

WORKSHOP MEETING - JANUARY 6, 2000

The School Board of Okaloosa County met in Workshop Session on January 6, 2000, in the Fort Walton Beach Administration Building, 120 Lowery Place, SE.

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

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

ABSENT: Rodney Walker, Chairman

In the absence of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman Frakes called the meeting to order at 9:05 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 or presenters. Routine items not discussed during the Workshop were reviewed prior to the meeting with no further questions or comments from the Board.

Mr. Gaetz asked for a report on the renovation of classrooms at Bob Sikes Elementary during the Christmas holidays. Bill Smith stated that new floor tile was installed in five kindergarten classrooms which required asbestos abatement. The appropriate procedures were followed for the abatement and the test results of air samples taken by a monitoring firm were clear of contamination. Some concern of contamination from the removal of the asbestos was expressed by teachers and parents. After meeting with the principal and teachers, a second firm was called in to test air samples and again, clear results were received. The test results have been sent to an environmental specialist for further analysis. A meeting with the teachers and parents is scheduled for this afternoon at the school and an OSHA Environmental Specialist will be at the meeting to answer any questions.

Mr. Gaetz reported that the Task Force on Technical Education is conducting further research through in-depth interviews with approximately 20 major local employers and through a mail survey of the families of 8th graders, 11th graders and 1996 graduates. This research effort is requesting information on what technical skills to provide and what should be included in a technical program. Additionally, a sub-committee of the Task Force has met with the leadership of the Economic Development Council to discuss options for implementation of a technical high school through partnerships. One of the options discussed was a joint venture between the school district and the EDC. This option will be presented to the Executive Board of the EDC. Further information from the Task Force will be presented to the Board after the additional research data is compiled.

Mr. Gaetz asked for a status report on the Board's request for a review of the district's RFP/RFQ process and recommended improvements. Mr. Gordon responded that a RFP/RFQ document is in its second draft form at this time. After receiving additional staff input, the document will be presented in draft form in February to receive input from the Board. The concerns and suggestions submitted by citizens have been considered in the review process.

Mr. Gaetz noted that at the December meeting of the Board, reconsideration of the BENCOR Retirement Plan was withdrawn with the understanding that all administrators would be fully informed of the program and that staff would investigate the possibility of a hold harmless clause in the plan for those employees who do not want to participate in the plan. He asked for a report on the status of these directives. Emmett Windham responded that a video on the plan has been shown and discussion of the plan has taken place with all administrators with the exception of those in Food Service and Transportation. A meeting will be scheduled with the employees of these two departments to complete the information process. As discussed at the December meeting, information has been

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received from the School District of Santa Rosa County regarding a clause in the program to exclude employees who do not desire participation in the plan. This information will be presented to the Board upon review and advisement by Mr. McInnis.

Upon the request of Mr. Gaetz, Vice-Chairman Frakes moved Consent #3, Monthly Financial Reports, to the Discussion Agenda.

Mr. Gaetz asked if the Superintendent would be prepared Monday night to respond to the questions and concerns expressed by Mr. Walker at the December meeting. He also stated that he would have a number of questions regarding the financial status of the district. Mr. Gordon stated that a full mid-year financial report will be provided at the next workshop.

Mr. Gaetz asked the Superintendent if any non-recurring revenues were being used for recurring expenses. The Superintendent responded that there were not.

Referencing the application for the Goals 2000 Local Education Reform Grant, Beth Holmes responded to questions from Mrs. Frakes regarding the addition of more reading teachers and other funding sources for the elementary reading program. Mrs. Holmes also responded to questions from Mr. Hill regarding expansion of the reading program into the secondary schools.

Mr. McInnis noted the conditional items in the contract with Okaloosa Academy, enrollment procedures and change in the management structure of the Academy, which have now been clarified and recommended by the Superintendent for approval.

Mr. Hill expressed concern with the vagueness of the proposed contract with the Boys and Girls Club of Okaloosa County to operate an in-school suspension program at Bruner Middle School. Specifically, the lack of any clear lines of authority, operational control, duration of the contract, and requirement for background check of contracted employees. He requested, and Mrs. Frakes approved, this item be moved to the Discussion Agenda.

Mr. McInnis stated that he would review the contract and reformat it into the standard agreement form used by the district. Mr. Gordon recommended the Board approve the program subject to completion of a more formal agreement. Mr. Gordon then responded to questions regarding this in-school suspension program and other ISS programs in the district and equity of funding for like programs in other schools.

Mrs. Frakes asked Mary Gunter to report at the meeting on Monday the amount of the supplements to the Ruckel Middle School staff and if support personnel would be receiving a supplement.

Mr. Hill asked when the classroom computers to be provided through the Technology Plan would be available to teachers. Mr. Gordon stated that a meeting has been scheduled for next week with the program manager and this would be one of the topics of discussion.

Mr. McInnis noted that a public meeting of the School Board, the Okaloosa County Commission and the City of Fort Walton Beach has been advertised for January 18, 2000, at 6:00 p.m. in the Fort Walton Beach Administration Building to discuss issues relating to the potential sale and/or transfer of various properties and the potential development of those properties for governmental and public use facilities.

Mr. Gaetz asked if the concerns expressed by Mr. Hill regarding the inability of local vendors to qualify under the specifications in the RFP for the purchase of computers have been addressed. Mr. Gordon responded that this issue will also be discussed at next week's meeting with the program manager.

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Mr. Hill and Mr. Gaetz stated that they have heard there are some concerns among the schools and the public regarding the time line for students to apply for entry into The University School program and the inclusion of IB and AP students in the program classes. The Superintendent was asked to keep the Board apprised on the implementation of the program.

Mrs. Frakes stated that she would be responsible for sending to the Okaloosa Legislative Delegation the Resolution regarding the Legislature's A+ Plan for Public Schools that was adopted at the December meeting. She requested the Superintendent post the Resolution on the district's web site.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Teresa Epperson, Recorder

WALTER C. GORDON
SUPERINTENDENT AND
EX-OFFICIO SECRETARY

CINDY FRAKES
VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD