

**SCHOOL BOARD OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA  
WORKSHOP – July 21, 2015**

The School Board of Pinellas County, Florida, conducted a workshop on Tuesday, July 21, 2015, at 9:00 a.m., in the Cabinet Conference Room, Administration Building, 301 4<sup>th</sup> 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, Dr. Ken Peluso, Members; Dr. Michael Grego, Superintendent, Dr. William Corbett, Deputy Superintendent, and Mr. David Koperski, School Board Attorney.

Absent: Mrs. Terry Krassner, school board member

The following topics were discussed:

- **Technology Refresh Plan-** Mr. Tom Lechner, Associate Superintendent, Technology and Information Systems reviewed the district's technology refresh plan and the process used to devise the plan. A copy of the power point presentation TIS Computer Refresh 2014-15 was shared. The TIS department sought input from several departments and a principal focus group. He stated that his approach was to insure the equitable distribution of technology to all schools and to be certain that each school has adequate technology to accommodate the move toward more online assessments. His team also reviewed the need for essential technology, which supports or enhances learning, and schools that had more aged inventory are being replaced at a faster rate. Dr. William Corbett stated that every school will have a 3:1 ratio for computers (3 students/1 computer) when school starts this year. Another area of concern that is being addressed is bandwidth availability and cost. Staff and student personal devices will no longer have access. This change is to address network security, the cost of providing the bandwidth and bandwidth availability. Dr. Ken Peluso asked if this will resolve the audit findings regarding our network security; the answer is yes.
- **Contingency Fund Balance Policy-** Mr. Kevin Smith, Associate Superintendent, Finance and Business Services and Mr. David Koperski, School Board Attorney, discussed the development of a board policy to address our contingency fund balance. Mr. Smith stated that our current Policy 6210-Fiscal Planning is outdated and the recommendation is to have a 5% contingency as a minimum not the goal. Dr. Grego shared that the optimum target is 10-12% as we are a coastal community. Mrs. O'Shea asked if they had an estimate of how long it would take to reach the optimum target; Mr. Smith said about three-five years. Dr. Grego stated that we are moving in a positive direction financially and that this is a good starting point, but we should keep the optimum target in mind. Policy 6210-Fiscal Planning with its proposed changes was shared with the Board along with Hillsborough County Public Schools Policy 6210 for comparison. An agenda item with these changes will be brought before the board next month.
- **Funding Alternatives for Capital Improvements-** Mr. Kevin Smith, Associate Superintendent, Finance and Business Services, Mr. Clint Herbic, Associate Superintendent, Operational Services and Mr. Will Reed, a representative from Ford and Associates, Inc., presented options for funding capital improvement projects. The document shared was Financing Options for Upcoming Capital Needs by Ford and Associates, Inc. The options discussed were short term financing, certificates of participation, and qualified zone academy bonds (QZAB). The short term financing, Tax Anticipation Notes (TAN), are used to manage general funds, not capital needs. The

certificates of participation (COP) are tax-exempt bonds that are secured with a facility lease. It enables a governmental entity to finance capital projects without long-term debt. Fixed rates are available and recommended. QZAB's may only be used for renovation projects at schools with a 35% or greater free/reduced lunch student population. This type of funding may be a good option for some of the planned projects. Dr. Grego shared that we need to look at the extent of borrowing we want to consider and how we want to manage the projects. Following some discussion it was determined that the board is interested in learning more about the COP funding. They are a common vehicle for school finance in our state. Although traditionally COP's have a higher interest rate than bonds, the increase is negligible due to current low interest rates. Mrs. Lerner asked how this impacts the district's budget as a whole. Mr. Smith shared that capital outlay funding is separate from our general operating funds.

- **Adult Workforce Development Partnership-** Ms. Lori Matway, Associate Superintendent, Student Services and Mr. Mark Hunt, Executive Director, Career, Technical and Adult Education, presented a plan for an outreach program targeting individuals 17 years of age and above who are either unemployed or under employed. The document they shared was Pinellas County Schools and the City of St. Petersburg Partnership School (Operation Career Start). The proposal is for an immediate rollout to fill current openings at Pinellas Technical College. For students without a high school diploma, GED preparation will be provided. Many of the programs offered can be completed in one year. Assistance with job placement will be available. There is no need for staff as they are currently in place and as the courses fill up there is the opportunity to create some late afternoon or evening class times.
- **Supplemental Funding-** Dr. William Corbett reviewed two documents Supplemental Academic Instruction 2015/16 and Title I Budget Summary 2015-2016. Title I funds from the federal government are earmarked for high poverty schools. Dr. Corbett shared that over the last three years, a larger amount of the total funds have gone directly to schools. Dr. Grego stated that an increase has been given to schools for the Extended Learning and Summer Bridge programs. Ms. Flowers asked about the Area Superintendent Allocation noted in the SAI funds. Dr. Corbett said an example of how an area superintendent used the funds is the placement of an extra assistant principal at a school that requested one. Title I funds are allocated annually and based on the number of free/reduced lunch students enrolled at each site.
- **Summary of Audit Findings-** Mr. Kevin Smith, Associate Superintendent, Finance and Business Services reviewed the State of Florida Auditor General, Financial, Operational and Federal Single Audit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2015. The result of the audit is that there were no material, no significant, no non-compliant and no financial findings as a result of this audit. There were 19 operational findings. Responses to the findings are at the back of the document. Mrs. Lerner asked which of those are the most significant. Mr. Smith said it was the food service fund balance and the virtual instruction. Food service had an excess of funds and they intentionally spent some of those funds; and this is the first time that virtual instruction was audited. Dr. Grego continued by saying that there was a lot of large equipment that was purchased by food service due to need, but they should not have done it all at once. He also said that we should be proud of the audit findings based on the depth of the audit.
- **Student Progression Plan (2015-2016) -** Ms. Pam Moore, Associate Superintendent, Teaching and Learning, along with Ms. Rita Vasquez, Executive Director, High School Education, Mr. Dywayne Hinds, Executive Director, Middle School Education, Dr. Lisa Grant, Executive Director, Exceptional Student Education and Mr. Mark Hunt, Executive Director, Career, Technical and Adult Education, reviewed the changes to the Student Progression Plan for 2015-16. Ms. Moore shared a power point on the topic along with

Policy 5210-Late Entries and the complete Student Progression Plan. Ms. Moore stated that many of the changes are state mandated. The first reading of the policy changes will come before the Board at the July 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Of the 16 policies in the plan, 11 have edits. Mr. Hinds spoke about the length of time allotted for an assessment in middle school, listed at ninety minutes. Mrs. Lerner voiced her concern that it may be difficult for sixth graders to sit for a test for that amount of time. Mr. Hinds shared that in part it reflects school scheduling issues. Dr. Grego said he supports the structure of the schedule but many assessments do not run that length of time. Dr. Grego suggested a wording change would be appropriate to state an average time.

- **Achievement Gap Strategic Plan (2015-2016)** - Dr. Grego opened the discussion stating that the Crowley case set data requirements for the district regarding black and non-black achievement. He said that the district decided to take a more aggressive approach with an action plan as outlined in the Bridging the Achievement Gap Strategic Plan document shared today. This plan addresses five goals: graduation rates, grade level proficiency, participation and performance in accelerated courses/programs, disciplinary infractions, and eligibility for emotional/behavioral disabilities. Mr. Koperski, School Board Attorney, added that these five goals reflect issues that are a priority as stated by the plaintiffs and that this plan has been well received by them. Ms. Lori Matway, Associate Superintendent, Student Services, stated that our black male graduation rate increased by 6.41% versus 5.2% for white males (goal 1) last year. All the plan initiatives are monitored regularly.
- **District/State Testing Calendar-** Dr. Dan Evans, Executive Director, Assessment, Accountability and Research, reviewed the following documents; Pinellas County School District Assessment Cycle and Calendar 2015-2016 Process Finalization, PCS Assessment Calendar for Elementary 2015-2016, PCS Middle School Assessment Calendar 2015-2016 and PCS High School Assessment Calendar 2015-2016. He stated that HB 7069, signed into law earlier this year, mandates that the total amount of classroom time spent on assessments must be less than 5 percent. Our district is between 2%-4% of total instructional time. Mrs. Lerner complimented Dr. Evans on the ease of reading the materials he presented.
- **Property Issues-** Mr. Clint Herbic, Associate Superintendent, Operational Services, shared updated information about currently unused district properties. He advised the Board that the project at Clearview Elementary housing the Dream Center is moving forward with the lease agreement. Madeira Beach Fundamental is beside property owned by St. Petersburg College. SPC plans to build a marine science center on the land and they are asking for a small pie area of land, about one or two acres, adjacent to the school. The plan is for a driveway and parking lot which will be accessible for both properties. Mr. Herbic will bring an agenda item before the Board in August 2015 for this proposal. He stated that the district owns another piece of land off Klosterman road; it is about 14 acres in a flood zone approximately .2 miles from the Gulf. It has been appraised at \$2.25 million. The north end is adjacent to Pinellas County owned land. He went on to say that Pinellas County owns a maintenance yard nearby that is not used and the district needs a maintenance facility in that area. He will speak with Pinellas County personnel regarding a potential trade plus cash deal. Mr. Herbic continued with another vacant property; the site of the old Palm Harbor Elementary. It is about 7.5 acres. They are currently waiting on an appraisal. Mr. Koperski advised the Board that a portion of this property was given to the district in 1926 with some stipulations. His office is currently working on a quiet title to allow for clear title of the property. This process will be handled through the Office of the School Board Attorney. Mr. Herbic also presented a job description change to the Board; Coordinator, Facilities Planning to replace Specialist, Education Specification. This new position will report to the student assignment office instead of operational services. The

previous position involved design and construction. The new position will have a pay reduction since the duties have been reduced.

- **Kids Tag Art-** Ms. Sue Castleman shared a proposal with the Board to work in collaboration with Pinellas County to allow students the opportunity to design license plates as part of their art curriculum with the potential of being selected for sale. It is a community partnership that will increase arts awareness and raise funds. The license plates will be unique vanity plates. Polk County has it in place with Orange, Lee and Pinellas adding it this year. She shared that a \$10,000.00 sponsorship has been offered and a website host. Purchases will be handled online. The sponsor will be acknowledged in the renewal notices sent out from the tax collector's office. Mrs. O'Shea shared that Diane Nelson had spoken with her about this program. Ms. Castleman said this would be our pilot year with about twenty schools participating. The monies raised would be affixed to a specific object code so the funds would go directly back into the arts program.
- **Leadership Discussion-**
  - Dr. Grego said that F graded charter schools will be coming to a workshop; they are Windsor, University Prep and Newpoint. He stated that the AdvancED district accreditation is now official. He advised the Board that the Back to School program for administrators is scheduled for August 10 at Palm Harbor University HS. The August 24, first day of school visitation schedule, will be shared with the Board. Recently the White House held a convening of school district administration to work on the reduction of school disciplinary incidents and foster safe and supportive school climates. Ms. Pat Wright and Mr. Both Poth, area superintendents, represented Pinellas County Schools. He also thanked the Board for a productive workshop.
  - Mrs. Lerner stated that FSBA has had a change in the term for their Legislative Committee Representatives. Currently the position is held from November-November, but it is changed to June-June. We have the option of maintaining our current representation and extending their time to June. Ms. Rene Flowers is our representative and Ms. Janet Clark is the alternate. It was agreed to extend their service to June 2016. Mrs. Lerner also brought forward the issue of substitute pay. She stated that their pay has not increased since 2005 and she supports an increase because they provide an invaluable service. She also discussed the Collaborative Implementation Team meetings that are being held at the elementary, middle and high school levels. She asked for a summary from elementary and middle school leadership.

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 3:25 p.m.

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Chairperson  
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Secretary