



VISION  
*To be a world-class school system*

## THE SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

### Town Hall Meeting – N O T E S

Thursday – March 15, 2007 / 6:30 p.m. (Rayma C. Page Elementary Auditorium)

**Participants:** Mrs. Jeanne S. Dozier, Board Chairman  
Mr. Robert D. Chilmonik, Board Member  
Dr. James W. Browder, Secretary & District Superintendent  
Mr. Joe Donzelli, Communications Director  
Dr. Jane E. Kuckel, Vice Chair  
Dr. Elinor C. Scricca, Board Member  
Mr. Keith Martin, Board Attorney  
Mrs. Sandi Agle, Media Services Coordinator  
Mrs. Denise Mangus, Recording Secretary

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – The Town Hall Meeting was called to order by Dr. Kuckel at 6:36 p.m. She welcomed all and introduced the Board Members present (Mr. Teuber is out of town) and Superintendent. She noted the questionnaire for the strategic listening (57 keypads distributed to use) on the back of tonight's agenda. There were approximately six parents who stood up in the audience, in response to a request to do so. Dr. Kuckel thanked the school's principal and assistant principal; Principal Caputo will give tours afterwards to those interested (about \$5 million was saved in converting this former super-chain store).
- II. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISTRICT** – The next section was immediately gone to.
- III. COLLECT INPUT/INFORMATION FROM AUDIENCE THROUGH STRATEGIC LISTENING** – The strategic listening exercise was administered (copy of results on file with these notes) with the following correct answers of those in attendance: 64% picked the District budget of \$1.6 billion; 51% had 690 daily school buses; 33% had \$5.5 million yearly diesel; 27% had 11 million yearly lunches served; 46% had 47% minority student population; 33% had 79% of our schools state-rated as A & B; 27% had 11,244 employees; 59% had 4,973 teachers; 39% had 77,001 students; 4% had 7,783 students who speak English as a second language; 61% had three District zones; 43% had 12 District high schools; 21% had 14 District middle schools; 42% had 43 District elementary schools; 27% had 13 charter schools in District; 30% had 165 National Board Certified Teachers; and 38% had \$42.5 million awarded in grants for last fiscal to the District. Dr. Kuckel noted it's a complex/big system, with Board Members setting policy. In Florida, it's more detailed for the Board, as they do many things—e.g., set and approve: start times, bus routes, school improvement plans; there are many Briefing meetings before Action Meetings to discuss pros/cons.
- IV. QUESTIONS FROM AUDIENCE** – A Villas Elementary paraprofessional spoke on behalf of others (some with 20 years) re next year's Title I loss. With No Child Left Behind, there were new high quality standards and each had to pass a rigorous test or have an associate degree with a deadline requirement. Concern was expressed losing the two pay grades (or job) with Title I status gone. Dr. Kuckel noted Title I is a grant from the federal government to assist with students performing below grade level; awards to individual schools involve students on free and reduced lunch (latter not doing as well as high income homes). Dr. Lohmeyer will follow up. Dr. Browder noted that unfortunately as grant dollars come into a District, they're identified for schools qualifying based on certain lunch percentages. Mr. Rushlow and Dr. Adkins have been part of negotiations for several years; all paras were bumped up at least one pay grade. Dr. Jones has noted Safe Schools funding has dramatically been reduced. People can't be kept in grant-funded positions if the grants are lost; one thing trying to be done is requiring sanctions when not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Monies are trying to be focused in schools with free and reduced lunch students. Title I funding is reduced yearly by the federal government. The bottom line is to assure everyone understands and that the money will go to another school. Villas Elementary has known for a year that this was going on; the first year is the grace period, and we're going into the second. The dollars are spread to schools having greater needs for children. Dr. Adkins and Mr. Rushlow will talk (negotiated in the contract and laid out). Dr. Browder feels being highly qualified is good but the next level up is the Title I funding (meaning jobs can be gone). Dr. Jones noted that if AYP not met in first year, you're in a grace but if not in second year—

notification received now. As vacancies are opened in other schools to have Title 1, one can apply so to remain at their pay grade.

A parent of a daughter attending Rayma C. Page noted loving a traditional summer; she inquired if other schools are coming to the South Zone. Dr. Kuckel noted schools are placed where there is growth (there are three sections in Bonita and up; it's undecided for the property at Corkscrew and Three Oaks—a high school had been thought of). A high school in Bonita has been asked of Dr. Kuckel but it's the best use of tax dollars for schools to be where needed. Bonita has about 800 high school students. It's hoped that all will like the District to be efficient. It's not desired to have schools segregated with all a minority. With the prior School Choice, Dr. Browder noted children would have attended four elementary schools (boundaries changed). Dr. Browder noted that over 50% of parents (with choice) choose a school away from them; this is a dramatic change, and parents choose for a variety of reasons (93-94% get their first or second selection).

**V. PUBLIC COMMENTS – none**

**VI. ADJOURNMENT** – Dr. Kuckel thanked all for attending. She noted Board Members have been adamant to be out in the community to listen/hear thinking. Dr. Kuckel gave a welcome for coming to the Board Meetings and ones to be in zones. Board Members can be reached by telephone also; they're concerned about education in the community and want to make sure students are well prepared for what they choose to do. We try to get better at what we do, and input can make a difference. There's pride in the Strategic Plan, and areas are looked at yearly to set what's been done, to measure, and to set strategies. A couple of things to be proud of, re the strategic plan, are grades have gone up and there are comprehensive high schools to address student needs. The ACT/SATs are not where we want them to be but is a strong goal for next year; another strong goal is decreasing the dropout rate further—every student leaving school with a diploma is relegated to a lifestyle possibly without as much comfort if they had the skills from school (criminal justice system and welfare roles are affected). There's a District website with much information but let us know if you want something; feel free to e-mail. Dr. Kuckel noted she's proud to work with the other Board Members, and diversity in the group makes good decision-making (though all may not agree) and we move forward with the decisions the Board makes. She noted hiring Dr. Browder four years ago was a great decision; he's a wonderful leader, and the effort and interest tonight for those here is appreciated. The meeting adjourned at about 7:30 p.m.

/dwm