

## WORKSHOP MEETING - OCTOBER 4, 2001

The School Board of Okaloosa County met in Workshop Session on October 4, 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

The Vice-Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:10 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.

The following changes to the agenda were requested by the Superintendent and approved by the Chairman: Added as Superintendent's Business #2, Travel request by the Niceville High School debate team; Consent #16D was revised as Continuation of Suspension of Employee #439944440.

Mr. Hill asked if the district uses re-milled asphalt. Bill Smith responded that re-milled concrete or asphalt is sometimes used as fill or base under paving projects. A clay base is preferred unless working close to the water table and is cheaper. When investigating the most cost efficient method of demolishing the condemned bleachers at Meigs, re-milling was considered but it was determined that there was not enough space to bring in the milling equipment. He added that when the best method of tearing down the bleachers has been determined, a recommendation will be presented to the Board.

Mrs. Frakes stated that she spoke at the Crestview Chamber of Commerce breakfast regarding the Take Stock in Children Scholarship Program. The goal of the Okaloosa Public Schools Foundation is to offer 20 scholarships this year. The Legislature has set aside \$3 million in matching funds for the program which means that the Foundation will need to fund only half of the \$6500 cost of each scholarship.

Mr. Hill noted that there are two different travel request forms with the same MIS number. He asked that there be consistent use of one form. Mrs. Thigpen requested a summary page showing the total amount of travel for each school and department included in the travel reports.

Referencing the Tobacco Prevention Grant Application, Mrs. Thigpen asked if the teachers cited in the application were aware of the proposal and their presumed involvement in the program. Mr. Gaetz responded that the teachers are not made aware of the program until the Board has approved the application and the funds are awarded. Mrs. Thigpen and Mrs. Frakes stated that the school principals and teachers should be made aware of the program and their input solicited prior to submission of the application. Some schools may choose not to participate in the program or may be involved in some other type of program.

Mr. Hill stated that he had several concerns with the Dropout Prevention Plan being presented and that he would meet with Mrs. Walthall prior to the Board Meeting on Monday to discuss his concerns.

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Mrs. Bevino distributed a revised copy of the Articulation Agreement with Troy State University/Florida Region which included only minor technical changes. The agreement being recommended for approval is a compilation of last year's agreement and the subsequent amendments. She noted that the financial provision and the student transcript provision of the agreement are still being negotiated and may be amended.

Mr. Hill asked for an evaluation of the University School program after one year of operation. Mr. Gaetz stated that he would schedule a presentation to the Board by those closely involved in the program.

Mr. Gaetz requested a waiver of the ESE certification requirement for two Staffing Specialist positions. The reasons for requesting the waiver were that the role of the staffing specialist has changed to more of an oversight position for the IEP process, although it was never intended as a teaching position, and because of the growing shortage of ESE certified teachers. He stated that the waiver is requested for these two positions only and that he believes the individuals recommended to fill these positions are qualified to fulfill the job requirements.

Mr. Hill stated that \$300,000 was allocated in the Delta/BTG contract for the development of a web site. He asked if the contract has been reviewed to make sure there would not be a duplication of services with the new job description for a Web Technician. Mr. Gaetz responded that the review has occurred and there is no duplication of services. The Web Technician position being requested is the person who will run the web site once it has been developed by Delta/BTG.

Mrs. Frakes questioned the minimum eligibility requirement of an adjunct certificate for the Web Technician position. Mr. Gaetz stated that he would like to have someone who meets the qualifications for an adjunct certificate which means they would have to have a degree. By definition of an adjunct certificate, this person could not be in the classroom for more than two periods a day.

Mrs. Frakes stated that it has been suggested to her that the school zones be included on the web site. Mr. Gaetz stated that staff is working with the County to use their maps in order to include this information on the web site.

Mr. Gaetz presented a proposal for continuation of benefits for employees called into active service for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. The intent is to ensure that there is no break in benefits for the employee or the employee's family and to ensure that these employees retain their rights to rejoin group insurance coverage when they return from active duty. He requested authorization to expend up to \$100,000 from undesignated fund balance to pay the full costs of family health insurance coverage on behalf of such employees for up to six months while they are on active duty.

Mike Foxworthy suggested the affected families switch to the TriCare Supplement which has equal or better benefits than the Blue Cross Blue Shield policy. This option would provide insurance coverage for the family at a lower cost to the District. BCBS has assured him that these employees and their families would be accepted under the open enrollment policy when they return from active service.

Mr. Gaetz requested the flexibility to accomplish the purpose of the proposal in the least expensive way. If the TriCare option can be offered to these employees, then that would be the coverage the District pays for.

Mr. Gaetz also offered assurance that all activated employees will have a job when they return. The job may not be the same one they left but they will be offered a job. During their

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absence, their duties will be covered in various ways such as long-term subs or the use of existing staff.

Mr. Gaetz requested an Executive Session be scheduled for Monday, October 8, at 4:00 p.m. to bring the Board up to date on negotiations with the two bargaining units. Mrs. Frakes approved the request.

Mr. Hill inquired as to the funding source for the legal fees associated with the settlement of the Title IX case. Mr. Gaetz responded that funds were allocated in the budget for legal expenses; however, this settlement will probably cause the District to exceed that allocation.

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

Teresa Epperson, Recorder

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DON GAETZ  
SUPERINTENDENT AND  
CORPORATE SECRETARY

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CINDY FRAKES  
VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD