

SCHOOL BOARD OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA
WORKSHOP – April 12, 2016

The School Board of Pinellas County, Florida, conducted a workshop on Tuesday, April 12, 2016, at 1:03 p.m. in the Cabinet Conference Room, Administration Building, 301 4th Street SW, Largo, Florida.

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

Review of agenda: no changes

The following topics were discussed:

- **Support for Schools:** Dr. William Corbett, Dr. Dan Evans, executive director, assessment, accountability and research, and Dr. Antonio Burt, director, school transformation, reviewed the following documents: *PCS Turnaround proposed 2016*; *Turnaround Best Practices Final 04052016*; *PCS Turnaround Recommendations 2016*; *PCS Tiered Supports Summary*, and *Scale Up Year 2 Formative Evaluation Final 040116*. Dr. Grego stated that we need to demonstrate a sense of urgency for this topic. The district is working to close the achievement gap and has made changes to support this goal. Our human resources and assessment, accountability and research departments are different today and working to support this initiative. Our financial picture has improved dramatically since 2012; we currently have 5% contingency and health insurance is self-insured. The district no longer places a teacher in a Turnaround School, the principal does the hiring. This has resulted in a lower turnover rate. We have distributed 6,000 laptops for student use and partnered with Bright House Networks to lower the cost to economically disadvantaged families. During the school board meeting today, Mrs. Lerner suggested additional WIFI hot spots to make internet access more available. The Summer Reading Initiative does not require internet access once the books are loaded onto the device. These are all positive steps to support student achievement. In 2014-15 school year the work began at the five elementary schools (Campbell Park, Fairmount Park, Lakewood, Maximo, and Melrose); this is not a knee jerk reaction. We have added social services, the Executive PASS program, and Promise Time. Dr. James Browder, executive director, Bureau of School Improvement and former superintendent of Lee County, was invited to attend the workshop. Dr. Browder stated that he is speaking as an individual. He understands that Pinellas County is using a systemic approach and making a long term commitment to make improvements for all students. He commended Dr. Grego for initiating Summer Bridge his first year in Pinellas County. He thanked the superintendent for including him in the conversation today. Dr. Grego referenced the slide Progress to Date/Turnaround Schools in the *Turnaround Recommendations 2016-17* document. Data supports that we are moving in the right direction. Dr. Corbett addressed the State Turnaround Options. The district selected option1; district-managed turnaround. This plan has six assurances and five areas of focus. There are twelve identified Turnaround Schools (Azalea Middle School, Bear Creek Elementary, Gulfport Elementary, Lealman Ave. Elementary, Ponce De Leon Elementary, High Point Elementary, Sandy Lane Elementary, Campbell Park Elementary, Fairmount Park Elementary, Lakewood Elementary, Maximo Elementary, and Melrose Elementary). Four of the schools will be in the fourth year of turnaround status and the district will have to present to the Florida Department of Education their improvement plan;

they are Azalea MS, Fairmount Park, Maximo and Melrose. Mrs. Lerner brought forward the concern that teacher evaluations are based in part on student achievement data, but often there is high student turnover. Some teachers have reported that at the end of the school year there are as few as seven students who started in their classroom; this is a concern. Ms. Flowers referenced assurance five regarding replacing instructional staff. She shared the importance of college curriculum addressing specific urban education issues. Dr. Burt said he met with Dr. Heller of USFSP and they spoke about the importance of real-time experience in urban education. Dr. Grego said they are working collaboratively with the university to build this into their education model. Dr. Evans spoke of the research at the University of Chicago and University of Virginia; and, their national partner, Hanover Research. They district will use these best practices. Dr. Evans has conducted approximately twenty focus groups to gather data. Dr. Merlande Petit-Bois, executive manager, AAR dept., attended the Turnaround Conference in Washington D.C. Based on what she learned there she believes the district is taking positive steps to make these improvements and shared that it is not easy work. It is important to include these goals in our strategic action plans. Dr. Burt reviewed the proposed Turnaround Recommendations. Mrs. Krassner asked how we can build trust with our educators, communicate the plan and create the culture. Dr. Burt said the Transformation Team will provide support for the teachers as shared in the recommendations and instructors will get additional professional development. Morning meetings will be implemented at schools for students to share concerns that may negatively impact their ability to focus on learning. Social workers, guidance counselors and school psychologists will be available to assist students. Dr. Burt stated the importance of teachers receiving student learning data quickly which will allow for differentiated instruction; the instructional model has remediation time built into it also. Ms. Flowers shared that it is important to build strong relationships in the community with all stakeholders; to share information on what students need to know at each grade level and how families can assist pre-k children with vocabulary and kindergarten readiness. Mrs. O'Shea mentioned that the state has not provided kindergarten readiness scores for the second year in a row; this presents a challenge for districts.

- **Update to District Strategic Plan:** Dr. Grego, Dr. William Corbett and Dr. Mary Beth Corace, director, strategic planning and policy reviewed the following documents: *District Strategic Directions and Strategic Goals 2016-17*; *Job Descriptions (deputy superintendent, minority achievement officer, and director, school transformation)*; *School Board of Pinellas County 2015/16 Org Chart* and *Proposed Reorg 4/12/16*. Dr. Corace shared the proposal to increase the district strategic directions from three to five by adding Equity with Excellence for All and College- and Career- Readiness. They are also proposing adding two goals to the existing five. The two new goals will read as follows:
 - Provide equity and excellence of education by increasing overall performance and eliminating the gaps between minority and non-minority student outcomes by reducing the disparity in graduation rates, proficiency scores on assessments, participation and performance in accelerated courses, disciplinary infractions, and placement in Exceptional Student Education programs.
 - Achieve the District's mission for college- and career-readiness for all students by adopting high quality standards, interdisciplinary curriculum content, aligned instructional practices, appropriate student supports, necessary resource allocations, and parent and community engagement.

The new strategic direction and goal regarding equity is part of the existing Bridging the Achievement Gap plan and Bradley MOU. Mrs. Cook likes that the College- and Career-Readiness goal ties into our state goals. Ms. Flowers appreciates the consistency of communicating the same message throughout our district plans. Dr. Grego spoke about the three job descriptions. He stated that he wants to upgrade the deputy superintendent

position to keep in line with other large urban districts; we are the seventh largest in the state. The minority achievement officer position is important because we have a growing population of minority students and we want to be a leading district in student achievement. The director, school transformation, is a change from the job title, director, school leadership, which has been filled by Dr. Antonio Burt. Dr. Burt will focus on the seven identified elementary schools (Campbell Park, Fairmount Park, Lakewood, Maximo, Melrose, High Point and Sandy Lane.)

- **Discipline Update:** Area Superintendents, Dr. Barbara Hires, Mr. Ward Kennedy, Mr. Bob Poth, and Ms. Pat Wright, reviewed the following document: *Educational Opportunity While on Suspension*. Ms. Pat Wright shared that principals have been asked to look at discipline practices at their schools and address the disparity and the long range ramifications for student outcomes for suspensions. A discipline committee that includes law enforcement, ministers, PCTA and other community members will now meet quarterly. Changes have been made to the Code of Student Conduct as a result of these conversations. Mr. Kennedy said it is important to keep students in school. Suspensions will be limited to three days per incident with no more than ten days cumulative. Second semester of this school year showed a 42% decrease in school suspensions compared to last year and a 34% decrease in arrests. The district continues to look at other avenues to address improving student outcomes. Mr. Poth shared that the goal is to reduce the behaviors and not just the data. Dr. Hires said the plan that is being proposed is to use existing PCS sites for students such as the Title I center, Clearwater Intermediate, Pinellas Secondary, Tomlinson Adult Learning Center and Bayside High. The room would be separate from the regular student population. There will be an instructor, technology and textbooks. The hope is that students will be able to maintain their academics while serving their suspension. This plan is for secondary students only. Parents will need to get the students to the site of their choosing. Mrs. Lerner asked about some of our students that are overage, very disruptive; our very challenging students. Dr. Hires stated that they have asked principals to identify these students and some have been placed at Pinellas Secondary. Mrs. Lerner also asked about in-school suspensions and how they are being handled. Ms. Wright noted that this is being discussed at the discipline committee meetings. Dr. Grego said this educational opportunity will be available for the 2016-17 school year.

➤ **Leadership Discussion:**

- Linda Lerner: 1) She shared that she had concerns about the Nehemiah Action scheduled for Monday, April 18. Her understanding is that they will provide one minute reply time for questions and she feels that may not give her enough time to communicate her response. She plans to contact FAST to clarify. 2) She spent a day at Skycrest Elementary at the request of a classroom teacher.
- Dr. Grego: He shared that he will be meeting with members of the FAST organization regarding their reading initiative. District reading specialists will participate in this conversation.
- Peggy O'Shea: 1) She shared a letter from the Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board requesting a board member serve on their board of directors. Ms. Janet Clark agreed to serve. 2) She advised board members that the Council of Great City Schools will have their annual Fall Conference, October 19-23, 2016, in Miami, Florida and encouraged their attendance.
- David Koperski: He advised the board that he will call an executive session at the April 26, 2016, school board meeting to share information regarding the Crowley class-action case which will be discussed on April 29th at the Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Court.

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 4:30 p.m.

Chairperson
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Secretary