

BUDGET WORKSHOP - AUGUST 28, 2000

The School Board of Okaloosa County met in Workshop Session on August 28, 2000, in the Fort Walton Beach Administration Building, 120 Lowery Place, SE.

PRESENT: Rodney Walker, Chairman
Don Gaetz
Howard Hill
Lloyd Taylor

Walter Gordon, Superintendent
C. Jeffrey McInnis, Esq., Attorney to the Board

ABSENT: Cindy Frakes, Vice-Chairman

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the proposed budget for the 2000-2001 fiscal year.

Mr. Gaetz stated that traditionally the Young Authors Conference includes both elementary and secondary students. It was the intent of the Elementary and Secondary Education Departments to have two events this year to better target each age group. He proposed an amendment to provide an additional \$8000 to the Secondary Education Department to fund separate events.

Mr. Walker asked Debbie Hurst if there were any funds left from the district carryover dollars. Mrs. Hurst responded that there is a remaining balance of \$6000.

Mr. Gaetz proposed that the \$6000 go toward the Young Authors Conference with an additional \$2000 from General Revenue.

Mr. Gaetz asked for the number of split classes and what the cost would be to eliminate the split classes. He also asked that the educational impact of split classes be explained.

Mr. Gordon stated that there are four split classes (3 at Southside and 1 at Baker). The cost to eliminate these classes would be from \$100,000 to \$200,000 for two to four additional teachers depending on the grade level enrollments. He added that while split classes are not the preference they can be very successful with an outstanding teacher.

Mrs. Gunter stated that there has been no formal research on the educational impact of split classes; however, from past experience in the county they have been very successful. The classes are typically carefully selected with a higher enrollment of older students with high performing students from the lower grade level.

Mr. Gaetz asked what happens if the parent objects to their student being in a split class. Mrs. Gunter responded that an orientation meeting is held with the parents to explain how the class will work. If the parent still objects to the split class, they can request their student be moved to another class.

Mr. Gaetz asked if all the teachers who have a split class have volunteered to teach the class. Mrs. Gunter responded that the teachers at Southside have volunteered but she would have to verify that information with Baker. She added that several other teachers in the county have also requested to have split classes.

Mr. Gaetz stated that he was prepared to offer an amendment to eliminate split classes but based on the information presented he would not do so if assurance can be provided that Baker has teachers who have volunteered to teach a split class and that the class enrollment is carefully selected as described. Mrs. Gunter stated that she would verify that information with the principal at Baker School.

BUDGET WORKSHOP - AUGUST 28, 2000

Mr. Gaetz asked if there were any overloaded classes as discussed previously. Mr. Gordon responded that the issue of overloaded classes has been resolved.

Mr. Gaetz stated that during the last budget cycle the Board agreed to ensure that all students would have access to a textbook to take home upon request. He asked if that practice was still in effect or if a budget amendment was required. Mr. Gordon responded that textbooks are available and no action is required.

Mr. Taylor stated that he had no other amendments to offer other than the one he proposed at the previous workshop regarding supplemental funding to the small schools.

Mr. Hill stated that he had no other amendments to offer at this time. The amendment previously offered regarding an ESE aide at Lewis Middle School was no longer valid as an additional teaching unit has been assigned to the school.

Mr. Gordon recommended reductions in out-of-county travel in each department totally \$65,557 to be used to buy math manipulatives for the elementary and middle schools (Exhibit 00-515).

Mr. Gaetz stated support of the recommendation and asked if the money would be distributed to the schools to make the purchase of materials or would it be done by the district. Mr. Gordon responded that the money would go to the schools and that the elementary and secondary staff would meet with the schools to help them select the appropriate materials.

As requested at the previous meeting, Jeff Roser submitted the projected cost of additional computers for ESE teachers to use the new IEP software. The estimated cost of \$42,863 was derived from a survey of ESE teachers. Mr. Roser also noted that this amount has not been included in the ESE Department Budget for 2000-2001. (Exhibit 00-516)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Teresa Epperson, Recorder

WALTER C. GORDON
SUPERINTENDENT AND
EX-OFFICIO SECRETARY

RODNEY L. WALKER
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD