

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

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

September 7, 2010

5:00 P.M.

This meeting 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; and Mr. Judge B. Helms. Also present were Mr. Reginald C. James, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board; Mrs. Deborah Minnis, Attorney for the Board; and others. Mr. Eric F. Hinson was absent

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Isaac Simmons, at 5:05 p.m.

2. Public Hearing - DISCUSSION OF CLASS SIZE AMENDMENT

Mr. Simmons stated that this was the second public hearing on class size amendment as required by the State of Florida.

Mr. James introduced the class size amendment team members: Dr. Sylvia Jackson, Mrs. Bonnie Wood, and Dr. Sonja Bridges.

Dr. Brides stated that beginning with the 2010 – 2011 school year, the maximum number of students in each core class would be 18 students in grades PK - 3, 22 students in grades 4 – 8, and 25 students in grades 9 – 12.

Dr. Jackson stated that Human Resource strategies for compliance will be to consolidate classes with less than five students (particularly in the middle and high schools), implement the combination classroom plan, and hire additional teachers for grade levels exceeding twelve students. She stated that the following K-12 strategies for compliance with the class size amendment: 1) all Assistant Principals of Curriculum were provided with a summary of the class size reduction mandate, which included the class size requirements for K - 3 (18 students), 4 – 8 (22 students), and 9 - 12 (25 students) at the August 18th District Curriculum Meeting; 2) principals reporting that they were exceeding or in danger of exceeding class size limits were directed not to enroll students from outside of the school's attendance zone, if enrollment would result in class size reduction non-compliance status; 3) the

K-12 Director visited each school site (Gretna, Greensboro, and Chattahoochee Elementary) that reported they were exceeding or in danger of exceeding class size limits on the first day of school (August 23rd); 4) the K-12 Director, on behalf of the Superintendent, scheduled a telephone conference with all principals on August 25th at 2:30 p.m., which allowed principals to report enrollment status, class size concerns, any challenges schools were facing during the first week of school; 5) during the August 26th EMT meeting school site challenges and strategies for correcting class size reduction non-compliance were discussed (e.g. addition of teachers at Greensboro Elementary and combo classes at Gretna and Chattahoochee Elementary; 6) MIS was asked to provide a master schedule for each school site by Friday, August 27th; 7) each school site's master schedule was reviewed by the K-12 Director for class size reduction non-compliance on Monday, August 30th; and 8) using warm-body counts reported by site principals and printed copies of master schedules, the K-12 Director will continue to monitor class size of all district schools during the week of August 30th; and work closely with the site principals and the district's Human Resource Director to correct class size reduction non-compliance.

Mrs. Wood stated that the annual compliance calculation is based on the October student membership survey. She stated that district allocation reduced by the amount of the class size reduction categorical for each student over the maximum. She stated that in 2010 – 2011, each district allocation shall also be reduced by 50% of the base student allocation (x DCD) for the number of students over the maximum. She stated that beginning in the fiscal year 2011- 2012, this portion of the reduction 100% of the base student allocation (x DCD) for the number of students over the maximum. She stated that the initial class size reduction is lesser of the calculated amount or the undistributed balance. She stated that the Commissioner is authorized to withhold distribution of the class size reduction categorical allocation. She stated that the Commissioner shall allocate an amount equal to up to 5% of the base student allocation per FTE to compliant districts, but < 25% of the total amount reduced. She stated that funds remaining reallocated to noncompliant districts with plans certified by school boards by February 15th, and the reallocation in proportion to district's share of the total reduction, with the reallocations in excess of the reduction. She stated that schools will be assessed fines based on student counts made in October. She stated that lawmakers this year roughly tripled the penalties for districts that do not comply. She stated that the fines vary but would average \$3,000 a student. She stated that if the district reaches full compliance with 2010 – 2011 class size requirements there is no penalty. She stated that districts that are fined can reduce the penalties by up to 75% by drawing up a plan detailing how they will comply next year. She stated that the school districts that are in full compliance could receive up to \$172.53 (BSA x .05) per district FTE. (This allocation will be generated from the DOE penalty imposed on non-compliant districts). She stated that the total reallocation to all districts cannot exceed 25% of the total funds reduced from noncompliant districts.

Mr. Joseph Drayton addressed the Board to express his concerns in regard to having 30 students in a classroom. He stated that 30 students in a classroom were too many.

Board members thanked staff for their presentation on class size amendment.

3. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mrs. Wood stated that the language has been submitted to the elections office for the .25 critical needs shortage. She stated that it was very important that the district advertise to solicit the public support.

Mr. James stated that the .25 critical needs shortage language will be on the November 2, 2010 ballot. He stated that the district will need to campaign for public support.

Mr. Milton stated that it appears that the Board should take the lead to present information to the public regarding the .25 critical needs shortage.

Mr. Simmons instructed the Attorney to contact Mr. Wayne Blanton regarding ways to campaign for the .25 critical needs shortage.

Mr. Milton requested that the Attorney and other staff be more proactive with School Board issues.

Mr. James stated that the district has received monies from the Race to the Top Grant. He stated that November 9th is the deadline to submit plans for the Race to the Top Grant. He stated that October 13th is the deadline to submit plans to the State for editing.

4. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

In response to Mr. Helms' concern regarding an update with GCCTA and GESPA activities, Mr. James stated that Mr. Rocky Pace will give the Board an update.

5. The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.