

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
UNAPPROVED WORKSHOP MINUTES
BUDGET
May 7, 2008

The Board met in workshop session duly called at 1:30 p.m. in the Boardroom, 620 East University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. Present were: Janie Williams, Chairman; Tina Pinkoson, Vice-Chairman; Ginger Childs, F. Wesley Eubank, and Eileen F. Roy, members; W. Daniel Boyd, Jr., Superintendent. The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Williams.

INTRODUCTION Superintendent Dan Boyd gave a brief introduction. Among his comments were that more state budget cuts should be expected in late Fall. He then gave the floor to Mr. Keith Birkett, Assistant Superintendent for Planning and Budget.

PRESENTATION Mr. Birkett conveyed to the Board the gravity of the budget situation and said there would probably be a difficult four- to five-year process of recovery. He expressed appreciation to the Board and Superintendent for their approach to finance issues in the past, allowing staff to build reserves and restore transfers to capital outlay, decisions that are now helping the District through this time. Mr. Birkett stated that today’s figures are projections and he suggested holding another workshop around the end of June, after budget figures are finalized.

Among the legislative highlights reported by Mr. Birkett:

- 2-mill capital outlay levy has been reduced to 1.75 mills
- Reduced weighted FTE for Advanced Placement/IB equates to loss of \$750,000.
- Middle school algebra credit was eliminated for next year.
- Declining enrollment percentage reduced.
- Teacher lead money reduced.
- School recognition funds reduced.
- Retirement rates remain the same.

Mr. Scott Ward, Chief Financial Officer, presented a comparison of the beginning 2008-09 budget to the beginning 2007-08 budget, showing a reduction of almost \$14 million. He provided a budget breakdown by revenue account, potential budget adjustments, and information on potential voter-approved operating millage.

Mr. Birkett presented information on potential transportation changes, including

- consolidating magnet bus stops.
- placing stops in centralized areas or on main thoroughfares.
- eliminating travel into neighborhoods, unless there is a safety issue or mileage requirement.
- eliminating activity buses except for Eastside/Loften and Hawthorne High, which are always full, while others have few riders.

Deputy Superintendent Sandy Hollinger addressed the Board concerning magnet and regular route transportation changes.

BOARD
DISCUSSION

Extensive Board discussion was held on transportation matters. Mrs. Hollinger stated that early parent notification of changes is vital. The Board requested a dollar figure on the cost of all magnet school busing.

A question arose on the possibility of placing the question of an increased operating millage on the November ballot. Mr. Birkett explained the process and that the Board would have to decide upon the millage level to be requested. Regarding the sales tax that the County is considering, he pointed out that the school portion of the sales tax that the County is considering could only be used for construction, not operation.

Mr. Eubank reviewed the District's property/casualty insurance situation, reporting that the insurance premium cost is reduced this year. Were there to be hurricanes, the cost would increase once again. He commended Mr. Jim Sumner, Risk Management, on savings in Workers' Compensation.

Staffing was discussed, with Mrs. Hollinger commenting that there may be instructional staff moves, but no jobs are expected to be lost. She noted that there is a stringent protocol for requesting supplemental units. Mrs. Hollinger reviewed some of the challenges of scheduling, especially in career-tech classes. The question of eliminating summer school was posed, but not favored because of concern for the dropout rate.

Freezing vacancies and eliminating positions is projected to save approximately \$1.3 million. Mr. Eubank questioned whether District staffing has crept back up since the 2003-04 reduction. With supplemental positions being pulled from the schools, he has a problem with not eliminating more District positions, through attrition and moving people around.

Mrs. Childs agreed with Mr. Eubank's concern and noted that her rough calculations have shown little change in Curriculum and Business Services, but significant changes through new positions and upgrades in Human Resources. She feels it is important to reduce here and reassign staff to schools as vacancies come up. Her goal is to have no one lose their job and not to have to resort to salary reductions.

Mrs. Roy expressed agreement with the concerns about District staffing, believing that people should be moved back to the classroom whenever possible, even within the schools. Administration should be impacted before classrooms.

An example of school consolidation was reported to have a potential savings of \$550,000.

Mrs. Childs suggested reducing the percentage paid for middle and high school teachers who teach six periods. She agreed with increasing the number of years in the rotation of art and music allocations to the schools.

There seemed to be consensus to:

- withdraw from the Crown Consortium for the upcoming year.
- not touch Fundraising Equalization unless necessary.
- reduce Special Magnet Allocation to cover mainly printing costs.
- evaluate alternatives to Athletic Allocations.

Mr. Eubank stated that he wants energy to be put on the list of areas to target for reduction. He would like to see the schools receive the savings from their energy reduction, rather than the District. Further, he feels there must be both incentive and principal accountability.

Mrs. Roy suggested motion sensors on lights that are now kept burning all night.

Mr. Birkett confirmed to Mrs. Williams that the roof and window replacement at Kirby should result in an energy reduction.

Mrs. Pinkoson stated that around the state, many counties are cutting teachers, and she is glad that is not the case here.

Board members agreed on the need to continue to put pressure on legislators.

Staff will review information from today's Board member input, and prepare an update for a subsequent meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.