

SCHOOL BOARD OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA WORKSHOP – November 15, 2011

The School Board of Pinellas County, Florida, conducted a workshop on Tuesday, November 15, 2011, at 9:00 a.m., in the Cabinet Conference Room, 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. John A. Stewart, Interim Superintendent, Mr. James F. Madden, Deputy Superintendent; and, Mr. James A. Robinson, General Counsel.

The following topics were discussed:

- **General Counsel’s Evaluation & Improvement Plan** – The importance was stressed of Board Members meeting the timeframe outlined for the evaluation and the portion of the process that allows for a one-on-one meeting with the General Counsel.
- **Student Assignment** – An update was provided by Mr. James Madden, Ms. Dee Burns and Mr. Marshall Touchton. Board Members requested further information regarding the “promise” that is referred to by parents of students who were placed in a school through the open-enrollment process and the impact the proposed policy amendment will have on siblings.
- **Progressive Discipline** – Mr. Robinson, Ms. Valerie Walker, OPS, and Ms. Laurie Dart, Associate Counsel, presented an update on the practices and procedures related to progressive discipline for employees.
- **Subcommittee Update – Legislative** – The subcommittee of the Board comprised of Mrs. Cook, Mrs. O’Shea and Mrs. Wikle presented an update regarding the planning for the upcoming breakfast with the Pinellas Legislative Delegation and other business and community partners.
- **Public Participation Policy – Determine Criteria for Review Process** – Board Members discussed possible criteria to be considered in performing a six-month review of this new policy. The following criteria were suggested: 1) Has the change resulted in our meetings running more efficiently and effectively, a more focused way of work; 2) Does the Board feel their meetings are more transparent with the new policy; 3) Are the opportunities for individuals to present their comments being limited; 4) Has the change affected the number of speakers coming before the Board; 5) How often does the Board find that the half-hour prior to the meeting does not accommodate the number of individuals wishing to speak to the Board; and, 6) How often did our partners such as PTA, PCTA, etc., not have sufficient time to present their comments. Board Members agreed that speakers will be offered a very brief survey to complete before they leave the meeting to express their agreement or disagreement with the new process.
- **Master Board Training** – The topics selected have been scheduled as follows: Essentials of Leadership, January 17, 2012, 8:30 a.m.; The A+ Plan for School Boards/Part I, March 13, 2012, 8:30 a.m.; and, Fight the Good Fight, May 15, 2012, 8:30 a.m. Board workshops will be scheduled for the afternoon of each training date. The dates and times will be placed on the Board Members’ calendars by Mrs. Beaty.

- **Subcommittee Report - Performance Auditor** – All Board Members will review the proposals received. Further discussion will be scheduled for the December 13, 2011 workshop.
- **Certified Board Member Training Information** – Mrs. Wikle shared information she received during her attendance at the recent FSBA Certified Board Member training sessions in Gainesville.
- **Climate Survey** – Dr. Stewart stated that he had been asked to look at the climate surveys of two schools and was surprised to find out that nothing had been done to correct those two situations as a result of the data received through the climate survey. Dr. Behrokh Ahmadi stated that the plan is now to administer the climate survey in January of each year; that effort will be made to ensure participants that their input is truly anonymous; that the comment area will be made “topic specific”; that discussion will take place with principals to remind them that the results will be reflected in their evaluations; and, that a policy will be written to be brought to the Board for approval that will reflect this direction. The Board requested that they see the survey before it is administered.
- **Differentiated Accountability** – Mr. Bill Lawrence, Mr. Fred Heid, State Bureau Chief, School Improvement, and Dr. Pamela Craig, State Regional Executive Director for the Office of Differentiated Accountability, presented an update on the current regulations and options available for schools identified as Intervene Status.
- **Leadership Discussion:**
 - Superintendent’s Update
 - Reading – Dr. Stewart stressed the importance for each child to master the ability of reading; and, shared that his direction will be to have children reading at grade level by second grade.
 - Middle School Reform – Dr. Stewart stated that his intent is to keep this initiative as cost-neutral as possible.
 - Title I Funds – Dr. Stewart shared that he is asking for an accounting as to how the Title I dollars are presently being spent; and, shared that his direction will be to use these dollars more at the elementary and middle school levels, while still keeping high school needs in his focus.
 - FADSS Study of Pinellas Administration – Dr. Stewart shared that a positional survey will be administered; that the Board will continue to be updated on this effort; and, that Ms. Winchester and Dr. Ciranna will be the leads in this review.
 - Communications – Dr. Stewart stated that he shares the Board’s concerns regarding our district’s communication organization. At Dr. Stewart’s request, a presentation and discussion regarding a proposed reorganization of the Communications Department will be scheduled for the November 28, 2011 workshop.
 - Little Elf Project/Blanton Elementary – Dr. Stewart shared that he will be encouraging employees to consider replacing their gift exchanges with a donation to this project. An account will be set up in our Finance Department by Mr. Kevin Smith.
 - Chronically Disruptive Students – Dr. Stewart shared an update on the district’s effort with this group of students; and, stated that Donna Winchester will be the contact person regarding the efforts of the district as it goes forward.

- **Strategic Plan** - Mrs. Lerner shared that she would like the Board to review and approve the plan each year. Discussion followed. Dr. Stewart stated that he is willing to incorporate that review and approval into a way-of-work for the district; and, will share that intention with the district's new CEO, once that individual has been appointed. Contact will be made with other districts to see how this issue is handled within those districts. Both Dr. Stewart and Mr. Robinson agreed that this process could become a part of policy. Dr. Mary Beth Corace will be asked for assistance in determining the process, etc.
- **SRO – Scope of Discussion** – Board Members discussed possible points to be covered through this scheduled topic. Dr. Stewart and Mr. Robinson will meet with Chief Gavin to fine tune the presentation.
- **Electronic Agenda** – Mrs. Cook stated that the review of the present program and others is taking place and requested that the Board Members forward to the office capabilities they desire the selected program to have.
- **December Workshop** – Dr. Stewart stated that he will schedule a discussion for the Board and the City of St. Petersburg regarding the Rio Vista property.

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 3:44 p.m.

Chairperson

Secretary

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