

**WORKSHOP MEETING – JANUARY 7, 2010**

The School Board of Okaloosa County met in Workshop Session on January 7, 2010 in the School District Administration Building, 120 Lowery Place, SE, Fort Walton Beach, Florida.

**PRESENT:** Rodney Walker, Chairman  
Cindy Frakes, Vice-Chairman  
Howard Hill  
Chuck Kelley  
Cathy Thigpen

Alexis Tibbetts, Superintendent  
C. Jeffrey McInnis, Esq., Attorney to the Board

The Chairman 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 and presenters. Routine items not discussed during the Workshop were reviewed prior to the meeting with no further questions or comments by the Board.

The Chairman made the following changes to the Agenda: Visitors item #4 was deleted, Recognition of Joshua Hinton as Winner of the Governor's Recognition Scholarship Essay Contest, as Joshua Hinton was unable to attend.

Mrs. Hendricks presented a Race to the Top Grant application overview, explaining the required data for the application and the scoring process. The Race to the Top funds are Federal Grant funds that are offered to states for statewide comprehensive educational reform. Mrs. Hendricks explained the criteria and assurances that the district must provide and include in their Grant proposal should the State receive funding.

Additionally, Mrs. Hendricks provided detailed information showing the district's accomplishments and plans for each of the five required assurances, and where the district is in the competitive Grant process. A breakdown of the educational priorities, reforms and initiatives that the State has in place in the five areas was explained in detail. The District's application must support and align with State initiatives and demonstrate that the district is moving forward in meeting the State's educational priorities. While explaining the district's status and plans in each of the five State assurances, Mrs. Hendricks stated that the district has a strong program in place that meets all of the components and is competitive in the Grant process at this time.

Mrs. Hendricks answered questions and addressed comments with regard to the performance pay component which falls under the Great Teachers and Leaders assurance, as well as the teacher evaluation instrument.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) specifically outlines the considerations that need to be discussed. The deadline to submit the Memorandum of Understanding is January 12, 2010, and the three parties listed for signature are the Board Chairman, the Superintendent, and the Union President. Mrs. Hendricks stated that there is expected to be some healthy conversations in regard to some issues and is confident that an agreement can be made with the Union on a large portion of the initiatives and reforms that are included in the Grant. Additionally, the President of FEA has not yet endorsed the Grant process but is still in conversations at this time.

The amount of funding the district would receive is uncertain, depending upon the amount of funding the State receives; however, it is anticipated that the allotment to the district would be between \$1.2 million to \$2.4 million over a four-year period of time.

**WORKSHOP MEETING – JANUARY 7, 2010**

Mrs. Thigpen commented that the Okaloosa County School District is already at the top compared to other districts in the State. Although many of the District's accomplishments are in place in the foundation for reform, it would require many hours for the staff to write those accomplishments in the Grant. She stated that she is concerned this program would put additional pressure on District staff, teachers, and students. She would support submitting the MOU with the understanding that the District can change its mind.

Mr. Kelley stated that it is his understanding that the Board is being requested to sign the MOU which will start the dialog with the Union in this process. If the parties cannot come to an agreement, then the Grant application will not be submitted in July and the District would continue with the standards already in place. Mrs. Hendricks stated that Mr. Kelley's understanding of the process was accurate.

Mrs. Frakes stated that she would not be in favor of creating an additional CHOICE Institute, as outlined in the area of the STEM component, while some of the CHOICE Institutes already in place are struggling. She commented that the RTTT Grant will require the District to start new programs, and because there will be additional work and staff time to start the new programs, she is concerned that attention will not be given to the current programs.

Mary Beth Jackson, CHOICE Director, responded that funds from the Perkins Grant have been realigned and will be used to start the Biomedical Science Institute at Fort Walton Beach High School; therefore, there will not be a cost to the school or the district. Ms. Jackson stated that Perkins funding has also been used for current CHOICE programs. Mrs. Thigpen suggested an overview be presented at the Board's February Workshop showing the status of the District's CHOICE programs and the direction in which the District is going with CHOICE.

On behalf of the Teacher's Union, Karen Peek, Union President, informed the Board that as of this date, the Union would not sign the Memorandum of Understanding. The Union understands the need for the District to submit the application and is willing to hold discussions; however, the MOU states that the Union will negotiate. Negotiations could lead to a possible impasse and imposition, and the FEA has cautioned Unions not to get into that situation.

The Board was in consensus to move forward with submitting the Memorandum of Understanding. Mrs. Frakes requested that the Board be involved in the continuing discussions and that they receive all information that is discussed in the next phases of the process. Dr. Tibbets suggested that as the staff moves forward with the five assurances, a Board member and Karen Peek serve as representatives on the RTTT committee.

In regard to the Monthly Financial Statement, Mr. Kelley inquired about the net income of Food Service Operations. Mrs. Scallan responded that there are expenditures that have not been posted, and that once those are recorded the net income will reflect a lower amount.

Mrs. Hendricks answered questions from Mrs. Thigpen regarding the criteria set forth in the Memorandum of Agreement by Gulf Coast Community College as it relates to the three-day field experience for GCCC students.

Mr. Kelley noted that the legislature has reduced the per-student funding mid-year, ranging from \$14 per student up to \$32 per student, and inquired as to the amount of funding involved. Mrs. Scallan responded that the overall average for the State is \$14 per student. The mid-year reduction for Okaloosa is approximately \$2.4 million and is attributable to declining enrollment and to pro-ration. She stated that most of the schools absorbed the reduction through FTE reserves.

**WORKSHOP MEETING – JANUARY 7, 2010**

Mr. Hill asked if there was a significant deficiency in the Preliminary and Tentative audit findings for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2009. Mrs. Scallan responded that there was a significant deficiency and responses will be prepared. She explained that it will not affect the District's audit record or the District's standing as far as academically high performing.

Mrs. Thigpen requested that Mr. Nobles and Dr. Bill Smith give a brief overview showing the status of the custodial contract. Dr. Smith explained that the facilities staff is in the process of meeting with principals and conducting a survey, and that he would present the results at the Board's February Workshop. Mrs. Thigpen suggested that surveys also be completed by a few teachers.

Dr. Tibbetts announced that evening school activities have been suspended due to inclement weather. Additionally, it has been requested that weekend evening activities move to the daytime hours because of the chill factor.

Dr. Tibbetts informed the Board that Megan Tucker, a teacher at Kenwood Elementary, has been named the winner at the National level of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).


Mr. Walker thanked Mrs. Hendricks and her staff for the Race to the Top presentation and input.

Mr. Walker announced that the Public Hearing concerning the re-missioning of Valparaiso Elementary School and Lewis Middle School is scheduled for Tuesday, January 19, 2010, at 6:00 p.m., in the School District Administration Building. He proposed that the Board defer their final decision until the following Board meeting, on Monday, January 25, 2010.

The Board members concurred, stating that the deferment would allow them additional time to follow up on questions and concerns expressed at the Public Hearing, and would allow the public an additional opportunity to attend a public meeting regarding this matter. Mr. Walker announced that the Board meeting on January 25<sup>th</sup> is a regularly scheduled meeting and would take place at the Crestview Courthouse at 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Jan Crawford, Recorder

  
ALEXIS TIBBETTS, Ed.D.  
SUPERINTENDENT AND  
CORPORATE SECRETARY

  
RODNEY L. WALKER  
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD