



High School Graduation Honors Workshop Minutes
Tuesday, May 8, 2007 – 10:00 a.m.
School Board Meeting Room
Stuart, FL 34994

Members Present

Laurie Gaylord-Chair
Nancy Kline-Vice-Chair
Dr. David Anderson
Susan Hershey
Lorie Shekailo
Dr. Sara A. Wilcox, Superintendent
Doug Griffin, School Board Attorney

Members Absent

Staff Present

Ruth Pietruszewski, Henry Salzler, Cathleen Brennan, Al Fabrizio, Joan Hunt, Pat Schmoyer, Delores Calloway, Dr. Joyce Holmes, Rodger Osborne, Julie Sessa, Marshall Skinner, Margaret Dow, Gary Deaton, Garrett Grabowski, J. Lisle Bozeman

Public

Samia Ferraro

Press PBPPost – Rachel Simonsen Stuart News- Kelly Tyko

MCEA – No representation **AFSCME** – No representation

Call to order by the Chairman and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

1. Discussion of High School Graduation Honors (COPY ATTACHED)

Hank Salzler, Assistant Superintendent, introduced high school staff; Joan Hunt, Principal of MCHS; Pat Schmoyer, Principal of SFHS; and Al Fabrizio, Assistant Principal of JBHS. Joan Hunt described how intense the competition had become to secure the valedictorian and salutatorian places. She explained the impact of on-line courses, dual-enrollment classes, and college summer school on the traditional system. She felt the traditional way of conferring graduation honor titles needed to be examined. Board members were provided with articles for their preview. (COPY ATTACHED) Joan presented a PowerPoint presentation. The key issues were that the Val/Sal designation connotated that one student was best. In recent years, the valedictorian was .11 points above the student that was in 10th place. Other issues addressed were that the Val/Sal designation recognized fewer students; the current system offered a limited course selection; the course selection was based on weight of course instead of interest; concerns arose over the collegiality among competitive students; and concerns arose over the strategic competition starting in the freshman year. Joan presented alternatives to the current system. The suggestion was to phase in a tiered system of summa cum laude (top 1%), magna cum laude (next 2%), and cum laude (next 2%), with next year's entering freshman. The new system would base the GPA on all credits taken and promote healthy competition. Samia Ferraro, former educator and owner of College Connection, shared her expertise on the subject. She informed Board members that elite schools did not rank their students, and the meaning of valedictorian is the person that gives the farewell speech. She listed five items that colleges look for in choosing college entrance applicants. Samia informed Board members that colleges evaluate the students overall record, meaning the level of classes taken and the GPA, to determine if the student can handle a demanding schedule. They review counselor's recommendations and analyze the college essay to determine how well the student writes. She explained that colleges look for strong extracurricular activities, not so much a long list, but to see if the student has a passion. The fifth item was the ACT and SAT scores. Samia advised students to take both tests.

Dr. Sara A. Wilcox reported that Martin County School District has had valedictorians and salutatorians who participated in everything, including sports and serving the community. She expressed her opinion that the students were well-rounded. Sue Hershey requested to bring this item back for a decision. Dr. Sara A. Wilcox suggested placing the item on the June agenda and preparing a recommendation and a policy.

2. Discussion of Development Review Fees Study (COPY ATTACHED)

Julie Sessa, MCSD Director of Facilities, and J. Lisle Bozeman, MCSD Capital Projects/Planning Specialist provided Board members with the Martin County Board of County Commissioners' agenda item on the Development Review Fee Study, an agenda item summary, and the Final Report for Martin County Development Review Fee Study-2007. Julie and J. Lisle explained that the fee schedule in the study attempted to re-capture the School Board's costs for reviewing development applications, including but not limited to staff time. J. Lisle suggested and invited Board members to attend the Board of County Commissioners meeting set for May 22nd at 3:00 p.m. The proposed fee schedule and process changes will be reviewed at this meeting.

3. Open to the Public

No one from the public requested to speak.

4. Open to the Board

All Board members declined to speak.

There being no further business to bring before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:09 a.m.

CHAIR (Laurie Gaylord)

SECRETARY (Sara A. Wilcox, Ph.D.)