

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

GADSDEN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
MAX D. WALKER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
35 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD.
QUINCY, FLORIDA

July 21, 2009

6:00 P.M.

This meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Judge B. Helms, Chairman; Mr. Isaac Simmons; Mr. Charlie D. Frost; Mr. Eric F. Hinson; and Mr. Roger P. Milton. Also present were Mr. Reginald C. James, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board; Mrs. Deborah Minnis, Attorney for the Board; and others.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Judge B. Helms, at 6:03 p.m.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

a. Revised School Board Truth in Millage (TRIM) Timetable

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Mr. Helms stated that a time was needed for the TRIM meetings. He requested that all the TRIM meetings be scheduled to start at 6:00 p.m.

Mrs. Wood stated that the amended 2009 Certified Tax Roll Values were not received by the District until July 10th, which requires an adjustment to the TRIM schedule approved by the Board on June 23, 2009. She stated that in accordance with the attached copy of a July 13th email from Mr. Clay VanLandingham, the Final Budget Hearing cannot be held prior to September 13th. She stated that therefore, the Annual Financial Report and the Final Budget Hearing will be held on separate meeting dates in order to comply with state laws. She provided the Board with a general overview of the district's 2009 – 2010 budget. She stated that the total revenue includes .25 mill Super Majority - \$44,424,497.00; less fund balance 3% per new state statute - \$1,332,735; less total expenditures - \$42,960,446; balance in excess of 3% reserve (revenue minus balance minus expenditures - \$131,316. She

stated that if Crossroad Academy is funded at 225 students – savings of \$344,060. She stated that the adjusted balance would be \$475,376.00. She stated that the budget is based on a staffing plan of 956 positions. She stated that as of June 23, 2009, the Board had approved 907 employees positions.

Mr. Milton stated that he was familiar with the Crossroad charter contract student enrollment for 225. He asked if their student enrollment could increase without Board approval. He asked if there were any legislative changes that would allow charter schools to increase student enrollment without Board approval.

Mr. Simmons stated that the Board had not received anything in writing requesting an amendment to the charter contract to increase student enrollment. He stated that the charter school would need the Board's approval before increasing student enrollment.

Mr. James stated that the district's unreserved fund balance was an improvement from last year. He stated that the district could not exceed 956 positions.

Following discussion, Mr. Roger P. Milton made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #2a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Contract for Professional Services: PSTB Consulting, LLC; NCN Consulting, LLC; and Christian C. Ukaga

Fund Source: Character Education

Amount: \$112,500.00

In response to Mr. Simmons' concern about the continuation of the number of years for the Character Education grant, Mr. James stated that the Character Education grant was in the final year.

Following discussion, Mr. Isaac Simmons made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #2b. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eric F. Hinson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- c. Contract for Professional Services: Davis Monk and Company; and Pine Hill Consulting

Fund Source: Federal (110) Fund

Amount: \$30,000.00

Mr. Hinson expressed his sentiments in regards to the need to continue hiring an outside source to work in the finance department. He wanted to know why a consultant was still needed to work in the finance department. He asked if the fund source could be used from another source other than the general fund.

Mr. James stated that the finance department is now working very efficiently, and is more stable with the help of a consultant. He stated that due to a work load issue, a consultant was needed. He stated that he will rely on the advice of the Assistant Superintendent for Business & Finance on how long a consultant will be needed.

Mr. Simmons stated that according to recent audit reports, the finance department is a critical area. He stated that because of the degree and level of knowledge needed with the finance department, a consultant is very much needed.

Following discussion, Mr. Eric F. Hinson made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #2c. The motion was seconded by Mr. Roger P. Milton and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

d. Memorandum of Agreement with Gadsden County Health Department

Fund Source: General Fund
Amount: \$100,100.00

In response to Mr. Simmons's concern regarding whether the district's budget amount for the Gadsden County Health Department was within range, Mrs. Wood stated yes, the budget amount was the same as last year.

Following discussion, Mr. Isaac Simmons made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #2d. The motion seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

3. AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS

a. Student Data Management System – CROSSPOINTE

Fund Source: General Fund, Capital Outlay, Title I, Title II, IDEA, Title II Part D
Amount: \$254,000.00

Mr. James requested that agenda item #3a – Student Data Management System – CROSSPOINTE be pulled from the agenda.

Mr. Milton requested a break down of the cost factor for the Student Data Management System – CROSSPOINTE.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Life Insurance Premium Increase

Fund Source: All funds that have payroll
Amount: Undetermined at this time

Mrs. Wood shared with the Board an overview of the following options for life insurance premiums from Assurant Employee Benefits: 1) Option 1 - Base Life (active) - .65 (\$18,436.60), Base Life (retiree) – \$2.81, Voluntary Life (active) no increase, and additional cost for Base Life (active) \$3,687.32; 2) Option 2 - Base Life (active) - .71 (\$20,138.44), Base Life (retiree) – \$2.50, Voluntary Life (active) no increase, and additional cost for Base Life (active) \$5,389.16; 3) Option 3 - Base Life (active) - .60 (\$17,018.40), Base Life (retiree) – \$2.81, Voluntary Life (active) 12.5% increase, and additional cost for Base Life (active) \$2,269.12; 4) Option 4 - Base Life (active) - .62 (\$17,585.68), Base Life (retiree) – \$2.70, Voluntary Life (active) 10% increase, and additional cost for Base Life (active) \$2,836.40.

In response to Mr. Frost’s question whether the insurance committee was included in the insurance renewal process, Mrs. Wood stated no, because the insurance rates were extremely competitive.

Mr. Helms stated that life insurance is voluntary, not and negotiable issue.

In response to Mr. Frost’s concern about bidding for life insurance, Mrs. Wood stated that bidding for life insurance would prevent retirees from participating.

Mr. Bob Butler, Insurance Agent, shared with the Board a brief background of Assurant Employee Benefits. He stated that the district’s life insurance policy was bided in 2000. He stated that Assurant Employee Benefits was the only life insurance company to provide the School Board with what they wanted. He stated that the district has had good experiences with Assurant Employee Benefits and has had only two rate increases.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

c. Health Insurance Premium Increase

Fund Source: All funds that have payroll
Amount: Undetermined at this time

Mrs. Wood stated that she was seeking direction from the Board with which plan to move forward with regarding health insurance premium. She stated that there are health insurance coverage changes by Capital Health Plan. She stated that there are no proposed changes in the Blue Cross Blue Shield coverage. She stated that the Select Plan I coverage changes are: a) prescriptions payments – remaining same at \$15/\$30/\$50; b) hospitalization - \$250 per admission (regardless of days); and c) office visit to primary care physician – remaining same at \$15/visit. She stated that the district is currently budgeted for \$176,358.96 for health insurance with a shared cost and the employee’s cost would increase per month.

Mr. Hinson stated that he was concerned about the increasing cost for family coverage. He stated that the health insurance coverage with Capital Health Plan for spouse and children are too high.

Mr. Terry Stepal, Capital Health Plan Sales Director, stated that 1% of membership accounts for 30% of insurance cost. He stated that children do not tend to have chronic illnesses. He stated that mainly adults have chronic illnesses. He stated that is one of the reasons the family coverage rates are high.

Mrs. Wood stated that the insurance committee recommended Select Plan I coverage to the Board for health insurance coverage.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

Mr. Helms deviated from the norm and addressed agenda item #5a.

5. EDUCATIONAL (IMPROVEMENT PLAN OF ACTION)

a. Carter Parramore Academy

Mr. Joe Lewis, Principal, and Mrs. Rosalyn Smith, Dropout Prevention Coordinator, shared with the Board a power-point presentation of their school's improvement plan of action. Mrs. Smith stated that the faculty, staff and students of the Gadsden County Educational Alternative Programs envision that students enrolled will move into the larger society and function in a self-fulfilling and self-sufficient manner with the community of standards set forth by that society. She stated that students show early signs of dropping out when they have poor grades in core subjects, low attendance, failure to be promoted to the next grade, and disengagement in the classroom, including behavioral problems. She stated that social indicators of dropouts include students who are abused and neglected, behavior, and mobility. She stated that the following proposals would address the needs assessments: a) implement educational alternatives and dropout prevention plan with fidelity; b) increase learning time to 90 minutes – block session; c) Voluntarily/Parent Choice Program; d) uniforms daily and “Dress for Success” each Wednesday; e) vocational educational; f) highly qualified teachers (English, Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies). Typically one teacher per group of fifteen students; g) teen parents (mothers and fathers) remain at CPA; h) two or more retentions participate in the Credit Recovery Program; i) two full-time ESE teachers for Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). Additional staff will be requested as needed; j) two full-time Behavioral Specialists for behavioral challenges; k) one full-time School Psychologist for group counseling and Advisor-Advisee Mentoring; l) PDPs for school goal and personal goal and staff development trainings in the areas of Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM). Planning for the 90 minutes Instructional Block, Understanding the Growth and Development of Young Adolescents, Classroom Management, Failure Is Not An Option, Data Analysis, etc.; m) one-time Visiting Teacher; n) Parents volunteer at least once per month; o) parents attend monthly conferences; p) Character Education; q) Response Intervention and Positive Behavior Support will be implemented; r) Community &

Business Partnerships for OJT; s) Post-secondary activities with GEAR-UP; t) School assemblies for student motivation, student behavior and student achievement; u) Adopt a Student Program for school-wide mentoring; and v) Ongoing academic history audits for student success. She shared with the Board the following research-based models for the 2009 – 2010 year; a) Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM); b) Character Education; c) GEAR-UP Projects; d) Extended Learning Time; e) Career Academies; f) Computer-Assisted Instruction; and g) Credit Recovery Program. She stated that the eligibility requirements for student enrollment would be retained in at least (2) two or more grades between 4th and 12th; 9th grade or above and cumulative GPA is 1.0 or 1.9; 10 or more unexcused absences for the prior school year; IEP classification is LY; School Based Order for disciplinary reasons; dropped out of school and wants to return to school; extensive history of disciplinary fractions for the prior three (3) years; volunteers to attend the alternative education program; and not age appropriate for his or her grade level. She stated that the referral options for student enrollment include student volunteers to participate in the program (CPA), parent refers child to the program via enrollment application (CPA), local school administrator or guidance counselor refers (grade 4 – 12 (CPA), student Individual Educational Plan (IEP) requests placement (Gadsden Central Academy), School Board Orders (Hope Academy), Department of Juvenile Justice, Local Law Enforcement Agencies or Department of Children and Family Services refers for alternative educational services (Hope Academy). She stated that students who need an alternative environment due to learning need mostly likely benefit from alternative education.

Board members asked questions, shared their concerns, and made comments throughout the Carter Parramore Academy Improvement Plan of Action presentation.

Mr. Helms called for a short recess at 8:14 p.m., and reconvened the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

b. West Gadsden High School

Mrs. Juliette Fisher-Jackson, Principal, and Ms. Pauline West, Assistant Principal for Curriculum, shared with the Board a power-point presentation of their school's improvement plan of action. Mrs. Jackson stated in order to meet the needs of each student enrolled at West Gadsden High School, it is imperative that certified and highly qualified staff are employed. She stated that in order to meet the reading requirements that are Level 1 and 2 students need to serve through an intensive reading course instructed by a certified reading teacher, and two additional reading teachers are needed. She stated that in order to meet the math requirements two additional math teachers are needed, one biology teacher, one 7th grade science, and one 8th grade science teacher is needed for a total of three additional teachers. She stated that West Gadsden High School is in the process of making sure all of their students are scheduled in the appropriate course and needs are being met. She requested that all teachers at West Gadsden High School be allowed to return to work on August 3rd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 11th and 12th with pay. She stated that because they are a low performing triple "F" school the teachers are needed early to brief them on the new policies and procedures for Differentiated Accountability Schools.

She stated that teacher lesson plans will be available from DOE on August 1st. She stated that they will disaggregate student data using the DRAFT 2009 model, complete teacher syllabus, become familiar with the district's new reading and math program, so all staff can hit the ground running on August 24th. She stated that teachers will also have a refresher of the school-wide AVID program, small learning communities and the district's SREB initiative. She stated that this working retreat will give those staff members who are not up for the challenge an opportunity to make other career plans. She stated that an Assistant Principal for Discipline had been hired. She stated that surveillance cameras needed to be installed in order to provide a safe environment for teaching and learning. She stated that discipline records show an immediate need for school-wide safety measures to include cameras. She stated that a receptionist is needed at the school to handle all front office matters. She stated that a Support ESE Facilitator is needed because the present facilitator was transferred to East Gadsden High School. She requested continuous professional development for all staff. She stated that the following repairs for maintenance were needed: doors on campus when locked could be snatched open, the security sensor on the east door in the gym needs to be replaced, a computer is needed for the Graduation Coach's use in his office, a telephone needs to be installed/connected for the Graduation Coach's use, and a door to the athletic weight room in the gym needs to have a metal bar to be secured.

Board members asked questions, shared their concerns, and made comments throughout the West Gadsden High School Improvement Plan of Action presentation.

Mr. James stated that Vice Chancellor Dr. Nicholi Vitti, stated that School Improvement monies will be received by East Gadsden High School and West Gadsden High School. He stated that he shared with them successful programs and ideas that were implemented in other schools.

Mr. Hinson stated that he was concerned about the number of elementary schools who had been retained. He requested a report showing information on the number of students who have been retained in elementary school (K, 1st, 2nd & 3rd grades).

Mr. Milton stated that he was concern about staff not being aware of the graduation requirements. He stated that he wanted to ensure that all staff was informed of the district's graduation requirements.

4. CONSIDERATION, PROPOSAL, AND/OR ADOPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND RELATED MATTERS

- a. Discussion and Request to Advertise the Board's Intent to Amend School Board Rules 2.25 (Code of Student Conduct) and 7.51 (Payroll Procedures)

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Mr. Helms recommended the Board defer action on agenda item #4a.

Following discussion, Mr. Eric F. Hinson made a motion to defer action on agenda item #4a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Isaac Simmons and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

6. ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

None.

7. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

In response to Ms. Millie Forehand's, Executive Director of CEDO, concern regarding the clarity on increasing the student enrollment at Crossroad Academy, Mr. Helms stated that the Board's approval was needed for an increase in student enrollment at Crossroad Academy.

8. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Mr. Helms reconvened the meeting at 9:10 p.m. in order to consider item #4a - Discussion and Request to Advise the Board's Intent to Amend School Board Rules 2.25 (Code of Student Conduct) and 7.51 (Payroll Procedures).

Mr. Isaac Simmons made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #4a. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.