatchee High School; added as Consent item #40, Choctawhatchee High School Self-Help Stadium Improvement Project.

Mrs. Frakes commented on the out-of-county expense for several teachers from one school driving their own vehicle to attend Common Core Standards Summer Institute, on the same date and at the same location. She noted that this was the second consecutive month of significant travel expense to the taxpayers. She requested that staff tighten up and be more efficient with the taxpayers' money. Mr. Walker made note of the expense for one individual to attend a multiple day workshop, and stated that even if the expense is reimbursed, it is still taxpayers' dollars.

Dr. Tibbetts responded that the Florida Department of Education will reimburse each school \$2,000 to cover travel and lodging for those attending the Common Core Summer Institute. She stated that the workshop would not be as effective if the District were to hold the workshop locally, as only one expert from DOE would present; whereas, at the workshops coordinated by DOE are presented by various experts in each field of the Common Core. She stated that those teachers and administrators who attend will be sharing the information learned at the workshop with all the other employees at their schools.

With regard to the Wellness Initiative Review for 2011-2012 school year, Mrs. Frakes asked about the participation in the health screenings compared to last year. Stacie Smith, Wellness Initiative Coordinator, stated that participation declined and changes for the upcoming year are being addressed, and she anticipates bringing a recommendation to the Board soon.

Mrs. Frakes pointed to the significant donation to schools from the Dugas Family Foundation, and expressed her appreciation for their contributions to the various programs.

With regard to the Wellness Initiative for 2012-2013, Mrs. Frakes requested that comparison data from the previous year be provided next year. She requested that the goals listed be measurable by a percentage, and she gave examples. Stacie Smith responded that she would provide a spreadsheet with comparison data from last year after the meeting.

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In response to Ms. Thrush's question regarding the publishing of bus routes, Jay McInnis, Director of Transportation, informed the Board that the bus routes, along with contact information for the route coordinators, will be posted on the District's web site next week, and will also be included in Sunday's *Daily News* Back-To-School insert.

Dr. Bill Smith stated that there are slight changes from last year in the Interlocal Agreement for Public School Facility Planning, mostly in the concurrency section.

Ms. Thrush voiced concern regarding the Head Start Grant Application, specifically that a majority of the program is Federal funded which will bring requirements that the District must meet that could be different than how the District currently runs the VPK program, as well as how the funding for the District's VPK administrator will be affected when 40% of that individual's duties is to manage the Head Start program.

Mrs. Scallan, Chief Financial Officer, responded that the existing position would expand to include the duties to oversee the Head Start program, and that Head Start would fund 40% of that position; that the time spent on the other programs would decrease, and that individual would be the coordinator or the overseer of individuals in the field.

At the request of Mrs. Thigpen, Dort Baltes, Grant Writer, provided an overview of the grant application and reminded the Board that this is only a proposal and has not yet been accepted by the Head Start Program. She stated that the narrative portion and the components of the application represent the input and information gathered from staff members and prospective community partners who are experts in this area. The recommended service locations are based on the current grantee and the locations where there are a preponderance of children being served by Head Start. A community-based needs assessment would be completed since it is one year before implementation. She stated that the application represents the continuation of strong community partnerships that have been collaborating with Head Start, and making certain the WorkForce Development Board is involved with the parents so services meet the cognitive, social and emotional development needs of children and providing support to their families.

Ms. Thrush referenced the Dual Enrollment Agreement when commenting that families should work closely with their children's guidance counselors when deciding to dual enroll, as far as determining whether the credits earned at the dual enrollment school meet their graduation requirements. Dr. Tibbetts stated that principals and guidance counselors have been alerted to monitor the graduation status of those students who participate in a dual enrollment program.

Mrs. Frakes asked how the elementary curriculum pacing guides would be evaluated, how staff will know that teachers are following the guide and if the guides are effective. Mrs. Hendricks, Chief Officer of Quality Assurance & Curriculum, explained how the quarter-at-a-glance schedule and checklist included in the guides can be used by the teachers. She stated that the curriculum guides are revised annually by teacher committees which represent every grade level per subject area, and those committees use the survey information as they revise the guides.

Consent item #27, Pupil Progression Plan for 2012-2013, was requested to be moved to the Discussion Agenda by Ms. Thrush. Ms. Thrush voiced concern regarding the section under Senior High School Progression and End of Course Exams on pages 80 and 81. She stated that the high stakes exams are not properly analyzed and vetted. She suggested that until the State-mandated requirement of administering an assessment measure for every course takes effect in 2014-2015, the District properly create, analyze and vet the assessments that will be required to assess all of the District's courses at that time.

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In response, Mrs. Hendricks, shared her concern that students would not be prepared if the District waited until it is required by the State to administer end of course exams, and she gave examples. She added that the District has administered end of course exams for five years and they have counted at the same percentage of a student's grade during that timeframe, with the exception of the State exams. She cautioned about eliminating the practice that has been in place for five years because of a problem that occurred a single year, with steps being taken to make improvement. She stated that the teachers are coming together to revise the exams and are carefully reviewing the benchmarks; a process that will continue throughout the year. The exams that will be produced will have the approval of the teachers representing different schools in that same course. Dr. Tibbetts stated that adjustments have been made in the professional development provided by the District which will improve overall training.

Mrs. Hendricks explained that the State end of course exams are vetted through Pearson and the District is not able to engage in that type of sophisticated vetting process. She commented that a third party vendor to assist the District is being considered. She stated the only other vetting option the District has is to allow the District's teachers to vet the exams

Mrs. Frakes inquired about collaborating with other districts and develop a test bank in the State. Dr. Tibbetts responded that exams have been shared with two other districts in the elective programs. Mrs. Hendricks stated that consideration would be given to Mrs. Frakes' suggestion, and added that teachers would have to meet and collect test questions from the bank to develop exams.

Mr. McInnis advised the Board that the City of Valparaiso has adopted revised ordinances that re-zone the school district's Valparaiso School campus property back to a Public Institutional zone with no sub-category restrictions. He requested the Board's direction to authorize the District to work with City of Valparaiso officials to dismiss the pending lawsuit at the Board meeting Monday evening.

Mrs. Frakes commented on the grand opening of the STEMM Center and STEMM Academy with a ribbon cutting ceremony yesterday.

Ms. Thrush thanked community businesses who have donated school supplies to various schools and school organizations in preparation for the start of the new school year beginning August 20, 2012.

Karen Peek, President of OCEA, informed the Board that the teacher evaluation committee met and came to a decision not to use the end of course exams for the teacher portion of the student performance, and to revert to the State requirements of using FCAT averages unless a State-provided exam was administered or if a teacher taught an AP/AICE-type course. It is her understanding that it is a verbal understanding with the Department of Education and that nothing in writing is required to be submitted in this regard.

The Chairman called for a brief recess at 10:30 a.m. The workshop reconvened at 10:35 a.m., with presentation of the Proposed Capital Outlay Budget and Project Budgets for 2012-2013.

Rita Scallan, Chief Financial Officer, explained the Certified Tax Value, Millage Rate & Budget % Analysis handout showing comparison information from 2007-2008. She explained 2007-2008 was the peak year of tax rolls, and since that time there has been a 25% decrease in the taxable value of property. She noted that the district has never fully levied the maximum amount of capital improvement millage, whereas most other districts in the State have.

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Mrs. Scallan presented the five-year work plan required by the State, and explained the new revenue for each year and the District's commitments. She noted that the District will receive no additional assistance from State funding for facilities as in past years. The District is totally reliant on funds generated locally, and with the decline in taxable value and the decline in the millage, available funds are critically reduced for district facilities. She provided thorough explanation of the legal and contractual obligations of the District, and responded to questions from the Board.

Dr. Tibbetts left the workshop at 10:55 a.m. Mr. Rodney Nobles, Deputy Superintendent served as proxy in her absence.

Mrs. Scallan gave explanation of each district-wide capital project in which funds have been allocated. Mrs. Thigpen made note of previous discussion concerning the consideration of changing the venue of the Board's meetings in Crestview, stating that funding for the renovations of a different site are not budgeted, and the money would have to come from capital outlay dollars. Mrs. Frakes stated that funds are not available for the Board to renovate a site at this time, and would either have to continue holding their Crestview meetings at the courthouse or move to a location at no cost.

In response to Mr. Kelley's inquiry regarding the source of funding if an emergency expenditure exceeds the allocated funds, Mrs. Scallan explained the various options which would require Board approval.

Ms. Thrush suggested that Board Member capital discretionary funds not be allocated due to the reduction of funds for district-wide capital projects. Ms. Thrush voiced concern with having more district-wide projects in carryover funds than what is projected in 2012-2013. Mrs. Scallan gave an explanation of the process of allocating for district-wide projects and how expenses are coded to certain projects when needs arise. Ms. Thrush recommended allocating smaller dollar amounts in district-wide projects, and that staff present an update to the Board on the existing minor repair and maintenance allocation on a quarterly or semester basis. Mr. Nobles commented that the priority list of capital projects was developed by an engineering firm that surveyed every infrastructure in the District, and a budget amendment is submitted to the Board if funding is moved from one project to another. Mr. Walker stated that Mrs. Scallan has implemented a procedure to determine whether a project is considered an emergency. He stated that the construction committee meets once a month and if the priority list of projects is re-adjusted because of available funds or needs, a recommendation is brought to the Board.

In response to Ms. Thrush's inquiry regarding the status of the District's wireless project and computer labs, Eric Mitchell stated that the District is slightly ahead on the project, that all elementary school either have labs in place or are in the process of putting them in place, and he does not expect there to be any issues when testing occurs.

At the conclusion of the review of the proposed 2012-2013 Capital Outlay Budget, Mrs. Scallan requested that Board members contact her with any questions or if they need additional information.

An overview of the General Fund Revenue and Appropriations was presented by Mrs. Scallan. She provided a summary of the list of projects for reference, and explained the projects funded from the Capital Outlay transfer. For each object category in the General Fund, she gave detailed breakdown of the revenue and the appropriations for each project under each object category. Where applicable, Mrs. Scallan explained that District reserves are to adjust for any modifications that come from the State throughout the year.

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With regard to Class Size Reduction, Ms. Thrush requested job descriptions for or clarification of the math and science coaches which are associated with the science and math initiatives. Mrs. Hendricks stated that with the transition to Common Core Standards, and based on the analysis of current math and science performance results, the focus of the coaches will be to provide support to teachers in math and science in the schools with the greatest need.

Mrs. Scallan stated that DJJ would receive any remaining funds at the end of the year in the DJJ Supplemental Allocation, as it is required that those funds are spent at those facilities.

Mrs. Scallan explained that revenue in the Lottery-School Recognition is an allocation estimated from the State dependant on test scores and the grading system. The revenue will remain in reserve until the District receives school grades.

The Medicaid Reimbursement revenue is funding for an individual to process claims paperwork and random sampling, as well as for a portion of the nurses' contract, and ESE items if needed, such as speech and occupational therapy. Mrs. Scallan answered questions from Ms. Thrush in regard to collecting Medicaid reimbursement for transporting ESE students to facilities providing therapies that qualify for Medicaid reimbursement. Mrs. Scallan stated that it is an optional program for teachers that are completing the additional paperwork which would be a negotiation item. She stated that after previous research, it was learned that the cost benefit was an issue as it would require more staff to process the paperwork and verify eligibility than the revenue it would produce; however, she would look into it again to determine if that is still the case.

With regard to the Print Shop, Mrs. Scallan explained that the revenue is generated from services provided to the schools and is allocated for staff and supplies. In response to Ms. Thrush's inquiry, Mrs. Scallan stated that there was a reduction in revenue and the year ended in a deficit situation; however, adjustments are being made to come within the budget constraints and to increase participation.

The revenue in Reading Instruction, as explained by Mrs. Scallan, helps with the salaries for literacy coaches, and the reserve funds will be used toward the reading initiatives.

Mrs. Scallan stated that the ROTC revenue will help offset the cost of positions, and the district reserves will be used in the event there are adjustments made in the funding.

Mrs. Scallan commented that the School Resource Officer program is funded from the Safe Schools revenue.

With regard to the STEMM Academy State Grant, Mrs. Scallan explained that this is a special allocation that the legislature made for the STEMM Academy.

Mrs. Scallan stated the Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI) revenue is funding for remediation services to students. She noted that the reserves will decrease significantly once the Plan of Care assessments are received. Lois Handzo clarified the duties of Attendance Officers in response to Ms. Thrush's inquiry.

In regard to Transportation, Mrs. Scallan explained that the District funds the shortfall between the funding from the State and the cost of the program. She clarified that the deficit is not an indication that the District is inefficient in transportation; but rather, the District does not receive enough funding for the State to adequately reimburse for those costs.

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Mrs. Scallan commented that in regard to Virtual Education, the State requires that every student take one online course throughout their high school career, and the reserves reflect partial funding from the State to help the District provide for that requirement; however, the funds do not meet the cost.

Mrs. Scallan concluded the workshop by explaining all the revenue sources, the adjustments to revenue, and the allocations to the various projects. She asked Board members to contact her if they have any further questions or need additional information.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Jan Crawford, Recorder

ALEXIS TIBBETTS, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT AND
CORPORATE SECRETARY

RODNEY L. WALKER
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD