

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
 MINUTES OF **BUDGET** WORKSHOP  
 June 17, 2008

The Board met in workshop session duly called at 9 a.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/  
 COMMENTS** Superintendent Dan Boyd gave a brief introduction. He stated that reports from the Governor imply there will be another 4% cut, on top of the over \$14 million already cut since last year at this time.

Mrs. Pinkoson felt that the Board has been belaboring some difficult decisions and feels there is no longer time to delay. She is ready to do what is necessary today and move on.

Dr. Boyd then turned the meeting over to Mr. Keith Birkett, Assistant Superintendent, Planning and Budget, and Mr. Scott Ward, Chief Financial Officer.

**OVERVIEW OF  
 2008-2009  
 BUDGET** Mr. Ward provided a summary of budget adjustments for 2008-09, which included the estimated revenue shortfall, utilities and fuel inflation projection, health insurance increase and recurring expenditures from 2007-08 reserves. Mr. Ward then reviewed the 2008-09 Budget Implementation Plan.

Regarding a previous suggestion of reducing the number of paid holidays, Mr. Ward reported that Florida statute prevents teachers from being paid for less than 196 days.

Mr. Birkett explained that in addition to the adjustments that have already been made, another \$4.4 million is needed to balance the budget.

**BOARD  
 DISCUSSION** Mrs. Roy asked for clarification on position reductions, stating that the information is confusing because the format is different from that of the last workshop. The positions were reviewed.

Mrs. Childs expressed disappointment in the absence of any cuts to HR Division staff. She suggested at least two positions be cut, one being a transfer to the open switchboard position. Other Board members expressed agreement with a need for reductions.

Mr. Birkett reviewed Staffing Adjustments and Budget Reductions:

▪ Increased Transfers from Capital Projects	\$ 1,600,000
▪ Utilize \$65 per UWFTE Flexibility From 2 Mill Levy for 2007-08 and 2008-09	3,200,000
▪ Revise Art and Music Allocations (11 Units)	550,000
▪ Consolidation of School	500,000
▪ Fundraising Equalization Funds (Defer for 1 Year)	<u>400,000</u>
	6,650,000

Mr. Birkett stated that this covers the \$4.4 million presently needed, plus it will establish a reserve, in anticipation of shortfalls in November. Should there be another 2% reduction, salary holdbacks would have to be implemented—preferably as early as possible in the year, so the impact would not be as severe as holding back retroactively from just the last few months.

Mr. Eubank suggested cutting back in new construction, rather than maintenance and facilities. He believes that is wiser in the long term.

At a question from Mrs. Roy, Mr. Birkett explained that salary holdbacks would adjust salary schedules downward, across the Board, by a percentage that will meet the shortfall. He confirmed that a step increase has not been budgeted. Mrs. Roy questioned whether this would violate the bargaining agreement, which states there will be a step increase, except in case of a financial emergency. Mr. Birkett stated that it may come to the place where there is no choice but to take the required steps to declare a financial emergency, although everything is being done to avoid that.

It was confirmed that the number of media specialists has been reduced to one in smaller high schools. Brief discussion was held on whether evolving technology will change media center requirements.

It was clarified that if today's recommendations are implemented, with a target of \$4.4 million, there would be an unbudgeted reserve of \$2.2 million. That is in anticipation of November shortfalls. Other necessary changes will be evaluated after receiving further information in July.

Brief discussion was held on Prairie View consolidation and Wellness coordinators.

Deputy Superintendent Hollinger addressed the Board regarding the potential revision of art and music allocations. The plan would be to pair schools and alternate semesters of music and art. That would result in a reduction of approximately 11 units.

Mrs. Roy inquired whether a Wellness Coordinator is mandated by the state. Mrs. Hollinger stated that the tasks are mandated, but not the position. She also reported that documentation of the Wellness program is required, and principals have been requested to submit their documentation.

Mr. Birkett presented an analysis of Camp Crystal. In conjunction with the camp director, Mrs. Hollinger will be considering adjusting camp fees. They will also consider moving two Teacher Specialist positions from the General Fund to Internal Accounts, which will save approximately \$100,000 in operating costs.

Mrs. Childs proposed that fees be raised to cover two months of the salaries of the Physical Plant Mechanic, the Executive Assistant and the Camp Director, thereby removing all subsidies for the summer program. Should the District be in the same financial situation next year, she would support further fee increases, rather than closing the camp.

Mrs. Roy expressed appreciation for the Camp Crystal information. Mr. Birkett responded to further questions, stating that the camp is used 5 days a week during the school year, plus additional rental weekends, and 6 days a week during the summer. Teachers who accompany students to camp during the school year are paid through stipends that are footnoted in the salary schedule. Mr. Birkett will gather further information on the accounts used for camp busing costs. While fee increases must be discussed, Mr. Eubank cautioned against possible stifling of the donor program.

Mr. Birkett reviewed procedures for courtesy busing, which includes moving stops to the front of neighborhoods, unless it is a two-mile distance to the back. He commented that safety issues and student attendance are taken into account.

The Board began review of a list of 61 areas of potential savings, discussing and making comments/suggestions:

- For potential future need, consider if there would be savings in increasing elementary PE class sizes or changing school start and end times.
- Utilize strategies to maximize FTE counts.  
Mr. Eubank commented that public schools are losing students. Therefore, it is vital to keep in mind that we are in competition with charter schools and private schools, so customer service must be a priority.
- The Board agreed to reinstate the \$400,000 in fundraising equalization funds, pull back the 20% discretionary funding, and use 5% of that to make allocations from the District, to provide assistance to schools in hardship cases.
- Mrs. Roy questioned whether discretionary funding could be distributed in a way that would equalize those schools that receive substantial AP funding and those that do not. It was explained that the \$400,000 in fundraising equalization funds is used for schools with the lowest ability to raise funds.
- Raise athletic ticket prices to offset the cost of trainers and Citizens Field.  
Dr. Boyd stated that the District has, over the years, helped to fund the non-revenue-producing sports and noted that Booster Clubs provide a substantial amount of money for athletics.
- Concern was noted about the appearance of schools, if contracted lawn maintenance is not continued.
- Remove personal electrical appliances such as heaters and refrigerators and be sure printers and computers are shut down when appropriate. Mrs. Childs did not favor removing such items from a classroom.
- Have Maintenance balance AC systems to maintain more even temperatures from room to room.
- Install ceiling fans in classrooms to increase comfort level while saving on AC.
- Ensure technology coaches are in schools, doing the job.

- Mrs. Hollinger explained situations related to reading coach positions and said that a proposed plan will be provided for the 2009-10 school year, so the Board can decide whether to request state waivers. At a question from Mrs. Roy, Mrs. Hollinger explained why the decision was made not to apply this year for the reading coach flexibility waiver.
- Mrs. Roy stated that she is still not satisfied that the Food Service program subsidizes utility costs to the extent they use them. She feels this should be reviewed again. It was explained that there is no surplus in the Food Service accounts this year, so to increase their costs would be futile. Mr. Ward stated that most students are on free and reduced lunch; few are paying.
- Ensure that decisions for providing free facility rentals are made uniformly across all schools.
- Review cost of DES versus cost of companies that provide the same service.
- Mr. Eubank suggested consideration of at least partial privatizing of custodial services; suggested interlocal agreements dealing with transportation; and review of white fleet vehicle take-home practices. Mrs. Childs suggested that all fleet costs for field trips be taken from school internal accounts.
- Reduce supplemental pay by establishing a minimum requirement for the number of teachers on a team, to qualify for a team leader position.
- Mrs. Pinkoson inquired what the first staff recommendation would be if the state should make another budget cut. Mr. Birkett stated that the only area left is employees, since that is where 80% of costs are.
- Mrs. Hollinger commented briefly on Prairie View, explaining that it will become a Head Start center.

Mr. Birkett summarized the items that he understands the Board is requesting, as a result of this workshop:

- ✓ Not defer equalization money.
- ✓ Reduce school allocations by the 20% that was added a couple of years ago, and reserve 5% of that money.
- ✓ Look for possible savings from the list reviewed today.
- ✓ Begin adjustments of art, music and media specialists.
- ✓ Try to position the Board as best possible against a potential shortfall in July and/or November.

Mrs. Pinkoson mentioned again having HR share in the reductions. She feels that if there are further shortfalls, PE must be looked at. Mrs. Childs agreed.

Mrs. Childs recommended that at Back-to-School meetings, principals tell parents what has been cut and what other cuts may have to be made.

Unless the Board should request another workshop, Mr. Birkett will proceed and present a balanced budget to the Board at the July Special Board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT      The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.