

WORKSHOP MEETING - FEBRUARY 28, 2000

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

PRESENT: Rodney Walker, Chairman
Cindy Frakes, Vice-Chairman
Don Gaetz
Howard Hill
Lloyd Taylor

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

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.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 from the Board.

The Chairman approved the addition of two items to the Consent Agenda: Termination of Employee #264-49-6862 and Bid #00-B39 Gym Seating.

SPECIAL DISCIPLINARY HEARING:

The Chairman recessed the Workshop at 4:00 p.m. for the scheduled Special Disciplinary Hearing. Mr. McInnis asked the parent if she would like for the hearing to be closed to the public and if the student's name could be used in the hearing. The mother requested the hearing be open to the public and authorized use of the student's name.

Fred Mangum, Gene Parish, Sanford Hayes, Booker Matthews, Louis Luna, Eva Rosado, and Roberto Rosado were sworn in by the Attorney.

Mr. Mangum presented the recommendation of the Superintendent for the expulsion of the student, Roberto (Bobby) Rosado, for the remainder of the 1999-2000 school year plus the 2000-01 school year for assault on an administrator.

Mr. Hayes gave an account of the student's actions at a basketball game which lead to the student becoming disruptive and disobedient when he was asked to leave the gym resulting in the recommendation for expulsion.

Mr. Parish and Mr. Matthews both gave a summary of the incident verifying the statements of Mr. Hayes.

Mr. Gordon explained that there had been a problem at a previous ball game between Crestview and Pace and he considered the actions of the student as inciting the crowd which could have led to further disruptive behavior.

Mr. Louis Luna, speaking on behalf of Ms. Rosado, requested that Bobby not be expelled for the alleged assault stating that Bobby pulled his arm away from Mr. Hayes but did not assault him. He stated that the expulsion information given to the Board did not include statements from students who witnessed the incident and that the administrators' accounts of the incident were not completely accurate. He informed the Board that an equal opportunity complaint has been filed against the school administrators claiming discrimination based on race and ethnic background in this case. And he further stated that he believes school officials failed to follow the policy on the use of reasonable force. He asked that any decision on this matter be delayed until a full investigation has been completed.

Ms. Rosado stated that her son admits to having made the obscene gestures and mouthing the obscenities to the visitors but disagrees with the alleged assault on the administrator. She added that she agrees punishment is required for his actions; however,

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she disagrees with the expulsion. Ms. Rosado offered some background information on the student as well as the student's explanation of the incident.

Motion was made by Mr. Hill and seconded by Mr. Gaetz to accept the Finding of Facts as presented by the school officials and as documented in Exhibit 99/00- .

Mr. Gaetz asked the Attorney to give a definition of assault or physical force that would justify a Finding of Fact of this sort. Mr. McInnis responded that the administrators have testified that there was some kind of pulling, jerking, or slinging action which made contact with Mr. Hayes and it was apparently delivered in a situation that caused Mr. Hayes to believe it was of a violent nature.

Following the explanation offered by Mr. McInnis, the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion followed regarding the conflicting statements about the incident and that the investigation of the equal opportunity complaint has not been completed.

Because of the conflicting information, motion was made by Mr. Hill that the student remain on suspension, that a full investigation be conducted including the equal opportunity complaint, and that a recommendation based on all the facts be brought to the Board at the next meeting or at the earliest possible time. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Frakes and carried unanimously.

The Chairman concluded the Hearing and reconvened the Workshop at 4:50 p.m.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS:

Mr. Gordon recommended the School Futures Research Foundation's proposal to operate The Okaloosa County Community Charter School be denied based on both district staff input and the recommendation of the Citizen's Review Committee. He submitted, in writing, his reasons for recommending denial of the charter school application and concerns about the proposal that have not been sufficiently addressed by the applicant.

Mr. Ray Sansom, Chairman of the Citizen's Review Committee, stated that the committee recommends that the charter school application submitted by the School Futures Research Foundation be denied. He submitted, in writing, the reasons cited by the committee to substantiate their recommendation.

Reverend Scotty Thigpen addressed the Board stating support of the proposed community charter school.

Mr. Bryan Bennett, representing the School Futures Research Foundation, responded to the concerns enumerated by the Superintendent and the Committee.

Mr. Walker asked the Superintendent, staff members, and Mr. Sansom if the responses offered by Mr. Bennett changed their recommendation in any way. All responded that their recommendation remained the same.

Steve Riggs and Kelly Hill of the CPA firm of Carr, Riggs, and Ingram gave a summary of the School Internal Audit Reports for the Fiscal Year 1999. It was noted that there was an overall improvement in the audit reports with no school rated as "Unacceptable" in the School Performance Ratings.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Teresa Epperson, Recorder

WALTER C. GORDON
SUPERINTENDENT AND
EX-OFFICIO SECRETARY

RODNEY L. WALKER
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD