

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE ESCAMBIA  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND THE  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
HELD MARCH 7, 2017  
BOARD CHAMBERS, FIRST FLOOR, ERNIE LEE MAGAHA GOVERNMENT BUILDING  
221 PALAFOX PLACE, PENSACOLA, FLORIDA  
(5:33 p.m. – 8:24 p.m.)

Board of County Commissioners (BCC)

Present: Commissioner Douglas B. Underhill, Chairman, District 2  
Commissioner Jeffrey W. Bergosh, Vice Chairman, District 1  
Commissioner Steven L. Barry, District 5  
Commissioner Lumon J. May, District 3  
Jack R. Brown, County Administrator  
Alison Rogers, County Attorney  
Kimberly McCord, Administrative Specialist, Clerk and Comptroller's Office

Absent: Commissioner Grover C. Robinson IV, District 4

Escambia County District School Board (DSB)

Present: Honorable Linda Moultrie, Chairman, District 3  
Honorable Gerald Boone, Vice Chairman, District 2  
Honorable Kevin Adams, District 1  
Honorable Patty Hightower, District 4  
Honorable Bill Slayton, District 5  
Honorable Malcolm Thomas, Superintendent of Schools

AGENDA NUMBER

1. Call to Order

BCC Chairman Underhill called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

2. Invocation

Reverend Bill Estes, Warrington Baptist Church, delivered the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

BCC Chairman Underhill led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

MINUTES OF THE JOINT BCC AND DSB MEETING – Continued

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4. Was the meeting properly advertised?

The BCC and DSB were advised by Kimberly McCord, Administrative Specialist, Clerk and Comptroller's Office, that the Meeting was advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on March 4, 2017, in the Board's Weekly Meeting Schedule.

5. Comments – Doug Underhill, Chair, Board of County Commissioners

BCC Chairman Underhill provided opening remarks.

6. Comments – Linda Moultrie, Chair, District School Board

DSB Chairman Moultrie provided opening remarks.

7. Discussion Regarding the County Career Academies

The BCC and DSB discussed the County Career Academies, and:

- A. Were advised by County Administrator Brown that the partnership between the School District and the County is going very well, there is a new teacher in the Corrections Academy, and that there may be other opportunities for partnerships with the County for more Career Academies;
- B. Heard comments from Commissioner May concerning aligning educational goals and strategies with the area economic development goals and strategies and preparation for target industries and projected jobs;
- C. Heard comments from BCC Chairman Underhill concerning accessibility of Career Academies and transportation barriers for some students;
- D. Were advised by School Board Member Slayton that:
  - (1) It takes a few years to determine whether a particular academy is going to be successful and have adequate participation, and it is important that academies focus on the occupations that are exciting to the students;
  - (2) Some students may be left out because academies have not been duplicated throughout the area;

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MINUTES OF THE JOINT BCC AND DSB MEETING – Continued

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D. Continued...

- (3) If a principal thinks that with their staffing they can create an academy and house it, they will be never be told "no," as long as there is the expertise to provide the instruction; and
- (4) There are currently more than 60 academies throughout the district that help students find out what they want to do, and what they do not want to do, in the future;

E. Heard comments from Commissioner Bergosh commending the School District on the expansion of the Career Academy program, advising awareness of automation and technology that may replace people in lower-paying fields in the next twenty years, and recommending trunk routing as one transportation option for kids who are challenged economically;

F. Were advised by Superintendent Thomas that:

- (1) The Escambia County School District has a very liberal bus policy, which allows any student to ride any bus as long as they can get to a bus stop in the appropriate zone, which is why, in the last ten years, academies have been added in every high school;
- (2) The academies are spread out and diverse, thousands of students cross lines to attend specific schools, and last year over 50 percent of middle and high school students were enrolled in a career academy; and
- (3) Currently, the volume is about right; however, the academies are always being adjusted to meet the demands of the community, and the School District will work with parents as much as possible for transportation;

G. Heard comments from School Board Member Hightower concerning using the Escambia County Area Transit (ECAT) to move students, and DSB Chairman Moultrie, Commissioner Barry, and Commissioner May provided feedback supporting the use of ECAT for student transportation;

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MINUTES OF THE JOINT BCC AND DSB MEETING – Continued

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- H. Heard comments from School Board Member Adams concerning contacts he has received from several businesses that are looking for a source of laborers coming out of school that are trained to hang sheetrock, install flooring, paint, and frame, which may be an opportunity to start a general construction helper program that could intern with local businesses for the students that need to go to work rather than attend college;
- I. Heard comments from DSB Chairman Moutrie concerning making workforce training in line with the dreams of young people, who seem to see less value in non-computer-related fields, do not realize the value in the building trades, and need to be educated in that aspect as well;
- J. Heard comments from Barbara Mayall concerning her experience with the School District getting her son and three grandchildren to school over the years using the trunk system if necessary, and past experience using ECAT for transportation to sports practices and that sometimes the ECAT schedules are not convenient for evening activities and are not compatible with class schedules at the school being served by a particular bus route;
- K. Heard comments from BCC Chairman Underhill tasking County Administrator Brown with putting together a team to study and explore opportunities to utilize ECAT for educational opportunities;
- L. Were advised by Scott Luth, Chief Executive Officer, FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance (FloridaWest), that companies are looking for labor since the community is now down to less than 5% unemployment, and the new academies may currently have low enrollment; however, there is a goal to recruit students into those academies serving the targeted industries, fill them to capacity, and grow them, as well as support the other academies; and

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MINUTES OF THE JOINT BCC AND DSB MEETING – Continued

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M. Heard comments from Dr. Michelle Taylor, Escambia County School District Director of Workforce Development, regarding the school's relationships with FloridaWest and CareerSource Escarosa, which form partnerships with education for workforce development with a purpose, and that:

- (1) New career academies have been developed as a result of FloridaWest's identification of target industries, including the Washington High School Aviation Maintenance Career Academy that feeds into the post-secondary program at George Stone Technical Center, and the newest academy, Automation and Production, at Pensacola High School and Northview High School; and
- (2) Mr. Luth has reviewed the enrollment numbers for the two new programs due to the challenges created by the stigmas associated with those fields, and is meeting with principals at those schools to develop strategies to recruit students into these academies.

8. Connect to Compete – High Speed Internet in Homes

The BCC and DSB viewed and discussed a PowerPoint Presentation, which was also provided in hard copy, entitled *Smart Tools for School Connect2Compete*, presented by David Deliman, Cox Communications, and:

A. Were advised by Mr. Deliman that:

- (1) Connect2Compete provides, for families whose children receive free or reduced cost lunch, high-speed internet access at home so that children can have the same access to technology as at school for \$9.95 per month, which includes a wifi router, at no additional charge, and free installation;
- (2) Families complete a simple online application, and once approved, call Cox to schedule the installation;

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MINUTES OF THE JOINT BCC AND DSB MEETING – Continued

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- (3) Cox needs help from the BCC and DSB promoting the program, which can be accomplished by distributing Cox-provided promotional material, having Cox host informational meetings or participate in existing events, and direct mail; and
- (4) Cox can only provide this service within its service area which extends from Cantonment south, with the exception of NAS Pensacola and Pensacola Beach; however, there are other participating providers in addition to Cox; and

B. Heard BCC Chairman Underhill direct County Administrator Brown to contact other area internet providers and encourage them to participate, if they do not already, and if they do, obtain promotional materials from them to place in Community Centers.

9. Community Center Partnerships with After-School Providers

The BCC and DSB discussed Community Center partnerships with after school providers, and:

- A. Heard comments from DSB Chairman Moultrie concerning keeping the School District involved, while incorporating educational tools for children that attend Community Centers as partners are allowed to provide services at the centers;
- B. Heard comments from Commissioner May concerning the need to expand and improve the after school programs to ensure that, after school, the children have a safe environment, education reinforcement, and homework help they may not get at home;

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MINUTES OF THE JOINT BCC AND DSB MEETING – Continued

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- C. Were advised by Valerie Jones, Division Manager, Escambia County Neighborhood and Human Services Department, that:
  - (1) The after school programs have transitioned from a recreation-based program to an academic focus, such as helping with homework or remedial help with reading or math, and project-based learning for hands-on experience with math and science that involves reading comprehension and ends with a completed project;
  - (2) At the beginning of this school year, County staff met with Superintendent Thomas and several principals to discuss incorporating Chromebooks into the after school program, and with the assistance of the County's IT Director, obtained 25 County-owned Chromebooks for use in the Wedgewood and Ebonwood Community Centers, as well as Cox high-speed internet; and
  - (3) Staff intends for the core program to be easily transitioned to other locations, and is working with Brentwood Elementary, Corodova Park Elementary, Ferry Pass Elementary, Holm Elementary, Lincoln Park Primary School, Lipscomb Elementary, Longleaf Elementary, Oakcrest Elementary, and Deliverer's Tabernacle;
- D. Were advised by Commissioner May that he and Parks and Recreation staff are looking at how to re-purpose Brent Football Field into a Community Center, and in the meantime, the County needs to collaborate with the School District to provide services at Montclair Elementary after school hours and summer transportation options to Community Centers in other neighborhoods;
- E. Heard comments from Larry Williams concerning transportation from the Wedgewood neighborhood to George Stone Technical Center, talking about careers with elementary school students to get them thinking about career paths, contacting students personally or by mail instead of via technology, making library materials available at Community Centers, and spreading the word that a good education leads to a better income;

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- F. Heard comments from David Bryant, the Pensacola City Council's appointee to the Library Board of Governance, concerning placing limited library functions into Community Centers via vending machine-style kiosks to dispense books, CDs, DVDs, and games for patrons with library cards, and lockers, where requested materials can be delivered, stored securely, and accessed by the borrowing patron with their library card; therefore, a plan will be brought to the BCC for approval to get the machines into as many Community Centers as possible, particularly in areas like District 5, where there are many Community Centers spaced far apart and in District 1, which has no branch library;
- G. Were advised by Todd Humble, Escambia County Library Services Director, that the kiosk systems Mr. Bryant mentioned are also wifi routers and would provide internet access at those locations, replace intermittent bookmobile stops, and allow 24-hour access to the materials, and that the Library Services Department's seven libraries throughout the County are available for programs;
- H. Upon inquiry from Commissioner Barry, were advised by Mr. Humble that there is a risk of library materials being lost without a parent signature, and a Personally Identifiable Information issue with obtaining student information to issue library cards;
- I. Were advised by Superintendent Thomas that the School District could easily provide "directory information," which is basic information, including the student's address and name; and
- J. Heard Commissioner Barry request staff obtain the student information from the School District, implement the program, and assess it after a year by measuring utilization.



MINUTES OF THE JOINT BCC AND DSB MEETING – Continued

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10. Traffic Flow Road Improvements

The BCC and DSB discussed traffic flow road improvements, and:

- A. Heard comments from School Board Member Slayton concerning the pending modifications to an intersection on West Kingsfield Road to improve traffic flow, and the need for improved communication between Escambia County Public Works staff and School District Transportation staff when planning road improvements;
- B. Were advised by Rob Doss, School District Director of Transportation, that the Escambia Pathways Coalition has been formed of County and School District staff to discuss transportation needs, utilize School District and County resources for planning and communication, and provide periodic updates to the School Board and BCC; and
- C. Were advised by David Forte, Escambia County Public Works, that it would be appropriate to add a School District member to the Technical Coordinating Committee or the Citizen Advisory Committee of the FL-AL Transportation Planning Organization.

11. Sidewalks

The BCC and DSB discussed sidewalks, and were advised by BCC Chairman Underhill that all sidewalk projects are designed starting from "core areas" and schools are considered a "core area"; furthermore, the Safe Routes to School Grant Program is designed to provide sidewalks for students who live too close to the school to ride the bus, and those areas are priority for adding sidewalks.

12. Land Donation for Future School Site

The BCC and DSB discussed land donation for a future school site, and:

- A. Were advised by School Board Member Hightower that, should Escambia County obtain Outlying Field 8 from the Department of the Navy, it would be a good location for an additional school;

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- B. Were advised by Superintendent Thomas that, in the Beulah area, where there are prevalent wetland issues, an additional elementary school requiring 15-25 acres will be needed in the next 10 years, and an additional high school, eventually; and 75-80 acres would accommodate both a new elementary and high school; and
- C. Were advised by BCC Chairman Underhill that, due to the growth in the Beulah area, and with the potential need for three schools, both Boards need to be thinking about future infrastructure needs, regardless of whether the land swap with the Navy occurs; that the existing core cannot be neglected to focus on new growth; collaboration with the DSB will be imperative when operating with limited resources; and all County staff should know, and regularly communicate with, their counterparts at the City of Pensacola and the Escambia County School District.

13. Safe Neighborhood

The BCC and DSB discussed safe neighborhoods, and:

- A. Were advised by School Board Member Adams that he would like there to be a Safe Neighborhood Leadership Council, comprised of City of Pensacola, BCC, DSB, and law enforcement, to meet at least quarterly, to discuss issues in pockets of poverty and high crime areas to determine where resources are needed most;
- B. Were advised by County Attorney Rogers that the list of suggested members is a clear Sunshine Law problem and overlaps with other committees, but it could be structured to be compliant; and
- C. Heard BCC Chairman Underhill recommend that the City Administrator, County Administrator, and Superintendent of Schools meet to discuss a way to make this group acceptable to the attorneys of each organization.

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14. Working Cooperatively to Reduce HIV-AIDS Infections in Escambia County

The BCC and DSB discussed working cooperatively to reduce HIV-AIDS infections in Escambia County, and:

- A. Were advised by Commissioner Bergosh that a recent radio program aired on WUWF concerning what was referred to as an HIV-AIDS epidemic in Escambia County, particularly in the African-American Community; and
- B. Were advised by Superintendent Thomas that there is a middle school program to educate students regarding sexually transmitted diseases, including prevention and awareness, in conjunction with the Department of Health, as necessary.

15. Downtown Boarding School Concept

The BCC and DSB discussed the downtown boarding school concept, and:

- A. Heard comments from Commissioner Bergosh concerning the success of some communities in the U.S. with putting children in crisis, due to dysfunctional home lives, in boarding schools, and how there needs to be a partnership between home and the school, and that:
  - (1) Funding comes from multiple sources, and the school would probably operate as a Charter School;
  - (2) Children must meet criteria to qualify and participation is voluntary; and
  - (3) A 2014 Vanderbilt study found that, by third grade, researchers could not tell the students who had received a high-quality pre-K from those who did not;
- B. Heard comments from School Board Member Adams supporting a non-profit organization operating a boarding school to serve high-risk children;
- C. Were advised by School Board Member Hightower that at the Washington, D.C., school, it costs \$48,000 per student, but businesses assist, and if there were an organization to take on the project, the School Board would be supportive;

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- D. Were advised by School Board Member Slayton that, with the current excitement behind Achieve Escambia, he does not support taking funding from Achieve Escambia for other programs because 30 percent of the 3,000 students that start kindergarten every year are not prepared, which needs to be corrected to reduce dropout rates; and
- E. Were advised by BCC Chairman Underhill that it is his opinion that removing children from the family home and parents to place them in State care is detrimental to children, because even a bad parent being in a child's life is critical, and removing children from their home implies that neighborhoods are not suitable for raising a child and problems cannot be overcome.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Boards, BCC Chairman Underhill declared the Joint Meeting of the Escambia Board of County Commissioners and the Escambia County District School Board adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST: 

Pam Childers  
Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
D. B. Underhill, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Clerk

Approved: April 6, 2017