

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED WORKSHOP MINUTES

Board Retreat

Conference Room E – January 15, 2014

The School Board of Alachua County, Florida, met in Conference Room E, Kirby-Smith, 620 E. University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida, for a Board Retreat, duly called at 9 a.m. Present were: Gunnar Paulson, Chairman; Leanetta McNealy, Vice-Chairman; April Griffin, Carol Oyenarte and Eileen Roy, members; Hershel Lyons, Interim Superintendent; and Staff Attorney Brian Moore and Board Attorney David Delaney.

The purpose of the Retreat was to discuss topics that, due to time constraints, were not covered at the last Board Retreat, which was held at the Matheson Museum on September 24, 2013. The following topics listed on the agenda include: Safety and Crisis Plans; Post DES – Retirement of Administrators Grandfathered-in; Low Performing Schools/Teacher Incentive Program; Lastinger Center for Learning; Administrative Appointments/Positions, and Zoning Exemptions.

Chairman Paulson called the meeting to order.

Safety and Crisis Plans:

Interim Superintendent Lyons welcomed guests Sheriff Sadie Darnell and Chief of Police Tony Jones, and law enforcement staff. Mr. Lyons stated that as the Board prepares for the upcoming budget cycle he felt the need to have a preliminary discussion regarding the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program.

Sheriff Darnell and Chief Jones provided the Board with information related to the costs of the SRO Program.

Current contribution by SBAC:

- 16 ASO Deputies = SBAC pays \$723,531
- 13 GPD Officers = SBAC pays \$348,311

Sheriff Darnell and Chief Jones both explained that due to increased costs for fuel, radios, vehicle insurance, vests, health insurance, etc., for officers/deputies, they are requesting the School Board consider an increase in the contribution to the SRO Program. They both felt that a more equitable level would be a 50/50 sharing of the costs, which is more in line with other districts in the state.

Board members agreed that the SRO Program is very beneficial to schools and the community as a whole, especially at the elementary level. The Board expressed their strong support and appreciation to both agencies and conveyed understanding of the request for the 50/50 split.

Sheriff Darnell and Chief Jones will each present the 50/50 proposal to their respective Boards. Board members thanked the Sheriff and the Chief for the collaborative working relationship between law enforcement leaders and the School Board.

Following were comments, suggestions and requests from the Retreat:

Post DES—Retirement of Administrators Granfathered-in:

Mrs. Roy:

- The Board has instated a policy limiting administrative personnel to two (2) years employment Post DES and a few personnel have been grandfathered-in. She believes that the Board should now require these employees to adhere to the same policy beginning next school year--limit them to two (2) years Post DES and then they would come in at the mid-point salary scale, which is the same agreement the Board has with other administrative personnel.

Mrs. Oyenarte:

- Reviewed the current list of DES administrative names/positions Mrs. Roy referred to and noted that with upcoming retirements there may only be eight (8) personnel that remain on Post DES that would be impacted by Mrs. Roy's recommendation.
- Does not understand the need for this conversation or the need to pursue going after these eight (8) individuals since some of these individuals will be exiting very soon on their own, and the savings is only one teacher unit.
- She does not believe that it would be fair for the Board to change the rules in mid-stream for these employees that were grandfathered-in.
- If the Board does this, it should be done across the board.

Dr. Paulson:

- Pointed out that this is a fairness and budget issue.
- These individuals are on annual contract and the savings should be spent on students.
- Former Superintendent Dan Boyd extended DROP and Dr. Paulson guaranteed that there would be no lawsuit for age discrimination.

Mr. Moore, Staff Attorney:

- Noted that he believes this could become an age discrimination issue because these individuals may assert that they signed-up with the understanding that this was the practice that was in place and the rules were changed after the fact.

Mr. Delaney, Board Attorney:

- Believes the Board always runs the risk of age discrimination, but he believes it would be a low risk to the District. The claim would be that the rules of the game have changed, but there would be no liability because it is an annual contract—no tenure.

Dr. McNealy:

- Believes there are extenuating circumstances in some cases.

Low Performing Schools:

Dr. McNealy:

- As we move toward the end of the year, what are we doing for schools that happen to be high needs and state mandates. Is it enough, what we are doing to level the playing field?
- Staff members carry the burden for student achievement and are trying to solve the problems.
- Scores are not indicative of what our schools can do.
- If a person is not effective in the same position, why do we continue to do the same old thing?
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Teacher Incentive Program:

Dr. McNealy:

- Application process closed a few years ago making a difference in performance.
- Long-term advantages could make a vast difference.
- Teacher Incentive Program (TIP) – Elementary feeder to middle schools.
- Could replicate the model.
- Inequities in high-needs schools.

Mrs. Oyenarte:

- Suggested checking with the city of Chicago as to what kind of funds those schools are getting.
- Affects morale.
- Suggested a signing bonus for highly effective teachers (\$3,000).

Dr. Paulson:

- Suggested a transfer procedure—three years and you can transfer.
- Concern with loss of SIG Grant and need to look how we are going to fund.
- What are we currently doing?
- Appraisal committee could be discussing how to evaluate teachers that do not have the FCAT.

Mrs. Griffin:

- Believes every school should have social workers for at-risk population.

Mrs. Roy:

- Is it worth the investment?
- Agree it should be 2-3 years for a teacher to get an incentive and should be able to show enhanced results.
- VAM model is up and down.

At the Board's direction, Mr. Caudle will check with other districts for future application to the TIP program and will provide some information related to the success rate of those schools that did get involved.

- Types of differentiated pay
- Extra time
- Extra pay planning time
- Recruitment bonus to attract high performing teachers
- Performance bonus (bounty)
- DOE specific requirements on how to write eligibility rules
- Use more than one year of data
- First year larger group/second year less/three years of data

Superintendent Lyons referred to VAM and informed the Board that he has spoken with ACEA and is currently finalizing what we are using to ensure that all teachers are evaluated on the students they are teaching. After completion, need to finalize that work with these schools to get differentiated pay. He also noted that the Action Plans the Board is developing will drive the negotiations.

Mr. Caudle referred to the 3-year social worker grant (with the option to ask for an extension if there are funds left) that Alachua County received for social workers at Lake Forest, Metcalfe, Rawlings, and Idylwild. He noted that this grant has limited funding and the district provided specific data in order to qualify, but most of the money is going into salaries.

Dr. McNealy shared her observations in two schools, which she believes are underrated, segregated, isolated and disconnected. Staff does not want to be part of the solution. Principals need to be allowed to manage their schools and administrators need to provide additional training for teachers.

- Modeling Coaches, DOE—need them to go into the classrooms and conduct walk-throughs.
- Need people to observe and get those students that are not encouraged.
- Let the teachers see—don't just tell.
- Facilitators are not familiar with the students.
- Benchmark testing every month or every two months.
- Depends on the grade level and subject area.
- See how those schools are stacking up.
- Need to be made aware and compare.
- Discipline declining.
- DOE walk-throughs are kinder and gentler.
- Magnet programs are not the answer--would increase enrollment, but regular students must be integrated.
- Lastinger Center for Learning Practice Model—they are willing to collaborate and do the work that is needed in our schools. Not a quick fix, but a phenomenal success with research to prove it.
- Rezoning—balance inequities in these high needs schools.
- SIG not getting bang for the buck.

Mrs. Oyenarte excused herself from the meeting.

Administrative Appointments:

Dr. McNealy:

- Expressed concern that administrative appointments are done at public Board meetings with families present. Feels there should be a better procedure in place when a Board member wishes to block an appointment.
- Knows that timing is an issue, but requested the new Superintendent be aware of the Board's expectations.
- African-American principals do not have to be appointed for a high-needs school.

Mr. Delaney:

- Board members must have "just cause" to go against the Superintendent's personnel recommendations.

Dr. Paulson:

- Recommends reinstating the site review which provides the faculty/staff/community an opportunity to provide input.
- Use of the Administrative Pool.
- Suggested Board members meet with the Superintendent one-on-one in a private meeting to voice support or non-support of a recommended administrative appointment.

Superintendent Lyons informed the Board that site reviews are still conducted, but often times there are timing issues involved and a site review is not possible (retirements create a domino effect). He noted that conversations are held with Board members in advance of an administrative appointment at a Board meeting.

Zoning Exemptions:

Zoning staff members Dr. Steven Stark and Ms. Martha Dean joined the meeting.

Dr. McNealy:

- In order to address some issues needing improvement, she met with Ms. Dean and had a very productive meeting where she gained a better understanding of the process.

- Zoning exemptions fall under many different categories.
- Praised the Zoning Department as one of the hardest working areas at Kirby-Smith and highly recommends the hiring of a temporary individual to assist the department.
- Understands that ethnicity is not considered for hardship cases.
- How many were denied/granted?
- High school coaches/principals/athletic directors need to curtail recruiting students—need a clearance system in place. Also need a system for extracurricular activities, which creates high anxiety.
- Take a closer look when it gets to the appeals process as to how many are being denied.
- Consider race in zoning exemption requests—socioeconomic diversity.
- Concerned that many parents are giving up their parental rights to get into a particular school zone.
- Many students apply for a magnet program to get into a school, but they do not complete the program.

Superintendent Lyons stated that the zoning process is very complex, but staff will continue to make it clear to principals that they are not to allow student athletes to tryout unless they are zoned to that particular school.

Dr. Paulson:

- Referred to the Zoning policy regarding rezoning and suggested moving up low socio-economic status in the order of preferences.

Ms. Dean reported the following data as of September 2013:

2,524 – Zoning Exemption requests received

1,805 – Granted

810 – Denied

Mrs. Griffin:

- Has seen an increase in temporary guardianship at a particular school.

Dr. Paulson stated that this meeting has been very beneficial and the Board needs to continue to improve what is being done and needs to spend the district's money smartly.

The School Board Retreat adjourned at 12:13 p.m.