

MINUTES

LAFAYETTE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

WORKSHOP, APRIL 21, 2025

The Lafayette County School Board held a workshop on Monday April 21, 2025, beginning at 5:00 pm. Present were Mr. Robert Edwards, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Darren Driver, Chairperson; Mrs. Marion McCray, Vice-Chair; Mr. Jeff Walker, Member; Mr. Taylor McGrew, Member; Mrs. Kimberly Adams, Member; and Mrs. Leenette McMillan-Fredriksson, School Board Attorney. Administrators present were Mrs. Janene Fitzpatrick, Director of Teaching and Learning Services and Mr. Scott Sadler, Director of Support Services. Mr. Patrick Bell and his wife Elizabeth were in attendance.

Hiring a Lobbyist for Special Facilities Funding Process

Mr. Darren Driver started the meeting at 5:00 p.m. by welcoming everyone and then turned the floor over to Superintendent Edwards. Superintendent Edwards introduced Mr. Patrick Bell, who explained how hiring a lobbyist could assist the School Board during the Special Facilities process. Mr. Bell thanked the Superintendent and the Board for the opportunity to speak and outlined how a lobbyist could be beneficial throughout the Special Facilities funding process. He shared that he has worked with 14 different schools in this capacity, provided a breakdown of his role, gave a summary of the current status of the Special Facilities funding process, and explained recent developments in the legislature. Mr. Bell further explained that a lobbyist could assist with the presentation given in Tallahassee, where all school districts that have applied for Special Facilities Funding are ranked. The legislature then reviews these rankings and decides which projects to fund. A lobbyist can help navigate the funding process and ensure the district's application remains a priority. Mr. Patrick Bell's wife, Elizabeth, further explained the current status of Special Facilities Funding and how schools have been funded per pupil station up until this year. She noted that there are no additional funds from COVID relief or other federal sources; the funding continues to come from the Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO)

program. As a result, officials are reviewing the cost per pupil station to develop a more efficient funding process, since the current system takes 2-3 years and requires ensuring full project funding. While she does not anticipate a drastic change, she expects that the cost per student station will be revised to provide a clearer estimate of school construction costs when requesting funding.

Throughout the presentation, Mr. Patrick Bell and his wife, Elizabeth, answered all questions from the board members and addressed their concerns. The School Board members expressed their appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Bell for taking the time to meet with them and explain how hiring a lobbyist could be beneficial during the Special Facilities Funding process.

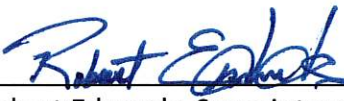
ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned at 5:42pm.



Darren Driver, Chairperson

ATTEST:



Robert Edwards, Superintendent
and Secretary to the School Board