

Minutes of  
 Okeechobee County School Board Workshop  
 September 8, 2016  
 4:00 p.m.

**I. Call to Order**

Call to Order: Chairman Morgan

- Present: District 1 – Joe Arnold  
 District 2 – Malissa Morgan, Chairman  
 District 3 – Dixie Ball  
 District 4 – India Riedel  
 District 5 – Jill Holcomb, Vice Chairman
- Ken Kenworthy, Superintendent of Schools  
 Tom Conely, School Board Attorney by designee Deborah Hooker

Invocation: Superintendent Kenworthy  
 Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Chairman Morgan

**II. Information/Discussion Items**

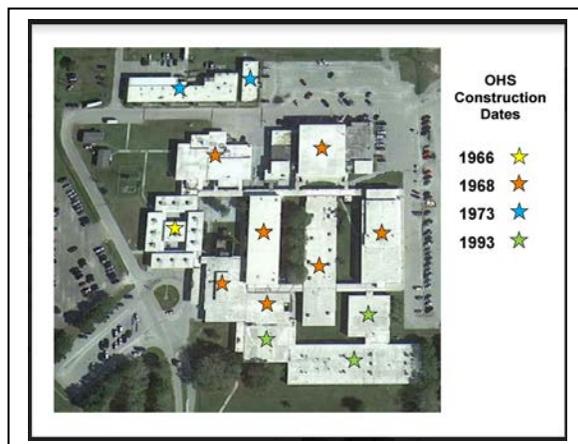
Chairman Morgan opened the meeting and introduced Superintendent Kenworthy. The Superintendent recognized and welcomed elected officials and guests and provided an overview of why we are here: remodel, renovate or rebuild Okeechobee High School. Mr. Kenworthy addressed the deficits with the infrastructure and explained how the condition of the facility and the grounds influence instruction. Mr. Kenworthy acknowledged Lobbyist Paul Hawkes, he is invited later to guide us on some possible next steps. Renovation and new construction are both costly and more money than the district would be able to raise locally. That is why the Legislature created the Special Facility Construction Account Program. This program looks at growth, condition and age and determines critical need. Once that determination is made, the project will move on to the Pre-Application phase. The District submitted an application last year, including a Castaldi report deeming the school, “critical need”.

**What is the Castaldi Formula?**

BUILDING NUMBER	6		
Building area	19952	Survey recommends new building.	
Present year	2015		
Year building built	1968		
Age of structure	47	Area added/remodeled/renovated	
Cost new construct	\$207.00	0	\$0.00
Cost Remodeling	\$103.50	0	\$0.00
Cost Renovation	\$69.00	19952	\$1,376,688.00
		19952 totals	\$1,376,688.00

Estimate	Rem/Ren/Add	New	Percent Prototype
	\$1,376,688	\$4,130,064	33
<b>Castaldi Formula</b>	\$1,376,688	x	1.2
	( 65 - 47 )		0.75
			> 65
			\$122,372.27 > \$63,539.45
<b>Minimum Cost for Castaldi to work</b>		\$714,819	



In February 2016, the District received a letter from the Department of Education stating that the site was not deemed critical need and offered a bulleted list of suggested repairs. Superintendent Kenworthy invited Board members and guests to listen to the speakers, look at the pictures and observe the grounds and campus during the tour to see if they would arrive at the same conclusion.

Principal Tedders shared what it means to be a “Brahman”. Mr. Tedders introduced two students, Delaenam Akahoho and Cristian Rios, to share how a new campus would impact a future Brahman’s education. Ms. Akahoho stated, “I believe that the environment in which students are taught in often influences the student’s behavior, grades and even the teacher’s quality of work. Circumstances such as, the AC Unit not working in building 6 or even technical glitches have prevented many opportunities in learning from the two years I have resided in Okeechobee High School. I am not discrediting this amazing campus, but I believe that facilities have the power to weaken or improve the teaching and learning environment for students”. Mr. Rios did a great deal of research on this subject and summed up his research by saying, “These studies all show that in addition to improved overall student performance, new facilities can also positively impact test scores, teacher morale, and students’ opinion of their own school. The construction of a new high school in Okeechobee clearly has the capability to improve students’ chances for graduation and admission to colleges, while providing a better environment and relationship between students, teachers, and administration while striving for that goal”.

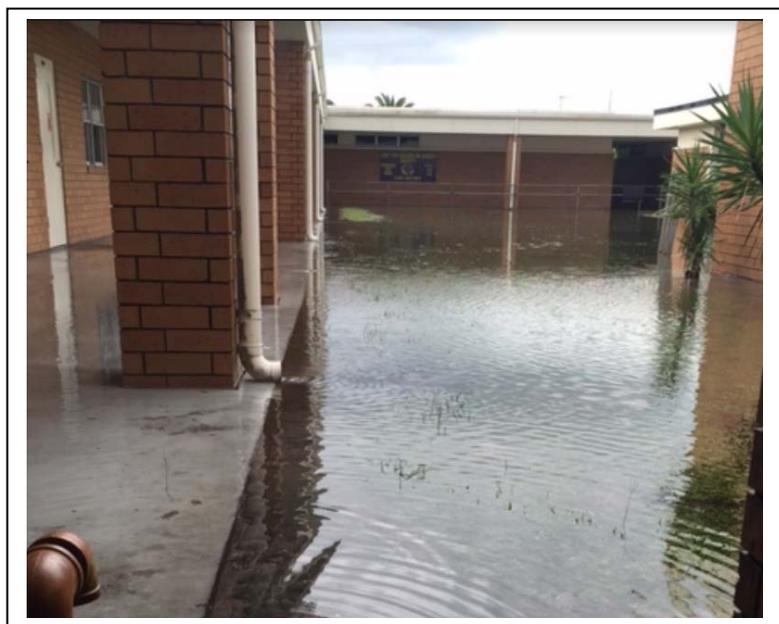
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Mr. Greg Kelley, CRA in Tallahassee, talked about the Castaldi report and the weight it carries in the decision to modernize or rebuild. A school is expected to last sixty-five years, but the final decision to renovate (minor interior fixes), remodel (extensive interior fixes that could include replacing walls, wiring, plumbing, etc.) or rebuild (new construction) is the bottom number on the Castaldi report.

The image shows a spreadsheet with two columns of data, each titled '2014 School District Taxable Values and Values of a \$1.5 Mill Levy'. The spreadsheet lists various school districts with columns for '2014 Taxable Value', '2014 Value of a \$1.5 Mill Levy', '2014 Taxable Value', and '2014 Value of a \$1.5 Mill Levy'. One row is highlighted in yellow, showing a taxable value of \$2,468,914 and a value of a \$1.5 mill levy of \$2,468,914.

This chart shows  
Okeechobee's  
value of the 1.5 mill  
levy At \$2,468,914

Superintendent Kenworthy started the tour in Building 6 with a tour of the Art room. The lack of adequate room size, storage and technology were a few of the deficits mentioned for that classroom and many others like it. A teacher with the knowledge and training to take the Art experience to a higher level is hindered by the size of the room and workspace and the lack of storage for the Art projects. Core classes are capped at twenty-five students, but specials are not limited in size. This building is two-story without an elevator. Students identified with mobility issues early in the year can be scheduled outside of Building 6. However, students that sustain injuries during the year must attend class elsewhere without the benefit of that teacher's face-to-face instruction. Classwork is taken to the student or sent to a device. Director of Operations, Brian Barrett, led the group through a hall that frequently floods, highlighting the pumping stations that regularly malfunction due to age, outdated design or electrical issues. High water marks were evident in several areas around campus.



Mr. Barrett stated that the high school campus has so many needs that in addition to janitorial staff, a full time maintenance person is allocated to this site. This site still has by far, the largest number of work-orders annually.

Building 4 is another building that regularly floods. This was evident by water marks on swollen furniture, separating floor tile, rusting filing cabinets, dripping HVAC, ventilation mildew/mold odors, and, although replaced regularly, stained ceiling tiles.

Engineer, Steve Dobbs, showed the group where the recommended fenced retention pond was to be located, directly in front of the campus, parallel to Highway 441. Although expensive, would only serve as a temporary fix for some of the campus flooding. Several members of the group expressed concern with the proximity to the school and walkways used by students and staff, mosquitos, the inability to mow and control overgrowth during the wet season, the limited space

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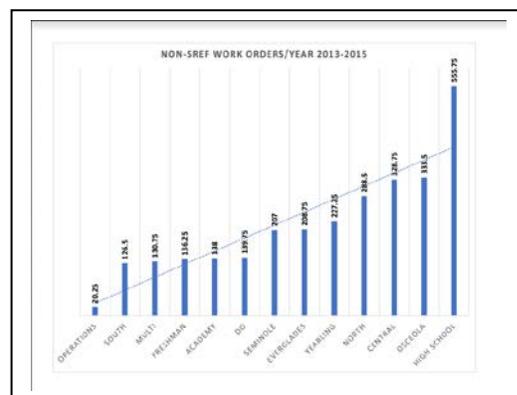
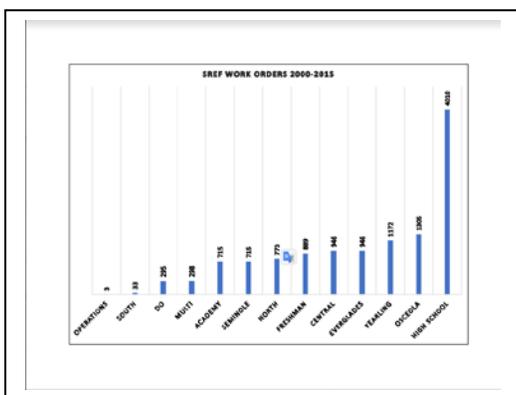
in which to locate a pond, not to mention a pond is not what you want to see when you on the front lawn of a school. The contingency continued to Building 5 and briefly paused outside the open-air restrooms. Lack of privacy was discussed for the restrooms. The carpet was removed from the halls and tile installed due to interior hall flooding. The tour continued to the gym. When the bleachers are fully extended they can seat over 1,400. If they are fully opened they extend into the volleyball and/or basketball court. Seating is limited because the bleachers cannot be fully utilized during sporting events. The gym does not have heat, drop ceiling tiles must be regularly replaced and the windows do not have a protective covering. The gym windows are covered with black plastic inside for protection and storm shutters are left in place outside to assist in maintaining air temperature. Several restrooms around campus are no longer functional and are used for storage. The restrooms in the gym have old cast iron plumbing that clog regularly. The plumbing should be replaced, however, that often requires cutting through concrete, sometimes under buildings. The Freshman Campus, an off-site campus, has a gym that is not air conditioned; the temperature this time of year is too high for the facility to be utilized. Freshman Campus students must be bused to the high school campus adding to the already overcrowded gym, locker room and restroom.

Principal Tedders led the group to the cafeteria, also used as a banquet hall for club and sport recognition dinners, dances and for wrestling matches. Eating and wrestling in the same facility on the same day affects air quality. The morale of the wrestlers is affected as well, the embarrassment of using the cafeteria for wrestling matches. Seating capacity in the café is 300 students. Many students eat and congregate outside, unless the weather is poor. Then the students must use covered walkways.

- Instructional and Campus Opportunities

  - Freshman would receive an additional one period of instruction
  - Access to Advanced classes
  - Access to Career and Technical courses
  - Modern facility that supports learning career and technical skills
  - Increase academic time during the day by eliminating transportation
  - Collaborative teacher planning between departments
  - Storage of instructional materials and student projects
  - Decreased loss of instructional time due to distance to restrooms
  - Recapturing of students that have shifted to home education
  - Access to updated, functional technology
  - Closed campus to increase security
  - Locker rooms, changing rooms for theater, JROTC & PE
  - Covered walkways to overcome skipping because of rain
  - Capacity in classrooms limits engagement
  - A modern day media center capable of facilitating independent learning with access to books, movies, works of art and gathering of student learning groups
  - Motivation, ownership and attitude changes impacting attendance, engagement and achievement
  - Cost effective, energy efficient, sustainable with decreased indoor irritants that come for an aging building
  - All of these elements indirectly relate to increased student achievement

Mrs. McCoy, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services, stated that student safety and instruction are the top two areas of focus. Mrs. McCoy highlighted the instructional and campus opportunities. Courses offerings are limited in the areas of advanced classes and career and technology due to capacity. Other deficits include: time it takes to cross such as large campus between classes, ongoing challenge with wireless reception, and the facility not able to keep up with current technology. Core curriculum and extra-curricular activities are impacted due to size, storage, space, electrical, plumbing and networking limitations. Mr. Barrett showed an area where buses, private vehicles and students coming at the same time during class change, early dismissal and late arrivals. The staff works diligently to ensure the safety of all students, but this is a problem in several areas across campus. The career/tech building is behind the general campus, this building lacks: storage, adequate restroom facilities, dressing room for the JROTC program, adequate room size to teach students hands-on projects.



The final building in the tour, 14, is the oldest. The rooms are small, no classroom storage, small windows at ceiling level and the restrooms are nonfunctioning. Mr. Barrett shared a list of campus-wide concerns.

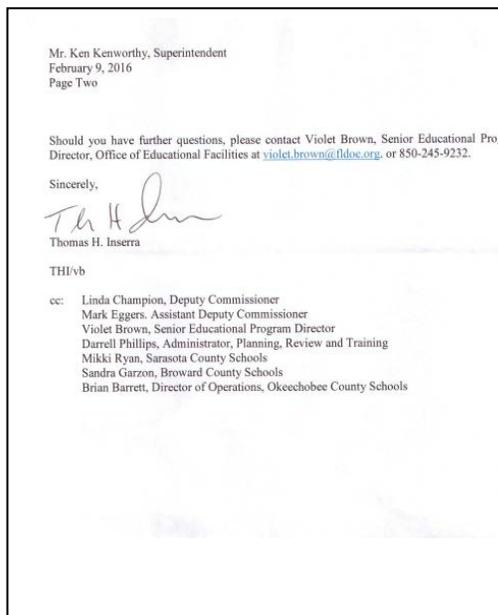
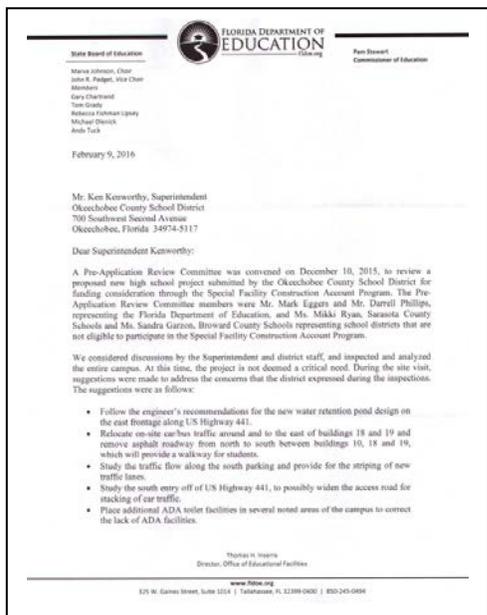
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Campus-wide Concerns	
ADA Compliance	Storage
Campus Security	HVAC
Ongoing Maintenance	Overall Drainage/Elevation
Telecommunications	Appearance
Technology/Fiber/Bandwidth	Millennial Style Education
Energy Management	Failed Restrooms
Asphalt/Paving	Capacity to House Freshmen
Air Quality	Instructional Barriers
Plumbing	Electrical
Roofing	Fire Alarm System
Traffic Patterns	Asbestos



Superintendent Kenworthy led the group to the parking area for closing remarks. As the group passed through the "commons area" they observed a picture showing that same area flooded.

Mr. Kenworthy shared a copy of the February 2016, Department of Education letter and reviewed the bulleted list of suggestions. Mr. Kenworthy shared details of the phone calls that went back and forth after the request was reviewed in December. Hearing nothing until the letter was received in February and not be able to obtain facts other those listed in the letter.



Superintendent Kenworthy concluded the meeting with an invitation to attend the Board meeting at 6:00 this evening where this discussion will continue with next steps.

### III. Public Comment

The audience expressed concern and support of the project after seeing first-hand the extensive needs of the campus.

### IV. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, on a motion by Dixie Ball, seconded by Joe Arnold, the Board workshop adjourned at 5:45 p.m. The School Board will conduct a final public hearing on the 2016-17 proposed millage rates and budget on Thursday, September 8, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. A regular School Board Meeting will follow the public hearing. Both meetings will be held at 700 S.W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida.

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ File \_\_\_\_\_  
Malissa Morgan, Chairman

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ File \_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Kenworthy  
Superintendent of Schools