

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
August 7, 2001

The School Board of Alachua County, Florida, met in regular session duly called at 7 p.m. in the Boardroom, 620 East University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. Present were: Bill Cake, vice-chairman; Bev Carroll, Jeannine Cawthon and Barbara Sharpe, members; Mary L. Chambers, superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board. Absent: Chairman Chester Leathers

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Cake, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES

Motion by Mrs. Carroll                      Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the minutes of July 17, 2001, as presented.

The question was called.                      Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe                      Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of August 7, 2001, as presented.

The question was called.                      Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

BOARD MEMBER  
ANNOUNCEMENTS/  
DISCUSSION

Mrs. Sharpe stated for the record that Chairman Leathers is absent due to illness.

Superintendent Chambers announced the results of the appeals for school grades and noted the following changes:

- Hidden Oak Elementary changed from a B to an A
- Santa Fe High School changed from a B to an A
- Hawthorne Jr./Sr. High School changed from an Incomplete to a C

She commended the many teachers and principals for their efforts.

The Board extended condolences to Shell Elementary School principal Gladys Wright on the recent loss of her father, Walter Grigsbee.

HELPING HANDS  
INITIATIVE

Mrs. Karen Scarborough, coordinator, School Volunteer Program, announced a new initiative entitled "Helping Hands," which begins on the first day of school, Monday, August 20. District-level staff members will be out assisting at schools by meeting/greeting, helping in the front offices, answering phones and helping parents register

children, etc. She stated that the spirit of the “Helping Hands” initiative is already spreading throughout the business partner community, which is currently collecting school supplies for students and teachers.

REDISTRICTING  
BOARD MEMBERS  
RESIDENCY AREAS

Dr. Jim Scaggs, staff attorney, reported that the school board residency areas must be redrawn periodically following the release of the 10-year census to distribute the population among the districts as evenly as possible. He briefly reviewed the statutory restrictions.

- The school board of any district may make any change which it deems necessary in the boundaries of any school board member residence area of the district at any meeting of the school board; provided that such changes shall be made only in odd-numbered years and provided further, that no change which would affect the residence qualifications of any incumbent member shall disqualify such incumbent member during the term for which he/she is elected.
- Such changes in boundaries shall be shown by resolutions spread upon the minutes of the school board, and shall be recorded in the office of the clerk of the circuit court, and shall be published at least once in a newspaper in the district within 30 days after the adoption of the resolution.

Dr. Scaggs stated that the Alachua County residency areas are drawn by voting precincts. Alachua County is not required to do so, but can use any geographic boundary the board chooses; however, voting precincts seem to be a commonly accepted way to keep track of who can run for a particular board seat.

He provided population figures by precinct based on the 2000 Census. He pointed out that there is a disproportionate number of population across the residency areas, with Mr. Cake having the largest number-- 51,478 residents. He also called attention to Precinct 47, which is split by Mrs. Carroll and Mr. Cake, but the split is not proportionate—Mrs. Carroll--3,199 and Mr. Cake—381.

Based on these population figures, it became apparent that changes might need to be made. In determining what changes needed to be made, it was decided that no board member would be zoned out of their current residency area. It is to everyone’s benefit to make the minimum number of changes, but differences in the residency areas must be addressed.

Staff made the following suggestions:

- Move Voter Precincts 22 (currently Dr. Leathers area) and 7 (currently Mrs. Sharpe's area) into Mrs. Cawthon's area—total of 7,978 persons into her area.
- Move Voter Precincts 16, 25, 28 into Mrs. Sharpe's area (currently Mr. Cake's area)—total of 10,105 persons in her area.

Dr. Scaggs noted there is less than a 10% variation between residency areas for each board member.

He recommended that in the future the Board may wish to consider combining Precinct 47 into one residency area and possibly moving the Cross Creek area into Mr. Cake's area, currently in Mrs. Sharpe's area.

The Board authorized staff to proceed with the process of redrawing the residency areas and present a resolution at the next meeting, publish a notice in *The Gainesville Sun* within the following week, and take action at the last Board meeting in September or first meeting in October.

#### TECHNOLOGY PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Jim Utley, Chief Technology/Information Services Officer, and Mr. Jim Moffett, director, Instructional Technical/Media Resources, gave a brief update on the QZABs (Qualified Zone Academy Bond Project). A technology audit indicated that over 50% of the computers in the district are obsolete. QZABs was identified as a potential source of funds for this replacement. It is a federal program designed to allow school districts to finance capital projects such as the replacement of outdated technology with interest-free bonding. The equivalent of interest on the bonds is paid by the IRS as a direct deduction of the company's taxes due. Schools with at least 35% free or reduced lunch status students and a 10% match of requested funds from their business partners could qualify to apply for the right to sell the bonds. Thirty-three of the district's schools qualified under the free or reduced lunch status percentage. The Board received approval of the project from the Department of Education and then voted to proceed with the process of issuing Bonds.

Each of the 33 schools developed their computer replacement plans and a master order was developed. School site installations will begin in November and take approximately one year. Training will also be provided in conjunction with the new computers.

The district is currently working with Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) to develop a support/training structure in the College of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida. Interns from the information science department at SFCC would receive hands-on experience in computer support and the district would benefit from

trained resources to help with technology support. The district would also benefit from SFCC's experience in developing technology training for students, teachers and staff. The UF College of Teaching and Learning could assist the district in training teachers and supervisors to identify software and classware that more effectively addresses specific academic objectives.

The regular Board meeting was recessed and a Public Hearing convened.

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PUBLIC HEARING—  
SCHOOL BOARD  
POLICY 9.10,  
CIVILITY—CONDUCT  
OF EMPLOYEES,  
PARENTS AND OTHER  
VISITORS TO SCHOOL  
DISTRICT FACILITIES

Dr. Scaggs stated that the Board authorized advertisement of a policy relating to civility. Since the advertisement, there have been two minor modifications made to the proposed policy as follows:

- Add language to page 1, item 1.c., to read: School Board employees will treat each other with courtesy and respect.
- Add language to page 1, item 2.a., to read: or school related off-campus activity.

The following suggestions/recommendations were presented to the Board for consideration:

- Support the policy, but also insist that parents be civil as well.
- Create a customer service division to prevent frustration among parents.
- The president of the Alachua County Education Association urged the Board to reiterate the need for parents to check into the school front office before going on campus.
- Conduct thorough employee background checks and character references.
- Offer diversity courses.

Vice-chairman Cake responded that the Board requires teachers to be civil, but also allows teachers the opportunity to request hostile parents be civil.

Superintendent Chambers reminded the public that the reason the policy was developed was that a major priority for the district next year is to have a safe and orderly learning environment for all students and staff. Rather than focus on violence, the district is focusing on prevention and intervention of violent acts in schools. Studies have shown that one of the main causes of violence is bullying and a proposed change in the Code has been made to cover bullying. She believes that if an impact is to be made on students, employees need to model that behavior. The proposed policy will show employees and teachers that the Board supports them, and it is also a statewide and community effort.

AMENDMENTS TO  
THE PUPIL PRO-  
GRESSION PLAN

Mr. Don Lewis, director, Charter Schools/School Improvement, stated that July 17, 2001, staff proposed amendments to the Pupil Progression Plan as follows:

- Provide high school credit for middle school students taking Algebra I and first-year foreign language.
- Align the middle school grading system with the high school grading system, in order to keep consistency with the high school legislative requirement.
- Reclassifying students in grades 10, 11 and 12
- Legislative requirements mandating one full credit for Physical Education.

Mr. Cake stated that he supports 8<sup>th</sup>-graders receiving high school credit for Algebra I or foreign language if they pass the test.

Responding to Mrs. Sharpe, Mr. Lewis stated that he does not see a downside to this issue, and noted that if 8<sup>th</sup>-graders are capable of passing the comprehensive exam, they should receive high school credit.

Mr. Lewis reported that other Florida districts allow 8<sup>th</sup>-graders to receive credit for Algebra I or foreign language. When an out-of-county-student enters Alachua County, they receive the credit.

Dr. Bill Cliett, deputy superintendent, Curriculum and Instructional Services, stated that a committee of math teachers made recommendations and raised questions related to implementation. The recommendations included: raising the passing score from 70 to 75% and how the test should be scored and handled.

Mrs. Dinah Stone, Buchholz High School math teacher, presented several concerns related to the middle school Algebra I credit:

- Struggling students will lose the option of going back to Algebra I Honors
- The end-of-year Algebra test
- Seventh-graders in Algebra I
- Parent issues
- Logistics of awarding the credit
- Math teachers overwhelmingly voted against awarding credit for Algebra I in middle school
- School districts that once awarded credit are going back and changing this policy because of having to address many of the above issues

Ms. Stone informed the Board that the high school math committee felt, that in the best interests of the students, the credit should be awarded retroactively—students should make it through Algebra II in high school.

She also urged the Board to remove the item from the Pupil Progression Plan and allow teachers to provide additional input and resolve many of the issues presented.

Mrs. Carroll requested staff get input from the math department and provide the Board with the input prior to the next meeting on the following:

- Test scores need to be higher
- Need option for failing students (when is the evaluation period and how can it be incorporated into the plan)
- Need to stay in the Honors track rather than being placed into a regular classroom
- Test should be above-board, should it be changed yearly, should it be administered at a high school site on a Saturday morning
- Who should grade the test (should it be graded by a core group of teachers paid outside of the classroom day)
- Do we need to require four-year math even if the student has math credit
- Parental issues
- Statewide trend

Mrs. Sharpe requested Superintendent Chambers and staff address each of Mrs. Stone's concerns prior to the next meeting.

Responding to Mrs. Carroll's request, Dr. Cliett explained the changes in the physical education credit. Several years ago the state reduced the high school credit to a half credit. The Board, at the time, made the decision to keep the full credit for physical education and fitness lifestyle design was required. The state has now changed back to a full credit and some students were allowed to opt out of physical education for other activities, such as extracurricular sports. Now that state law requires a full credit, students must take an extra half credit of physical education.

Mrs. Carroll suggested the Board request a waiver from state graduation requirements.

Dr. Scaggs stated that the Board would need a strong justification for the waiver and he is not certain that they would consider it because it is a strong statement from the legislature.

Vice-Chairman Cake and Mrs. Sharpe requested that the Pupil Progression Plan be presented to the Board for a vote prior to requesting a waiver.

A Kanapaha Middle School parent strongly urged the Board to adopt the proposed amendment to the Pupil Progression Plan, which addresses high school credit for middle school students to complete Algebra I and foreign language courses during their eighth-grade year.

Dr. Paulson, president, ACEA, urged the Board to include teachers and make sure they have input on the proposed amendment.

The Public Hearing was adjourned and the regular board meeting reconvened.

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CAPITAL FUNDING  
OPTIONS

Mr. Jerry Ford, president, Ford and Associates, Inc., presented capital outlay financing alternatives and discretionary funding sources, which included:

- A ½ cent sales tax.
- General Obligation Bonds

CITIZEN INPUT

The following concerns/suggestions/recommendations were presented to the Board for consideration:

- The Board was provided with information related to employee resignations/terminations for the period of August 2000-July 2001 and was urged to investigate the reasons for employee resignations, hiring practices, administrative skills in dealing with employees and employee morale in those departments with the highest turnover rates.
- Disappointment with the lack of appropriate textbooks and curriculum related to African-American history.
- Make raising the Base Student Allocation (BSA) the Board's number one priority.

BOND COUNSEL  
SERVICE AGREEMENT  
FOR ISSUANCE OF  
SERIES 2001-QZAB

Mr. Keith Birkett, deputy superintendent, Planning/Budgeting & Systems Accountability, reported that in order for the Board to sell Qualified Zone Academy Bonds (QZABs), bond council services need to be acquired. Mr. Judson Freeman, Jr., of Livermore, Freeman, & McWilliams, P.A., has served in this capacity for many years. The district's financial advisor has reviewed the fee structure to assure that fees are normal and reasonable.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the Bond Counsel Services Agreement for Taxable Certificates of Participation, Series 2001-QZAB.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

QUALIFIED ZONE  
ACADEMY BONDS  
RESOLUTION NO. COP-  
QZAB-01-10

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt Resolution No. COP-QZAB-01-10, "A Resolution Authorizing the Issuance on behalf of the School Board of Alachua County, Florida, of not Exceeding \$5,147,100 Taxable Certificates of Participation, Series 2001-QZAB, for the purpose of Lease-Purchase Financing of Educational Facilities for the School Board of Alachua County, Florida; Approving the Major Financing Documents; Approving a Negotiated Sale of the Certificates to the Purchaser, Subject to Certain Conditions; and Providing an Effective Date."

Mr. Birkett reminded the Board that immediately following the regular meeting, a special meeting of the Leasing Corporation has been scheduled.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

REVISIONS TO THE  
CODE OF STUDENT  
CONDUCT—SECOND  
READING

Mrs. Kathy Black, executive director, Student Support Services, reported that a public hearing was held July 17, 2001, to consider revisions to the Code of Student Conduct. The revisions, as recommended by the Superintendent's Committee on Student Discipline, include:

- Prohibition of Electronic Telephone Pagers and Cellular Telephones
- Addition to the Glossary Terms—adding the word "bully" to the definition of harassment
- Format change to Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Rules section
- Additional language added to the Notice of Receipt

She noted that staff will work with principals on a monthly basis and at the end of every nine weeks report back to the Board on any necessary changes, depending upon the impact.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to adopt the revisions to the Code of Student Conduct as presented.

Mrs. Sharpe expressed concern that the Board's policy is in conflict with Florida Statutes, which states that electronic telephone pagers and cell phones are prohibited on school campus and at school functions. She pointed out that the proposed policy does not address what procedures or course of action teachers must take with cell phones.

Board Attorney Lang stated that when the Legislature enacted this particular provision, it was giving the Board the power to be able to preclude the possession of the pagers on campus. He does not believe that it precludes the Board, if it chooses to do so, to propose that students can have them in possession, but they cannot be turned on. If the student has violated the policy, the Board would have rights concerning what to do with the pager and/or the student.

Mrs. Black reminded the Board that there are still procedures in place and a range of consequences for misbehaviors for cell phones/pagers and the jurisdiction of the principal.

Mrs. Cawthon felt that the cell phone/pager proposal would add more confusion and responsibilities for teachers and administrators.

Mrs. Carroll expressed concern that she had not received many emails from teachers and they are her biggest concern. She felt that this would be an ongoing problem and one more issue for teachers to deal with. If it is already occurring, it is important for the Board to support them and administrators when action has to be taken. She stated that she is very undecided due to the lack of public input and she is willing to wait until school begins and have teachers provide input.

Mrs. Black explained that the issue of cell phones/pagers on campus originated from Board policy in the Code of Conduct that dealt with allowance of them in vehicles. The question before the committee was input from parents concerned that their child did not own a car, but they would also feel secure in knowing that they can contact their child at school, not only limited to students who drive cars. If there had been a complete ban, the committee may not have dealt with it, but because of the input, the committee dealt with the issue.

Mr. Cake stated that he could support the proposed amendment to the Code of Conduct if he can be assured that staff will monitor throughout the year and readdress it next year or sooner, if it is a problem.

Mrs. Black noted that cell phones and pagers are currently on school campuses, are in backpacks and are being controlled.

Mrs. Carroll stated that in the current policy there was an issue of students that were driving that might be unsafe in their cars, not unsafe at school. Has the Board done their part in having telephones that are accessible after school hours, when children come back from field trips, which would help with the issue of parents being able to contact students. She requested staff report back before the end of the first semester.

She encouraged the press to make parents aware, if it passes, that they will have to be very understanding and support the Board in upholding the portion of the policy related to confiscation of cell phones and pagers if misused.

Mrs. Sharpe realizes that it is a technological society and she is not trying to prevent communication with parents or students, but feels it is just one more issue for teachers to deal with. It is the responsibility of the Board to ensure the least disruptions in the classroom and she cannot support this issue.

Following a poll of the Board and discussion, Superintendent Chambers suggested withdrawing the proposed amendment on page 15 dealing with cell phones and return this change mid-year or next year.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to amend the motion and withdraw the proposed amendment dealing with cellular telephones and pagers, page 15, in the Secondary Code of Conduct and the current language remains the same in the Secondary Code and bring the issue back to the Board prior to the end of the first semester.

The question was called on the amendment.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

The question was called on the original motion as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

CHANGE ORDER  
NUMBER SEVEN FOR  
PROJECT SBAC CB632—  
WESTWOOD MIDDLE  
SCHOOL ADDITIONS  
AND RENOVATIONS

Mr. Ed Gable, director, Facilities, stated that this change order adds \$118,727.89 to the contract, revising the contract to \$2,343,017.43, and represents an increase in cost for providing and installing metal stud framing and hi-abuse drywall to all existing interior walls; concrete foundation, concrete masonry units (cmu) retaining wall and finishes; and structural retrofit of existing building number 8. This change order adds forty (40) consecutive calendar days to the contract time.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration’s recommendation to authorize execution of the change order as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

CHANGE ORDER  
NUMBER SEVEN FOR  
PROJECT SBAC CB909—  
EASTSIDE HIGH  
SCHOOL REROOFING

Mr. Gable stated that this change order adds \$125,420.20 to the contract, revising the contract to \$2,605,317.70, and represents an increase in cost for replacing 4,462 square feet of existing metal deck and insulation found to be structurally unsound. This change order adds twelve (12) consecutive calendar days to the contract time.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration’s recommendation and authorize execution of the change order as presented.

Mr. Cake requested a final amount and a report on what projects had to be cut or postponed.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

2002 LEGISLATIVE  
PRIORITIES

Superintendent Chambers provided the Board with a draft of the 2002 Legislative Priorities. Dr. Joy Frank, the Board’s lobbyist, presented information to the Board at the August 2 workshop and compiled the list of priorities as presented.

Mrs. Carroll suggested rearranging the priorities and making the first priority increasing the BSA in order to competitively recruit/retain to meet the national average for Alachua County; retain low pupil/teacher ratio; and provide needed electives and curriculum not under state funding sources, particularly textbook adoptions.

Superintendent Chambers hoped to get discussion and approval from the Board and send a draft to the FSBA for their documentation and bring back at the next Board meeting.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to tentatively approve the 2002 Legislative program with suggestions.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the consent agenda as described in items 1-16. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

BOARD MEMBERS/  
SUPERINTENDENT  
REQUESTS

Mrs. Sharpe provided the following information:

- A computer furniture catalog
- Information from the Carpenter's Local Union 75 to share with facilities staff, to provide the district with temporary maintenance by trained, skilled craftsmen from Union Temp Staffing, Inc., and requested a report on the feasibility of this service.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m.