

Volusia County Schools
~**School Board Notes**~

July 23, 2013
School Board Meeting

FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The superintendent stated seven budget workshops were held with a focus on protecting student instructional programs, services and activities and class size requirements from further budget cuts. This goal resulted in significant reductions in all district departments in order to balance the recommended budget. Information was also provided regarding the loss of federal funds due to sequestration. In addition, there was a report on an update of the major effort to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to restore local control to improve student achievement. Volusia and Florida schools districts were active in contacting and working with our congressional representatives. The House voted to return state and local control, but a concern remains about the inclusion of vouchers. The Senate must also act to change the law, but will wait until after their August recess.

TENTATIVE BUDGET AND MILLAGE RATE FOR 2013-14

The school board adopted the tentative Volusia County Schools' budget for 2013-14 and the proposed district tax levy. The tentative budget is \$764.2 million and the total millage rate is 7.358 which is 4.89% lower than the rolled-back rate of 7.7367 mills. The rolled-back rate is the property tax levy that will, after the value of new construction is deducted, produce the same amount of revenue as the previous year. A public hearing on the final budget is scheduled for the September 10 school board meeting.

STATE INSTRUCTIONAL SALARY DISTRIBUTION

The school board approved a resolution that establishes a board approved evaluation plan for the purpose of distributing the 2013-14 salary appropriation as required by the state legislature and governor. The salary distribution will rely on components of the existing evaluation system for teachers, principals and assistant principals, but will not include the measure referred to as the Value Added Model (VAM) score.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION

The school board heard an overview of the responsibilities of the legal department, the history of cost savings and legal issues that have been resolved. The chief counsel's responsibilities include serving as in-house general counsel, chief labor negotiator and labor relations manager, and supervising the coordinator for student discipline and records.

The action plan for 2013-14 includes:

- Continued use of outside law firms assigned by the chief counsel and superintendent on an as needed basis

- Requesting letters of interest to expand the pool of available local law firms to provide legal services in the areas of workers' compensation, general liability, land use and real estate transactions, special education, employment/labor litigation, administrative matters and litigation, fleet liability, construction litigation, and other specialized areas.

RENEWAL OF AGREEMENT FOR CONSULTING LEGAL SERVICES

The school board approved renewal of annual agreements for currently utilized law firms at previously approved and existing hourly rates on an as-needed basis. District legal services are directed by the chief counsel, as general counsel to the district. Utilization of law firms is required by the chief counsel for specialized matters or those matters which cannot be handled solely by the chief counsel.

ANNUAL RENEWAL OF SCHOOL BOARD ATTORNEY CONTRACT

The school board approved renewing the contract with Doran, Sims, Wolfe & Kundid for legal services provided to the school board through June 30, 2014. There were no changes to the costs in the agreement. The school board agreed to consider other law firms in January, prior to the renewal period for the school board attorney contract.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Several consent items were approved by the school board, including:

- Marketing agreement with the School Board of Orange County for the purpose of generating revenue for the athletic programs at all high schools
- School resource deputy agreement with the County of Volusia for 14 full-time deputies
- Submittal of a \$25,000 grant application to the National Fish and Wildlife foundation to implement a biology/environmental science educational program on managing exotic plant species.

NEXT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Regular Meeting: Tuesday, August 13, 4 p.m., DeLand Administrative Complex, 200 N. Clara Avenue, DeLand.

During school board meetings and workshops, a live audio broadcast can be accessed from the School District of Volusia County's website at <http://myvolusiaschools.org>.

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