

WORKSHOP MEETING - JULY 5, 2001

The School Board of Okaloosa County met in Workshop Session on July 5, 2001, in the School District Administration Building, 120 Lowery Place, SE, Fort Walton Beach.

PRESENT: Cindy Frakes, Vice-Chairman
Howard Hill
Lloyd Taylor
Cathy Thigpen

Don Gaetz, Superintendent
C. Jeffrey McInnis, Esq., Attorney to the Board

ABSENT: Rodney Walker, Chairman

Vice-Chairman Frakes 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.

As authorized by the Board, a comprehensive audit of all school bus routes and stops was conducted by the Transportation Department. Each route/stop was evaluated for safety, time, address, and the number of student riders. As a result of the audit 239 stops were eliminated, one regular bus was eliminated in the South zone, and one mini-bus was added in the Central zone. Other routes/stops were revised to reduce the amount of time students ride the bus, for safety reasons, or to correct driving time. Changes in the routes/stops in the North zone will now allow for revisions to the school starting times at Crestview High (7:20 a.m. instead of 6:53 a.m.), Southside Elementary and Antioch Elementary (8:45 a.m. instead of 9:00 a.m.).

Mr. Gaetz stated that the RFP for an independent analysis of the Transportation Department is being distributed. This analysis is being conducted in an effort to determine where other efficiency can be achieved and to determine if there are ways to compress the school starting times in a cost effective manner.

Mr. Gaetz stated that he would administratively change the school starting times for Crestview High, Southside and Antioch Elementary Schools for the 2001-2002 school year if the Board had no objection. Board Members stated they were in agreement with the changes indicated.

J. J. Steele presented the Code of Student Conduct for the 2001-2002 school year and indicated where content revisions had been made due to statutory changes and policy updates. Board Members approved of the document content but requested the size of the print be increased in order to make it more readable, particularly within the Equity Notice.

Mr. Hill noted that the property inventories did not reflect the changes in school principals. Mr. Gaetz responded that when there is a change in the school administration there is a sign-off process on the property inventory but both administrators are held responsible for the inventory during that particular school year.

Mr. Hill also stated that it was his understanding that this year the property inventories would reflect a depreciated price for missing items. Mr. Gaetz stated that he would check with the Chief Financial Officer to find out if it is allowed under Florida statutes.

Mrs. Thigpen stated that there is a suggestion from one of the principals regarding the inventory of outside equipment that should be discussed with the Property Control Department.

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Mr. Gaetz stated that a new inventory system was implemented last year that will improve the process but suggestions are welcomed.

Mrs. Frakes, again this year, expressed concern with the amount of missing property. Mr. Gaetz stated that accountability for property will be included in the evaluation of principals.

Mrs. Frakes also expressed concern with the amount of condemned food being disposed of by the central kitchen. Mr. Gaetz reminded the Board that when the District went to an independent audit process it was noted that the inventory at the central kitchen was too high. Since that time the inventory has been reduced but there is still a need to improve on inventory control. He noted that some of the condemned inventory is USDA commodities which are stored in USDA warehouses before being delivered to the District thereby reducing the District's control over expiration dates. He stated that he will be meeting with Mr. Bobo to discuss ways to improve inventory control.

Mr. Hill noted that the Physical Education for Progress Grant application states that the community will be invited to use the physical fitness course and equipment. He asked what the District's liability would be if a community member was injured on school property using the equipment. Mr. McInnis responded that the District would need to post the appropriate disclaimers.

Mr. Hill stated that the District Limited English Proficiency Plan addresses charter schools as if Okaloosa Academy is the only one. Since the district now has other charter schools, he suggested the wording be changed.

Mr. Hill asked if the 1997-98 school year was the most current data the District has available on ESOL personnel needs. Terry Bevino responded that she is working with Dr. Mike Berry of the University of West Florida to aggregate new data based on the past two years.

Mr. Hill requested Carolyn Lulue verify the beginning date of the contract with Walton County for ESE services since our school year begins on August 9. The Superintendent requested the cost per student charged to Walton County be verified with Mrs. Wascom to ensure that it reflects the District's cost.

Mr. Gaetz stated that it was the assumptions of the selection committee for the Employee Assistance Program Provider that the program is under utilized and that employees may prefer a choice of providers. Rather than paying a set amount to one provider and based on the above assumptions, the committee is recommending that all vendors who meet the conditions of the RFP be eligible to participate under these guidelines: 1) cost for the EAP will be capped at \$5900 for the year; 2) vendors who participate will bill on a quarterly basis at \$15.00 per visit until the cap is reached; and, 3) vendors may notify employees of the available services through vendor request forms. Based on the recommended guidelines, only two providers are willing to participate. Unfortunately, a vendor from the north county area is not willing to participate under these guidelines.

Mrs. Thigpen asked if students participating in the reading and/or math remediation program at Ruckel would receive any social studies instruction. Dr. McEachern responded that the students would be exempt from these classes to participate in the immersion program. As these students are brought up to the appropriate academic level in reading and/or math they will be moved back into social studies and physical education classes. Mrs. Bevino added that teachers are encouraged to use social studies and science texts as reading materials.

Mrs. Frakes, Dr. Frank Fuller and Mrs. Jacqueline Craig presented a proposal to establish a "Blended School" partnership with home schooling families. The program would allow home schoolers access to public schools on a part-time basis and, in some cases,

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special programs. Dr. Fuller and Mrs. Craig defined the need for the program, reviewed input received from the community on the needs of home schoolers, and outlined the proposed program.

Mr. Gaetz recommended the Board establish a "Blended School" as outlined in the proposal; appropriate \$90,000.00 from unencumbered general revenues as a one-time, start-up fund for the program; establish an Office of Independent Education with the stipulation that no new employees are added to district overhead for this purpose but that duties may be realigned; authorize the Superintendent to enter into agreements with the Arts and Design Society, the University of Florida (Camp Timpochee 4-H Center), and the Focus Center in order that instructional services for Blended Students may be provided in these locations; and authorize the Superintendent to conform the Pupil Progression Plan to accommodate this partnership. He explained that the \$90,000.00 appropriation is approximately two-thirds of the expenses anticipated for the program in FY 2001-2002, as detailed in the proposal, and would be expended beginning upon enactment and until the February FTE count, by which time the program would either generate FTE in an amount necessary to cover additional expenses or would be subject to discontinuance by the Board.

Mr. Hill asked if a program such as the Florida Virtual School for high school students was available for elementary and middle school students. Dr. Fuller stated that he would be meeting with a representative from the Florida Virtual School next week and invited Mr. Hill to attend the meeting.

Mr. Hill stated that \$2000 for a laptop computer seemed too expensive. He asked that the specifications and cost be reviewed. Mr. Gaetz stated that he would review this matter and provide the Board with information prior to the meeting on Monday.

At the request of Mr. McInnis, a closed Attorney-Client Session was scheduled for Tuesday, July 10, 2001, at 8:30 a.m. in the School District Administration Building.

Mrs. Frakes reminded the Board that a Special Meeting has been called for July 16, 2001, at 9:00 a.m. to receive the proposed department budgets for 2001-2002 and other related matters. The Agenda meeting also scheduled on that date has been moved to 8:00 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Teresa Epperson, Recorder

DON GAETZ
SUPERINTENDENT AND
CORPORATE SECRETARY

CINDY FRAKES
VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD