

SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP

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

April 27, 2010

4:30 P.M.

This workshop was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Isaac Simmons, Chairman; Mr. Roger P. Milton; Mr. Charlie D. Frost; Mr. Judge B. Helms; and Mr. Eric F. Hinson. 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 workshop was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Isaac Simmons, at 4:35 p.m.

2. FINANCIAL DATA REPORT

Mr. James stated that the writing scores are scheduled to arrive in mid May. He introduced Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Deputy Chancellor of K-12 Public Schools.

Dr. Vitti shared with the Board a power-point presentation outlining the district's NCLB Monitoring Report Findings. He stated that the purpose was to inform the School Board of the findings from the Florida Department of Education's (FDOE's) No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Final Monitoring Report for Gadsden County, discuss the scope of the findings and suggestions for corrections of findings, and to offer FDOE assistance in correcting the findings. He stated that FDOE is required by federal and state law to monitor all districts programs to: ensure compliance with federal regulations, and ensure that the program outcomes are being met and impacting student achievement. He stated that the findings are directly tied to federal and state requirements, and many of the findings mirror those of the Auditor General's Office. He stated that Title IV includes state requirements for Bullying and the Safe Schools Appropriation. He stated that the number and scope of findings for Gadsden County far exceeds that of any other district. He stated that findings are indicative of systemic problems, not isolated incidences. He stated that the findings reflect both program and financial compliance issues, which impacts the capacity of the district to provide quality programs for students. He stated that the majority of findings are for Title I, Part A, and Title II Part A also has significant findings. He stated that not all programs have findings (Title I, Part A Choice with Transportation and Supplemental Education Services - recommendation only; Title I, Part C, Education of Migratory Children; Title II, Part D, Enhancing Education Through Technology; Title III, Part A, English Language Acquisition (while there are no compliance findings for III, Part A, there are significant concerns regarding Gadsden's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs. He

stated that all NCLB program findings are organized by “Common Elements” such as Needs Assessment, Program Planning, and Evaluation; Parent Involvement, and Budget). He stated that some may require financial adjustments, including restoration of funds. He stated that Title I, Part A Findings received 35 criterion items with findings, and 21 criterion items with requirements met. He stated that the following were **Findings for Title I, Part A**: a) Needs Assessment, Program Planning, and Evaluation (reviewing and reporting on student performance, using assessment data to drive instruction, reviewing annually the effectiveness of parental involvement and professional development, and evaluating school-wide program effectiveness); b) some of the most significant findings are related to student achievement; c) no financial adjustments likely for student achievement findings; d) implement System Improvement Plans to strengthen planning and evaluation of Title I programs; e) coordination of programs (coordinating Title I activities with other federal programs, including Head Start, Title II, Title III, and IDEA, and coordinating with School Improvement programs funded under Title I); f) no financial adjustments likely; g) findings impact the quality of instruction and support for low-performing students; h) implement System Improvement Plans to address coordination of programs to prevent duplication and maximize resources; i) Private Schools (consultation with private schools, provision of timely services to participating private schools; adequate supervision of the Title I program in private schools, proper identification of private school students, teachers, and parents for service; j) four findings are likely to require financial adjustments to ensure that private school students receive services to which they are entitled (possibly from state or local funds); k) FDOE will work with the Title I office in the consultation, design and delivery processes; l) School Improvement (assistance to schools in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring; m) no financial adjustment likely; n) negatively impact improvement in low-performing schools; o) implement System Improvement Plans to ensure assistance to schools in the design, review, implementation, and evaluation of School Improvement, Corrective Action, and Restructuring Plans; p) Programmatic Use of Funds (funds provided to non-Title I schools, funds improperly allocated to schools based on percentage of students in poverty, questioned costs at the district level, comparability calculations conducted too late in the school year to make school adjustments, if necessary); q) financial adjustment of up to \$542,818 possible; r) findings significantly impact the financial situation of the district; s) implement System Improvement Plans to improve internal controls, ensure proper allocation of Title I funds, and compliance with comparability requirements; t) overall plan will be developed to address systemic issues with financial management and internal controls including use of consultants to acquire additional expertise; u) budget (failure to allocate 85% of the previous year’s allocation to schools in corrective action or restructuring; v) if determined to be true, a financial adjustment will be required; w) implement System Improvement Plans to ensure proper allocation of funds to schools in corrective action and restructuring; x) parental involvement (development of school-level parental involvement policies/plans, failure to hold the required meetings for parents, development of parental involvement policies/plans designed to improve parents’ capacity to assist their children, development of school-parent compacts in conjunction with parents, evaluation of parental involvement policies/plans, notification to parents regarding their “right-to-know”, notification to parents when children are assigned to or taught by a non-highly qualified teacher for four or more consecutive weeks; y) findings have significant implications for the involvement of parents in their children’s education, negatively impacting academic performance of the students; z) implement System Improvement Plans to address lack of school-level parental involvement policies, ensure annual meetings, jointly develop compacts, and ensure that parental notifications are disseminated in a timely manner; aa) highly qualified staff (documentation that all paraprofessionals in Title I schools work under the direct supervision of

a teacher; bb) findings do not require a financial adjustment; cc) implement System Improvement Plans to ensure that paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of a teacher; dd) dissemination/marketing and reporting of outcomes (dissemination of information on school-wide plans to parents, staff, and the public, dissemination of required “annual report cards” to parents and the community; ee) implement System Improvement Plans to address dissemination of plans and report cards. He stated that the following were **Findings for Title II, Part A, Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment**: a) common elements – Needs Assessment, Program Planning, and Evaluation (paraprofessionals may have been hired without regard to the requirements for districts that have failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for three consecutive years and meet annual measurable objectives; b) School Improvement (little/no evidence was provided to document that staff development activities were aligned with the Sunshine State Standards and/or state assessments; c) Dissemination and Marketing (the district did not implement the marketing plan as outlined in their application; d) Budget (not all funded activities were specifically related to assisting teachers to become highly qualified, district used Title II, Part A funds to hire personnel for which the costs were unallowable expenses, district used Title II, Part A funds for personnel activities that were unallowable expenses; if determined to be true, a financial adjustment will be required. He stated that the following were **Findings for Title IV, Part A, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities**: a) Needs Assessment, Program Planning, and Evaluation (failure to follow approved implementation plans, failure to follow the “Principles of Effectiveness”; b) Coordination of Programs (failure to consult with community agencies, schools, teachers, and parents in the design of the project; c) School Improvement (failure to have crisis management procedures in place, lack of a school climate survey to secure data for use in program design; d) Dissemination and Marketing (failure to communicate program activities to school advisory councils, the School Board, schools, etc., failure to provide bullying information in the Student Code of Conduct; e) Reporting of Outcomes (failure to provide regular required reports; f) System Improvement Plans have been approved; f) Gadsden County will be required to submit evidence of implementation. FDOE will monitor implementation. He stated that the following were **Findings for Title X, Part C, Education for Homeless Children and Youth**: a) Common Elements (Needs Assessment, Program Planning and Evaluation; appropriate policies/plans are not in place; b) System Improvement Plans have been approved; Gadsden County will be required to submit evidence of implementation. FDOE will monitor implementation. He stated that the following were **Additional Conditions Placed on Gadsden County**: a) restrictions on cash advances; payment on a reimbursement basis only for selected federal programs (Title I, Part A, including Choice and SES, and Title II, Part A); b) monthly reporting of expenditures and FDOE oversight of alignment of such expenditures with fiscal requirements and program plans; c) hiring an outside consultant selected in conjunction with FDOE to review and redesign financial systems to ensure adequate internal controls; d) hiring a consultant with expertise in federal programs to address fiscal non-compliance issues. He stated that the next steps are: a) FDOE leadership will meet with district leadership on a bi-monthly basis; and b) more frequent monitoring and individualized technical assistance will be provided, including involvement in decision-making regarding program expenditures for Title I, Part A and School Improvement grant funds before they are made.

Mr. James stated that the district has advertised for a Director of Federal Programs position, and a Program Specialist position to add to the Title I/Federal Programs Department.

The Board members asked questions, shared their concerns, and made comments during the power-point presentation by Dr. Vittti.

Mrs. Wood introduced Mr. Knicely who shared with the Board a report on his activities with the district.

Mr. Knicely reported that the district has had control deficiencies in the area of rank and serve for at least the last three audit cycles. He stated that the Auditor General questioned costs in the last two audit cycles. He recommended that approximately \$500,999 be restored to the Title I Program from the district's general fund. He stated that federal regulations require: (1) the district rank its schools by percentage of low income students, in descending order; 2) funds be allocated to those schools on a per pupil basis; (3) no lower ranked school may receive more funds per pupil than any school ranked above it.

Mrs. Wood shared with the Board the following information: 1) 110 – General Fund – Encumbered \$2,739,435.59; 2) 300 – Capital Projects Fund – Encumbered \$708,313.95; 3) 410 – Food Service Fund – Encumbered \$164,182.74; 4) 420 – Contracted Projected Funds - \$829,755.69; 5) 431 – State Fiscal Stabilization Funds – Encumbered \$16,145.00; 6) 432 – Targeted ARRA Stimulus Funds – Encumbered \$159,467.90; and 7) 433 – Other ARRA Stimulus Grants – Encumbered \$17,544.89.

3. ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

None.

4. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

None.

5. The workshop adjourned at 6:05 p.m.