

SCHOOL BOARD OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA
WORKSHOP – April 21, 2015

The School Board of Pinellas County, Florida, conducted a workshop on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, at 9:00 a.m., in the Cabinet Conference Room, Administration Building, 301 4th Street SW, Largo, Florida.

Present: Mrs. Linda S. Lerner, Chairperson; Mrs. Peggy L. O'Shea, Vice-Chairperson; Ms. Janet R. Clark, Mrs. Carol J. Cook; Ms. Rene Flowers, Mrs. Terry Krassner, Dr. Ken Peluso, Members; Dr. William Corbett, Deputy Superintendent; and Mr. David Koperski, School Board Attorney.

Absent: Dr. Michael Grego, Superintendent

The following topics were discussed:

- **Legislative Update:** Mr. Steve Swartzel updated the Board on the current legislative session in Tallahassee. He reviewed the "School Board Workshop Legislative Materials" document which provides detailed information on the current status of legislation that impacts education and its funding. The Governor signed HB 7069 into law last Tuesday, April 14, 2015. The bill addressed some of the education concerns related to assessments and the school start date. However, it did not create a multiyear phase in of the testing of the new Florida Standards Assessment (FSA). Budget negotiations have not begun publicly, which is an area of concern. Additionally, how the budget monies may be shared with charter schools could potentially impact our budget in a negative way. State funding is based on projected student enrollment and currently there is concern that these projections may fall short of the actual number of new students entering the district. There are also many changes being discussed in regard to the Florida High School Athletics Association (FHSAA) which currently governs school athletics. Mr. Swartzel shared that additions or changes to legislation remains a possibility and the legislature may opt for a special session. All this impacts school operations and the timeframe to complete the district's budget. Mrs. Lerner stated that our district website legislative summary is a very good resource for better understanding of the issues. Mr. Swartzel said that our delegation is working for us in Tallahassee.
- **Budget Update:** Mr. Kevin Smith, Associate Superintendent, Finance and Business Services shared two documents with the Board. Public School Funding, The Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) Fiscal Year 2015-16 and Statewide Funding Unweighted FTE Comparison. He explained that there are several challenges ahead. First, the budget has not been set; second, the state estimation of the increase in the numbers of students; and, third, if the state is not predicting the numbers of students correctly that will equate to less funding per student. Another issue is the 13% inflation rate. At this point, neither the House nor Senate has reached the Governor's recommended level of funding.
- **Health Care Update:** Mr. Ted Pafundi, Director, Risk Management and Insurance, and Ann Gebhard, AON representative, shared an overview of the 2016 medical fully-insured renewal information and the self-insured medical projection information along with other items to be considered in the interest of controlling district costs and still provide good medical insurance for employees. AON met with Humana and has negotiated down the renewal increase; the preliminary increase was 15.4% which has been revised to 9.3% through their efforts. There was much discussion regarding a number of options that could be initiated and new tools available to the consumer that would assist in better awareness of health care expenditures. It was reiterated that the self-funding option is a financial decision and from an employee

perspective there would be no change. The savings from self-funding is a long term benefit; initially cash reserves have to be held. In May, a decision will need to be made on funding the health care plan. In August, the plan will be proposed. Ms. Flowers shared concern with the State's potentially late budget and our timeline for a decision. Mrs. Lerner stated that she always wants the district to offer a lower cost HMO option for our staff.

- **Summer Bridge Outline:** Ms. Pam Moore, Associate Superintendent, Teaching and Learning Services, presented a summary of the Summer Bridge sites, dates, times and services offered for the 2015 Summer Bridge programs. She stated that the Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program is scheduled for five days a week from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm due to state guidelines. The elementary, middle and high programs are four days a week for four or five hours a day. Currently there are 5,470 students enrolled to participate with the expectation of continued enrollment; last year there were days that exceeded 12,000 students. Students may attend a program at the school closest to their home. The Strategic Communications department has done an excellent job of getting the word out into the community. Paper registration forms are available at schools for families that don't have access to technology. Ms. Moore and Mr. Cerreta informed the Board that they have aggressively sought out interns and instructional staff to fill a variety of positions with terrific success. Mrs. Lerner asked if we track the number of students unable to utilize the program due to lack of transportation. It was shared that in some cases, if enough students need bus service from a centralized area, the area superintendent may be able to make that arrangement through existing summer bus schedules. Ms. Flowers shared that our website has very good information. She also said that need to inform parents of extended day care availability. Mr. Bill Lawrence, Director, Student Demographic Assignment and Student Capacity, has worked with local day care providers to contact parents directly and advise them of services available.
- **Summer Training:** Ms. Pam Moore, Associate Superintendent, Teaching and Learning Services, and Mr. Lou Cerreta, Director, Professional Development, reviewed the list of extensive professional development offerings for summer 2015. They provided the Board a schedule of training opportunities for elementary, middle and high school staff. Mr. Cerreta highlighted Leadership Week June 8-11, which brings principals and their assistant principals together to continue training on the Marzano framework strategies. He also shared that the launch of the True North Logic professional development software will occur on September 1, 2015. Mrs. Krassner complimented Mr. Cerreta on the positive changes and increased training opportunities. He shared that much of the groundwork had been done by his predecessors.
- **Educational Alternatives Update:** Dr. Barbara Hires, Area 4 Superintendent, and Ms. Michelle Topping, Director, Educational Alternative Services, updated the Board on the varied programs offered to meet the needs of students. They shared the guidelines used for student placement to specific programs and enrollment data from 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Our Strategic Communications department is developing brochures for these varied programs to place at schools to increase awareness of the opportunities available. Dr. Hires is recommending these students be able to participate in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Committee (SR&R). She also informed the Board that students may graduate from these programs with 18 credits (specific State required courses) instead of 24 (including electives); this makes the goal of a high school diploma more attainable. Ms. Busara Pitts, principal of Lealman Innovation Academy, and Dr. Bonnie Solinsky, principal of Pinellas Gulf Coast Academy, shared a video which highlighted their schools.
- **Code of Student Conduct:** Mr. Ward Kennedy, Area 3 Superintendent, presented the draft of The Code of Student Conduct 2015-16. He stated that there is a new design and format for next year's handbook. The new cover is aligned to our website homepage. Topics have been consolidated for ease of use. He advised the Board that this is a draft and he welcomes their input regarding any improvements or changes they would like to see in the final document. Mr. Kennedy thanked the committee for their hard work.

➤ **Leadership Discussion:**

- Mrs. Lerner opened the discussion with her viewpoint on the suggestions made by the FAST Education Committee. She is not in favor of definitive actions for specific behaviors as each situation is different. She disagrees with the format and feels that she needs to take a stand on it. Mrs. Krassner shared that she wants the organization to receive answers to their questions, but also does not care for their program format. Ms. Flowers added that we are making progress on issues such as closing the achievement gap but feels that FAST members suggest that nothing good is being done in our school district. Mrs. Lerner clarified that when board members attend public meetings they are speaking for themselves. When district administrators attend they are speaking for the district. Board members agreed that one letter from the district would be written in response to the FAST organization.
- Mrs. Lerner then continued with some suggestions for the leadership discussion at future workshops. She wants to schedule 45 minutes for this topic. It will be a time that board members may share information that they receive through their involvement on community boards, district committees, and conferences, etc. Mrs. Cook and Mrs. O'Shea concurred that this sharing of information is crucial it is a good idea to resume this practice. Conversation continued on the importance of the district reporting to the community on an annual basis with relevant data on our progress; they should create a document that board members could take to meetings and share with the public. Mrs. O'Shea said that sometimes it is a challenge to find specific data on our website. She would like to be able to access graduation data, a data dashboard, etc.
- Mrs. Lerner asked some questions about The New Teacher Project (TNTP) that is being used at five elementary schools. She knows they have many resources available to assist students and would like to see some of these same services offered at other schools.
- Dr. Peluso asked if "old business" might be added to the agenda so we are able to revisit topics.
- Mrs. Krassner asked about the process for involuntary transfers of instructional staff. Mrs. Cook asked how a principal handles that situation. Dr. Corbett's response was that if no one volunteers to transfer then it goes by seniority according to the bargaining agreement.
- Mrs. Lerner brought up the topic of students who are issued computers through Title I dollars. She asked if teacher's lessons are based on utilizing that technology. Her concern is that some students don't have internet access. Dr. Corbett shared that the district worked with Bright House to provide a less expensive option of internet service and Mrs. O'Shea shared that there are many places with free Wi-Fi.
- Dr. Corbett spoke about HB0769 which was recently signed into law by the Governor. District administration is carefully reviewing the impact on a variety of issues it presents regarding teacher evaluations, student assessments, etc. They will continue to work toward understanding the ramifications of this new legislation. He also stated that they will bring before the board a job posting for a principal at the new East Lake Middle school. Currently, it is served by an assistant principal and shares the principal of East Lake High; but, they want to change that to one principal for the middle school without an assistant principal. This follows their staffing practice. Also, student assignment has changed the Special Attendance Request (SAR). Now if a family is granted an SAR, the student will be permitted to remain at the school through the highest grade offered. Mrs. Lerner asked if this impacts class size limitations. Dr. Corbett said that we enroll to 95% of capacity and if the district opts to meet class size based on school averages there may be a penalty. He said the Board and the District may choose that option.

- Mrs. Krassner asked about our dual enrollment program with St. Petersburg College. She has discovered that some classes may not be eligible for that program. She asked for additional information on this topic.

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 2:40 p.m.

Chairperson

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Secretary