

**BREVARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
WORKSHOP**

September 22, 2003
1:05 p.m.

King Center (Room #168), (Bldg. #9)
Melbourne Campus

PRESENT: Dr. Alexandra M. Penn Williams; Vice Chair; Mrs. Miriam E. Martinez;
Mr. C. R. "Rick" McCotter III; Mrs. Alberta K. Wilson
Mr. Joe D. Matheny, Attorney; Dr. Thomas E. Gamble, Secretary

ABSENT: Mr. James W. Handley, Chair

GUESTS: Dr. Heather Sherry and Dr. Jill White

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Dr. Alex Penn Williams, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order.

2. REVIEW OF CHARTER SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IN VIEW OF NEW LANGUAGE IN CHARTER SCHOOL BILL:

Dr. Penn William, Vice Chair, opened by welcoming visitors: Ms. Bea Fowler, District School Board, and Dr. Heather Sherry, Director of Articulation and Student Services, Division of Community Colleges; as well as Dr. Jill White, Director, Okaloosa Walton Collegiate High School (OWCHS) (Dr. White participated via telephone conferencing.) Dr. Gamble followed with the introduction of Dr. Walt Christy, Director of Secondary Programs, and Mary Hertzfield, Learning Director, Office of School Choice, with the Brevard County School System.

Dr. Sherry provided a brief overview of charter schools and explained the purpose of the presentation was to provide information and issues necessary for consideration when making decisions regarding the process. She reported currently in the U.S., 40 states have charter school laws with a total of 2,000 charter schools nationwide which are growing in popularity. Many charter schools serve special needs or "at risk" students. Charter schools in Florida are funded based on a performance contract (Performance for Dollars). The advantage of charter schools is that they are not bound by as many laws and regulations thus giving more freedom to be innovative in the formulation of the school.

There are now 222 charter schools in Florida compared to five in 1996. Most of the 50,000+ students served by charter schools are elementary and middle school level; however, some high schools do exist.

Florida charter schools are categorized as public schools so they must meet the same federal and state accountability measures, such as No Child Left Behind (adequate yearly progress) and state requirements of A+ program, FCAT, etc.

The only Florida Charter High School operated by a state community college is Okaloosa-Walton Charter High School (OWCHS), established in 2000. It has achieved great successes, such as maintaining a grade “A” since its inception; 100% passing FCAT on math and writing; 97% passing FCAT on reading, etc. There is some misconception that these high rates are due to “taking the best students from other schools.” This is incorrect as there is open enrollment and is not limited to high performers. Although a 3.0 GPA is required to meet dual enrollment standards, students can be accepted with a lower GPA and then enter into the prep program.

The success of OWCHS has led to state-wide legislative support with increased enthusiasm due to the class size amendment as charter schools are not required to meet the class size requirements under this amendment. The State Board of Education Strategic Plan has a maximum access and seamless articulation requirement which fits well with the charter school model as students earn both high school and college credits simultaneously, thus making it more likely that these students will continue to complete their BA degree. Several other community colleges in the state are interested. St. Petersburg Community College has applied and will focus on recruiting minority students to enter the dual enrollment program; Florida Community College at Jacksonville is investigating an adult education focus to encourage drop-outs or potential drop-outs to obtain their high school diploma; and, Seminole and Polk Community Colleges are also investigating the charter school concept. A state-wide workshop on charter schools will be held on October 16-17 in Orlando, Florida. Further information will be forthcoming.

Ms. Sherry reported that there are several types of charter schools: (1) collegiate high school such as OWCHS – with heavy dual enrollment focus; (2) adult high school rescue program for drop-outs; and, (3) a new concept which David Armstrong and Commissioner both support, which is similar to a magnet school and focuses on preparing students for certain high-demand occupations, i.e. aerospace industry in Brevard County, or nursing and teaching due to shortfalls in these occupations in the state. The difference in this third option is that in the normal program a student would complete their AA degree, but perhaps without a planned focus of study toward a future occupation, where this option will start with a planned goal to enable the staff to guide their scheduling toward the completion of this goal. Students are guaranteed block transfers of their AA degrees due to articulation agreements (2+2) so that AA can transfer to a state university and accepted as Juniors. Students are guaranteed that Bright Futures requirements are met and further have full use of the services offered by the college. High school students take classes with college students in regular college courses in order to truly experience post-secondary education. Parents are very enthused as they feel that choices allow their children to find their niche and thus fulfill their highest potential.

Ms. Sherry reported on the possible benefits to a community college. There are financial benefits as there is federal funding – two years start-up dollars of \$150K for each year, plus dissemination grants available for best practices which may be applied for at \$200K each year after that. There is also a state financial benefit of up to 95% for 500 students

and 100% for all additional students for the FEFP. Funding is also available for categoricals such as books and transportation, which are important issues with dual enrollment to offset expenses. The bottom line is that funding for K-12 is constitutionally mandated and so there is no choice for funding students K-12, which then would apply to community colleges with K-12 students. These additional funds can be used to offset other financial needs to benefit the college, not just the charter school.

She reviewed areas of consideration which included: (1) affect of relations with school district; (2) increased accountability requirements; (3) increased administrative burden; (4) faculty concerns; (5) need for additional curriculum especially for students in need of college prep classes; (6) seat time vs. credit hour issue – FEFP funding based on seat time so working on conversion formula to fix this problem; (7) potential for increased discipline problems; (8) encourage diversity; (9) facilities decisions; and, (10) transportation issues. Resources are now available to assist throughout the state, such as centers funded out of federal charter school grant (i.e. Florida State University focuses on academic performance and accountability; USF focuses on students with disabilities; FAU specializes in legal assistance and UNF helps with start-up and business practices).

Dr. Jill White, Director, discussed experiences with collegiate high school start up. She reported that OWCHS is now in the fourth year of a five-year contract. The law states that a charter school contract cannot exceed five years during the first contract session. Following their fifth year, they will be able to request a 15-year contract. The governing board is the college Board of Trustees, which meets at the same time as the college Board Meetings, but with a separate agenda. The school is SACS accredited, but must be reaccredited on a three-year cycle. Charter schools have separate policies and procedures and are totally exempt from local school district policies. OWCHS this year had the highest number of points in the A+ accountability program in the entire state.

Dr. White reported OWCHS currently has 240 students enrolled; an increase from 185 for 2002-2003. She reported on innovative characteristics such as: (1) giving a laptop computer to each student to use during the year; (2) coordinating history and reading with ongoing internet instruction; (3) having a culture of reading, which believes that “all reading is good” so students are given choice in what they are going to read according to their interests; (4) scheduling an academic seminar; (5) coordinating an internship program in Spring semester for Seniors; (6) providing a student academic resource lab; and, (7) scheduling a “mini-mester” workshop during time periods when the college and high school calendars do not match up in order to make the 180 day year minimum.

The curriculum is typically that 10th graders primarily enroll in high school credit courses with maybe one college class; 11th graders usually enroll primarily in college classes; and, seniors typically enroll in college courses only.

The admissions process requires public high schools to have “open access” so this includes collegiate high schools. The open admission process is set by the governing board each year based on number of openings. There are two application periods during the year. Once there is a complete application on file, student applications are reviewed

and are sorted by space availability, GPA, residency and FPET scores. If the student meets the minimum FPET scores and 3.0 unweighted GPA, they are eligible to be placed into the collegiate program. If the students' scores do not meet minimum standards, then they must enter the pre-collegiate program. There are a certain number of openings available each year for both the collegiate and pre-collegiate programs. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of slots, then a random lottery is held.

Dr. White stated that the current budget for the OWCHS operation is approximately \$1 million (\$4,000 per FTE with approx. 240 FTE's). Dr. Penn Williams noted that federal grant money is increasing to about \$200,000 per year, plus planning money will now be available even before the school signs a contract.

Dr. White related that OWCHS is in a small school district, with AP at all five high schools as well as an International Baccalaureate program; however, there is limited access to dual enrollment. At the time OWCHS opened the dual enrollment program required students to be in their senior year and to have a 3.5 weighted GPA. The legislative delegation also requested an alternative to the "choice" dilemma. Furthermore, the area is very conservative and has a very active home school population, which had been using the dual enrollment program to satisfy high school requirements, but this had financial disadvantages for them as there was no help with transportation, books, etc. There was a significant parental lobby to provide this opportunity.

Mr. Little explained that he was tasked with reviewing financial and administrative issues surrounding charter schools. Administrative concerns included: (1) need to monitor all-day activities of students; (2) increased security burden; (3) required fingerprint and background checks ; (4) increased sexual molestation issues and responsibilities; (5) school lunch requirements; (6) increased student records and reporting; (7) increased administrative burden to current administration; (8) facilities and space concerns; and, (9) possible scheduling difficulties for college students hindering timely completion of their requirements.

Dr. White responded that the stated concerns were valid. She reported that records/reporting requirements was handled by the school district via networking software so the college IT staff was not burdened.

Dr. Gamble reiterated concerns regarding the impact of giving charter school students priority access to regular classes. Dr. White admitted that this was initially a problem, but experience has taught them to minimize problems by adding classes upfront in the scheduling process. Although they do allow collegiate students priority in scheduling, the OWCHS administrative staff monitors to ensure that there is an equal and fair distribution of the younger students in each class. OWCHS staff facilitates scheduling based on the student's input to avoid conflicts.

Dr. Penn William asked for further clarification of the fingerprint and background check requirements. Dr. White stated that K-12 employees must have fingerprinting so OWCC decided that all employees would be fingerprinted.

Regarding student records, all charter school student registration forms are maintained with college records along with dual enrollment forms, and high school records.

Mr. Little explained possible negative effects to the BCC budget, with the reduction of dual enrollment students, which would reduce the FTE and reduce the relative need index for the state community college system funding formula. He stated that he was neutral from a financial administration point of view believing that there would be no significant financial gain or loss. However, the major concern is whether the gains offset the increased administrative burdens added to BCC's current staff resulting in less time to accomplish their current goals and objectives.

Dr. Gamble reported on the positive relationship between BCC and the School system as evidenced by the 2,800 dual enrollment students. There are other programs in the area which appear to be moving in positive ways to increase dual enrollment as well as increasing statistics for minority students' completion of their AA with high school diploma. He would be hesitant to engage the charter school idea unless the Board of Trustees were solidly behind the idea, as it does represent a significant challenge.

Mr. McCotter expressed concern with a possible negative effect on dual enrollment opportunities at the high schools. He recommended there be thorough exploration by the Board of Trustees, cabinet and school board before presenting the idea to the community. He further expressed that although there would be a benefit to the public school system, such as controlling class size, it might interfere with the primary BCC mission. Budget shortfalls must also be considered as currently there are approximately \$100 million of unfunded enrollments at the community college level.

Mrs. Wilson said that her opinion is that extensive exploration and a collaborative effort is necessary in order to get the entire picture and formulate possible solutions.

Mrs. Martinez expressed that although there is a positive benefit with the charter school concept, that the costs and intangibles are significant. Ideally, if it is determined there is a need in this county, then it should be determined who would best provide for that need. She also noted the geographical challenges of this county. She further expressed concern that a charter school could take precedence over what the college does best, and perhaps BCC could partner with the K-12 level to assist to satisfy the need.

Dr. Gamble remarked that BCC does not have an obvious space for a charter school. There have been thoughts of providing an administrative complex with the idea that the students could partake in classes at all five campuses. Dr. White said that a centralized location is necessary as the K-12 arena requires close attendance tracking for FTE purposes. Furthermore there would be a diminished social and psychological benefit to students without a central location.

Dr. Sherry asked for more clarification of the collegiate high school at the Cocoa Campus. Dr. Fettrow reported on the collegiate high school program, which allows students to obtain their AA while still in high school. Dr. Sherry remarked that BCC is already doing the basics of what OWCHS does and that perhaps there could be an expansion without actually having a charter school or as an interim step. Dr. Gamble indicated the problem with dual enrollment is that the school does not receive FTFP for this type of program. However, Dr. Gamble reported there are at least three state-level studies regarding the dual enrollment issue and that the funding problems are being recognized, which might lead to future funding for dual enrollment.

Dr. White again reiterated the challenges of starting the charter schools and that it not might be feasible in every area, but that there could be a middle ground. For instance Santa Fe Community College has a program which might be helpful to be studied for our circumstances. Dr. Gamble said that this group should investigate the Santa Fe model.

Mr. Spraggs commented the High School Culinary Arts program on the Titusville campus (26 students from two high schools) is progressing very well and has been successful.

Dr. Gamble summarized the workshop discussion and plans for the next step and stated the College must determine if it can identify a single site that would accommodate the charter school program as it appears that one centralized location is important. Further, another joint meeting with the school board would be necessary to discuss the details and form a small working group between the college and the school board to discuss particulars and then make recommendations to the Board. He asked if the Board agreed with this plan.

Ms. Martinez affirmed the next steps, but indicated the other solutions to obtain the same result should be studied rather than making BCC the main solution and these explorations should be done in partnership with the school board to reflect their viewpoints of the situation. This action should be taken internally prior to a presentation to the community. In addition, the Santa Fe data should be analyzed to see if their approach is more compatible with this county's situation.

Dr. Sherry concluded that enrollment could become a point of contention in view of Brevard's current 2,800 dual enrollment students versus the OWCHS enrollment of 240 students. In order to maintain the small school idea, only a small percentage of Brevard's current dual enrollment students would be able participate in a charter school if it were offered at BCC.

It was the consensus of the Board to proceed with the next steps with a November review by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT:

The workshop adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Chairman, District Board of Trustees

ATTESTED: _____

Secretary, District Board of Trustees