

SCHOOL BOARD OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA WORKSHOP – June 23, 2011

The School Board of Pinellas County, Florida, conducted a workshop on Thursday, June 23, 2011, at 9:00 a.m., in Room 203 ABC, Second Floor, Administration Building, 301 4th Street S.W., Largo, Florida.

Present: Mrs. Carol J. Cook, Chairperson; Mrs. Robin L. Wikle, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Janet R. Clark, Mrs. Terry Krassner, Mrs. Linda S. Lerner, Mrs. Peggy L. O’Shea, Mr. Lew Williams, Members; Dr. Julie Janssen, Superintendent; Mr. James F. Madden, Deputy Superintendent; and, Laurie Dart and David Koperski, Associate Counsels.

- **Superintendent & Board** – Dr. Wayne Blanton, Florida School Boards Association, and Sen. Bill Montford, Florida Association of District School Superintendents, were brought to this session as facilitators of the conversation between School Board Members and Dr. Janssen.

Board Members placed the following areas of concern on the table regarding Dr. Janssen’s leadership and examples to support their concerns in order to begin the dialogue between the Board and the Superintendent:

- Blame of others – not taking the responsibility when things go wrong, i.e., issues in the Professional Development Department, the issue of copyright relinquishment and the concern with the lack of specific information in a recent agenda item regarding the rehire of DROP employees and employees who are DROP Rehires.
- Lack of confidence by the Board in the Superintendent’s decision-making.
- Lack of confidence and understanding of agenda items and recommendations by the Superintendent – needs to demonstrate a more knowledgeable leadership role in recommendations.
- Recommendations not vetted thoroughly before being presented to the Board, i.e., zoning, copyright relinquishment request, reconfiguration of Walsingham and Southern Oak campuses and the recommendation to reopen Kings Highway and Gulf Beaches against the Board’s direction.
- Poor crisis management.
- Lack of communication with the Board regarding district issues, i.e., Melrose.
- Lack of communication to schools and staff when a change is being proposed for their site.
- Lack of follow-through – ATD (attention to detail), i.e., DMAC information to be placed on the district’s website but still not there, strategies for struggling students not identified and relayed to Board Member, etc.
- Lack of demonstrated organization management skills.
- The need to be more proactive, rather than reactive, i.e., John Hopkins discipline issues and the need to have strategies in place to prevent those issues when the district returned to neighborhood schools. Superintendent needs to be ahead of the curve – have an action plan.
- Doesn’t seem to use her team to receive honest, critical input/feedback.
- Poor morale - fear factor – by her administrators and employees.

- Time management – improvement needed in prioritizing and re-evaluating days away from district.
- Strategic Plan – lack of a final product and the need for a final, working plan.
- Need for a climate survey to be completed and reported each year.
- Improvement needed in the budget process.
- Improvement needed on how information is coming to the Board and the expediency of that delivery of the information requested.
- Superintendent needs to react to the Board, not modify her recommendations at the direction of a single Board Member.
- Need for a review of the reporting structure for attorneys/Office of the General Counsel in order to provide the most effective team.
- Reporting structure of the Board’s Administrative Assistant position.
- Need to have a better, more open & honest relationship with the media – think before she speaks and attend to requests for information from them in a more expeditious manner.

The following resolves were presented:

- Superintendent should meet more often with the Board Members, as individuals and as a body.
- Board Members should be open and honest with the Superintendent in their meetings.
- Superintendent should bring one, well-vetted recommendation to the Board on items to be voted on; and, then provide them with three options – approve, do not approve or alter. All options should include potential ramifications.
- Superintendent should put together a proactive media plan in order to improve the district’s relationship with the media and to have an open and honest relationship with the media. Superintendent should be proactive in order to eliminate crisis situations. It’s about “taking back the conversation.”
- When working on a recommendation with staff, look at best- and worse-case scenarios before bringing the recommendation forth. Vet all recommendations thoroughly before bringing them to the Board.
- Consider having a board agenda review meeting with the Board the day before the meeting.
- Superintendent should respond to requests for information submitted by Board Members by identifying the timeline to be met and the appropriate staff member(s) to handle the request. Superintendent should follow through to ensure the information has been delivered within the timeframe and shared with the remaining Board Members.
- Superintendent (and staff) will provide the Board Members with answers to their agenda questions in a timely manner. This will require the Board Members to be deliberate in forwarding their questions to the Superintendent’s Office a.s.a.p. upon receipt of the agenda in order for the Superintendent and staff to respond to questions in a timely fashion.
- When being asked for information by a Board Member, the Superintendent needs to be more honest if it is not an appropriate area for the Board Member to go.
- Administratively, everything falls under the Superintendent. If something goes wrong, the Superintendent should not use the “blame” tactic; but, take the responsibility and feel free to share with the Board where the ball was dropped. There is a difference between blaming and explaining.

- Superintendent should ensure that a climate survey is administered annually and results produced/shared in a timely manner with the Board and a direction as to how those results will be used.
- When a school will be affected by a recommendation, a thorough dialogue will take place with that school's leadership, staff & faculty during the vetting process.
- Walk-in agenda items will be limited/reduced.
- Discussion will take place at the next workshop regarding the Office of the General Counsel – reporting of the three attorneys, etc.
- The Board and Superintendent should review the organization chart yearly during a workshop to see what is working and what is not.
- Superintendent will work with her administrative team to make sure they know they are invited to work alongside her, not just follow her direction out of loyalty.
- Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent could cover more ground if they did not travel together to attend same functions/meetings.
- Superintendent has a good leadership team and needs to delegate to them in order to meet timelines.
- Communication Audit Report will be brought to the next workshop with a proactive communication plan.
- A member on the Superintendent's Cabinet will be assigned to each Board Member to address their concerns and/or questions in an attempt to improve communication. A complete list of the members of the Cabinet will be forwarded to the Board Members.
- Superintendent will produce a Strategic Plan and schedule a discussion of the plan with the Board at a workshop. The presentation should identify those responsible for carrying out each item contained within the plan, etc.
- Budget process will continue.
- Board Members were advised to give Dr. Janssen a timeframe by which to demonstrate improvement and then use the evaluation process to indicate whether their concerns continue to exist.
- This should be the final discussion needed of this type. If improvement is not seen following this discussion and the Superintendent's evaluation, next steps should be identified and taken.

The Board Members discussed a timeframe by which they should expect measureable improvements in the areas mentioned. Mrs. Lerner suggested a November/December timeline. Ms. Clark stated that two months should provide a sufficient time by which to determine if there are improvements and suggested a review at the August workshop. Mrs. Wikle stated that her timeframe has been the three years Dr. Janssen has served as Superintendent and is looking for immediate improvement; and, that in the two-month timeframe suggested, the Board should be ready to continue their contract with Dr. Janssen or ask for her resignation. Mr. Koperski and Dr. Blanton discussed areas of Dr. Janssen's contract that speak to a timeline. Both Mrs. Lerner and Mrs. Wikle asked Dr. Janssen whether there was any part of the discussion that she did not understand. Dr. Janssen, in response, stated that she wished to reserve her comments until she has time to digest the discussion. Dr. Blanton stated that there has been a lot placed on the table today; that there will always be some issues that are subjective and some that are objective; and, that the Board, through the contract, has a timeline to follow. Ms. Clark requested that the Board have an opportunity at the August workshop to "review the

progress” of improvement by the Superintendent. A “periodic review” of the Superintendent will be scheduled. Mrs. Wikle stated that Dr. Janssen is a strong person with a kind heart; but, that this is about accountability. Mrs. Krassner, earlier in the session, acknowledged that Dr. Janssen is a kind and caring individual.

The workshop recessed at 1:30 p.m. and reconvened at 2:11 p.m. to discuss the remaining workshop topics.

- **Superintendent’s Evaluation Tool & Process** – Mrs. O’Shea, chair of the subcommittee, and Dr. Behrokh Ahmadi presented the first draft of the proposed evaluation instrument and process. Discussion followed and suggestions were made. This item will be brought back to the Board for further discussion at the July 14, 2011 workshop.
- **FSBA Master Board – next steps/on-site sessions** – Board Members decided that communication would be sent by Mrs. Beaty to FSBA to indicate that the leadership team of Pinellas has requested the following:
 - Topic - The A+ Plan for School Boards- How School Boards Impact Student Achievement - Part I and Part II, if possible
 - Conduct both sessions, in sequence, on one of the following dates: First choice – Tuesday, August 30, 2011; Second choice – Wednesday, August 31st; or, Third choice – Monday, August 29th
- **Assignment of Subcommittee to Identify Next Steps – Performance Auditor** – Ms. Clark, Mrs. Lerner and Mrs. Wikle were assigned to this subcommittee.
- **Review and identify topics for the July 14, 2011 workshop** – Update on the transportation issues related to the current partnerships with the cities of Petersburg & Oldsmar; Communications Audit Report – Update; Board Self Evaluation Instrument & Process; Processes for making changes to agenda items on policies; Organization of the Office of the General Counsel; and, Timeline for Student Assignment
- **Additional items** –
 - Redistricting –The message to be given to the Supervisor of Elections, Deborah Clark, is that the School Board has reached consensus that their district lines should mirror those of the County Commissioners.
 - Thurgood Marshall transportation – this discussion will be scheduled at a workshop prior to December 2011.
 - Reporting line for the Board’s Administrative Assistant – this discussion will be scheduled.
 - Direct Instruction – Mrs. Lerner questioned whether members of the Board and the Superintendent’s staff were interested in attending a presentation on Direct Instruction by FAST. Discussion followed and Mrs. Lerner will respond to FAST to ask that they send alternative dates and more details as to what their presentation will include.
 - 3% FRS Contribution by Employees – Dr. Janssen explained that if the district begins this deduction from employees paychecks beginning with July 1, 2011, it will actually impact the employees’ earnings from the 2010/11 fiscal year. Dr. Janssen stated that the plan is to have the district cover the 3% payment for employees, as well as the district’s portion, for

all employees for their first paycheck in the 2011/12 fiscal year. Dr. Janssen requested and received the Board’s “blessing” on this action.

- Furlough Days – Dr. Ciranna stated that this has not been finalized; that it is a bargaining issue; and, that no decision will be made until the books close.
- First- and Second-Year Teachers – Dr. Janssen stated that Board Members receiving concerns should these individuals should provide the names and contact information to either Dr. Ciranna or her; and, contact will be made with them.

No official actions were taken by the Board at this workshop. An audio recording of this workshop is filed in the Board Office archives. This workshop adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

Chairperson

Secretary

/db

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