

WORKSHOP MEETING - OCTOBER 5, 2000

The School Board of Okaloosa County met in Workshop Session on October 5, 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

The Vice-Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:00 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 and presenters. Routine items not discussed during the Workshop were reviewed prior to the meeting with no further questions or comments from the Board.

Vice-Chairman Frakes made the following additions to the Agenda: Added as Consent #25, Professional Services Agreement with Marlene Barron for Elliott Point Elementary; added as Discussion #2B, Waiver of OCEA contract to pay a bonus to teachers and support staff at Northwood Elementary; added as Discussion #2C, Waiver of OCEA contract to pay a bonus to teachers and support staff at Destin Elementary.

Bill Smith presented the survey and the Phase One Environmental Site Assessment on the property adjacent to Valparaiso Elementary used as the playground area. The survey determined the parcel of land to be 2.395 acres instead of 1.83 acres. He stated that he has discussed the discrepancy with the owner of the property and the owner wants to proceed with the sale of the property.

Mr. McInnis stated that two independent appraisal have been done on the property. Both appraisals came in at approximately \$150,000 based on 1.83 acres. The increase to 2.3 acres will only increase the appraised value.

Mr. Gaetz declared a potential conflict of interest in this matter because he has an unrelated business relationship with the owner of the property.

Mr. McInnis noted that he has provided representation to the seller at times in the past but has offered no legal advise in this matter. He stated that he has prepared the standard contract for this transaction but all other documents have been provided by independent consultants.

Mr. McInnis stated that the owner of the property has requested that the Board pay all closing costs associated with this transaction since the agreed upon purchase price is significantly less than the appraised value of the property. The Board has already paid for the survey, appraisals and environmental study. The additional closing costs are estimated to be less than \$2000.00. He stated that along with the contract he would be requesting the Board authorize payment of the \$500.00 Earnest Money Deposit as called for in the contract. The transaction should close around October 20, 2000.

Mr. Hill asked why Antioch, Destin and Edwins Elementary Schools chose not to participate in the AmeriCorps program. Mrs. Gunter responded that it may be because of the required matching funds or the results of the program in previous years. She stated that she would contact the principals to find out why they were not participating.

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Mr. Hill requested this item be moved to the Discussion Agenda stating that if funding was an issue, particularly for Edwins, that he would offer a motion to provide funds for this program to Edwins Elementary. Mrs. Frakes moved this item to Discussion #4.

Mr. Hill asked if Destin Middle would be required to request a waiver to pay the mentor teacher a supplement if the school was awarded the pilot program. Mrs. Gunter responded that the school is aware that a waiver of the OCEA Master Contract will need to be negotiated at that time.

Mary Gunter responded to questions from Mrs. Frakes regarding the Goals 2000 Staff Development Grant. Discussion included teacher training, selection of students for the program, classroom implementation, and funding.

Board members discussed with Jeff Roser the proposal concerning implementation of a District Scholarship Plan for Students with Disabilities to fulfill the intent of Section 229.05371, Florida Statutes.

Mr. Gaetz expressed concern that the Charter School Contract for the Liza Jackson Preparatory School obligates the district to continue with the fall testing pilot program for Terra Nova. He suggested that language be included to state that if the district elects to alter its testing program, it will not be obligated to run such a testing program solely for the benefit of the charter school.

Mr. McInnis stated that the overall intent of this section is to state that the school will mirror the assessment program of the district. Mrs. Gunter added that the school is looking for baseline data and are not obligated to use Terra Nova. Other assessment instruments are available for this purpose. Mr. McInnis suggested that the reference to Terra Nova be deleted.

Referencing the district's ESE Special Program and Procedures document and the Admissions and Placement Manual and Forms, Mr. Gaetz expressed concern with a contract that ties behavior for a five year period to documents that exist today. He suggested words to the effect of "as may now exist or from time to time be altered or changed or omitted at the district's sole discretion" be added to this section.

In the Transportation section of the contract Mr. Gaetz suggested the addition of language to state that no provision of this contract shall obligate the district to furnish, or cause to be furnished, any transportation for any student to the charter school.

Regarding the list of administrative services to be provided by the district in return for the 5% administrative fee, Mr. Gaetz stated that these services are now provided by the district to our school. However, over the course of five years these services could change or be de-centralized and provided by the schools. The contract should not obligate the district to provide services to the charter school that it may or may not provide to its own schools in the future.

Mr. McInnis stated that the list of services is provided by Statute, but there is no statutory definition of the services. He recommended additional language to state that the services will be provided if they are offered or performed by the school district.

Mr. Gaetz suggested the contract state that on an annual basis the Superintendent and the charter school will establish a working definition of administrative services.

Mr. Gaetz asked if there was a statutory obligation for the district to support the charter school in its efforts to secure capital outlay funds that may be made available, as is stated in the contract. This statement would mean that the district has to support the charter school's efforts to obtain funds in which the district may be competing for also. Mr. McInnis stated that he would check the statutory reference on this matter.

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Mr. Gaetz further noted that the contract obligates the district to notify the charter school of all pertinent grant and award opportunities which is more than we do for our own schools. Mr. McInnis stated that the intent is for the charter school to be placed on the district's mailing list to receive all grant information that is distributed to schools within the district.

Mr. Hill questioned the need to list specific outcomes for FACT in grade 8, as is listed for grades four and five, since the contract states that the school may serve grades prek through 8. Mrs. Gunter responded that 8th grade outcomes can be added, although they will not be serving 8th grade students as yet, but the State will be changing the criteria next year.

Jeff Roser responded to questions from Mr. Hill regarding the district's role, as the Local Education Agency, in the IEP process at the charter school and the exchange of district ESE services for the charter school's share of Part B Federal entitlement funds for disabled students.

Mr. Hill questioned the contract language stating that the charter school shall receive 100% of the earned transportation funding when the district receives less than 65% of the actual transportation cost. Mr. McInnis responded that the district will be serving as the pass-through agent for transportation funding. This statement means that the school will receive 100% of the earned transportation funding received by the district.

Mr. Hill asked if the 75-day time line was sufficient time for the school to submit their annual audit at the end of the fiscal year. Mr. McInnis responded that this time line was set in order for the district to meet its deadline for submission of final reports to the state.

In response to questions from board members regarding the integrated curriculum approach to reading, writing and math, Mrs. Gunter stated that there has been an increase in FCAT reading and math scores in schools where this approach to the curriculum is being used. Because the emphasis has been on reading and math, science and social studies have not been given priority in instructional time; however, it is recommended that teachers use science and social studies materials for reading lessons.

Mr. Gaetz stated that he has received calls from parents and teachers regarding the awarding of a bonus to teachers and support personnel from Florida School Recognition Funds. He asked if it was necessary for this to come before the Board since Florida Statute leaves the decision on how to spend this bonus money to the discretion of the school advisory council and faculty.

Mr. McInnis responded that the Board is not approving how the money is divided among the staff. The Board is authorizing a waiver of the OCEA contract to pay a supplement to employees.

Mr. Gaetz requested Mr. McInnis provide the appropriate wording for the agenda item on which the Board will be voting at its regular meeting.

Vice-Chairman Frakes approved the request of Mr. McInnis to make a technical correction to Discussion item #3 to reflect the correct size of 2.395 acres for the property being purchased by the Board.

Mr. McInnis advised that a personnel matter has moved through the Administrative Hearing process and a recommended Order is ready to be delivered to the Board for consideration. A complete transcript of the Administrative Hearing will be delivered to each board member for review. According to the rules of procedure, each party has the right to prepare Exceptions to the Order. The Superintendent and his counsel have prepared Exceptions to the Order and developed an alternative recommendation which will be delivered to the Board. This matter will be scheduled for the last meeting in October for the

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Board to take final action on the recommendation. It will not be an evidentiary hearing; however, the employee and his attorney will be present at this meeting to respond to the Superintendent's recommendation prior to the Board taking formal action. If the employee is not satisfied with the decision of the Board, there is a time frame in which the employee may file an appeal with the First District Court of Appeal.

Mrs. Frakes inquired as to any changes in the meeting schedule for November and the Organizational Meeting. Mr. McInnis responded that typically the Board combines its meetings in November but the schedule has not been addressed.

Mr. Gaetz stated concern that teachers are being given inservice on how to prepare paperwork for Medicaid reimbursements. He indicated that he would discuss the matter with Ms. Cavanah and possibly submit an agenda item regarding this matter for the next meeting.

Mr. Hill stated that he has received a letter regarding the district providing education services to juveniles incarcerated as adults. Mr. McInnis stated that the Superintendent has filed a response to the letter. The education program serving these individuals has been operational for two years and is being provided by Okaloosa Academy.

Mr. Hill stated that again the issue has come up that coaches are telling students that if they play on a school team, they cannot participate in any other outside sports activities. This was addressed last year and was to be handled administratively rather than by policy. He requested that each school provide in writing the restrictions being placed on students for each sport.

Mr. Gordon stated that he met with the athletic directors and some parents last year and thought there was resolution to the matter at that time. He added that he was not aware that there was a problem again, but that he would address the issue.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Teresa Epperson, Recorder

WALTER C. GORDON
SUPERINTENDENT AND
EX-OFFICIO SECRETARY

RODNEY L. WALKER
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD