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**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY**  
**School Board Briefing Meeting – M I N U T E S** (Approval 9/25/07)  
**Tuesday – September 11, 2007 / 2:30 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Mrs. Jeanne S. Dozier, Board Chairman  
Mr. Robert D. Chilmonik, Board Member  
Dr. James W. Browder, Secretary & District Superintendent  
Mrs. Julie Nieminski, Board Auditor  
Dr. Jane E. Kuckel, Board Vice Chair  
Mr. Steven K. Teuber, Board Member  
Dr. Elinor C. Scricca, Board Member  
Mr. Keith Martin, Board Attorney  
Mrs. Denise Mangus, Recording Secretary

*(Dr. Kuckel called the meeting to order at 2:42 p.m.)*

**A. BOARD MEMBERS**

- 1. Special Areas of Board Involvement/Reports** – Mr. Chilmonik noted the Sanibel new bridge span opening, with Sanibel School represented; he attended the SPALC Labor Day picnic. Mr. Chilmonik also went to last week's meeting of the News-Press editorial board where the topic was taxes, and he's concerned about Florida tax reform and impact on schools; there's confusion on the January '08 amendment. Mrs. Dozier noted attending the 8/29 Educational Leaders lunch, and Dr. Browder made an outstanding presentation as a keynote speaker; she also attended the nice SPALC picnic event and congratulated those involved. Mrs. Dozier commended Dr. Browder and staff for their help in the successful FSBA Board of Directors Retreat. She attended the PACE lunch and noted: this is wonderful program for girls; their Chair was a PACE girl many years ago; and Commissioner Hall's good work at the lunch where \$250,000+ raised. Mrs. Dozier stated she'll put information in the office to view from the legislative meeting with the Executive Committee; there are 108 initiatives (all of Lee's will be on the platform). She's working with Mr. Donzelli on the platform card. Mrs. Dozier noted Lt. Gov. Kottkamp graciously attending one of the Retreat functions; two schools were also toured for the Retreat, with an autism class as one and, separately, a program at another. Lt. Gov. Kottkamp talked about Lee County and the positive things going on here. Dr. Scricca attended the SPALC picnic and noted that DAC will convene next week. She also noted continuing work on the 11/7 Pride & Patriotism event. Dr. Scricca attended the Rotary dictionary labeling last Saturday held here; third graders all receive a dictionary 10/5. She has two schools to finish visiting all in her district and then will start with the others; it's rewarding one-on-one with the principal where mutual hopes/aspirations are shared. She congratulated Mrs. Dozier on a stupendous retreat and Principal Bryan on an inspirational presentation there. Dr. Kuckel noted attending most of the Retreat where there was dynamic work; much legislation (passed or not) happens because of FSBA's lobbying effort, and she acknowledged Mrs. Dozier's work with legislators. Dr. Kuckel hasn't seen the kind of leadership in FSBA as there is now since she became a Board Member. Dr. Kuckel attended the SPALC picnic and the Black & White Gala where DOE Commissioner Blomberg was at the latter (she noted Dr. Scricca was at the Gala also). Dr. Kuckel inquired of Mr. Chilmonik as to when she would get a response to her memo to him; he noted being ready; it was deferred to tonight. [Mr. Teuber arrived late, missing this section.]
- 2. Board Advisory Committee Appointments** – Mrs. Dozier noted this looks like a good slate of candidates (page on file), with a sampling of all walks. Dr. Scricca agreed and thanked those who serve. Dr. Kuckel is pleased we have people interested. Dr. Scricca noted DAC's separate 70+ participants (SAC reps) who contribute their time and thanked them. There was consensus to move the proposed list forward for the 9/25 Action agenda.

**B. ITEM(S) WITH GUESTS**

- 1. ESE Update** – It was noted people dedicate their lives to children—teachers, principals, and assistants who are in the audience; the truth is wanted to be shared and not part as has been portrayed. Dr. Brunick noted ESE is very large, with massive laws to carry; he noted not talking the cost/budget/numbers for exceptional children but people invited today who work with children—it's teachers and staff not forms/rules/regulations. These people dedicate their lives for all children and not just ESE. Dr. Brunick noted being an ESE coordinator 15 years ago and principal at three different schools since, one of which was Tanglewood-Riverside (where 35% of students were exceptional). There are over 11,000 in the county with disabilities, ranging from very mild to extremely severe; 200 can't come to school (hospitalized or in-home for emotional, medical reasons, etc. and their school is the hospital or home). The District has some students with one-on-one nurses (extremely difficult medical and educational issues). Most ESE students are in regular classes some or all of their day; the expectation is to progress as much as humanly possible. He can't say everything's perfect; there are some students that are not as successful and some parents not happy. Dr. Brunick noted, in his heart, we serve them extremely well. He noted thank-you e-mails received for being there for their children. He talks with Dr. Browder daily and the majority is pleasant re individual children and how to help parents.

Jackie Turner, ESE Coordinator, noted working mostly with high school and middle school re transition services; she's involved in compliance and operations and has responsibility for transition program, students with severe cognitive disabilities, alternative assessment, FCAT, etc. There are many current accomplishments in ESE and hard work with the Transition Interagency Council; we want to ensure students leave the District with a plan and services lined up and in place. For example, 19 different community agencies may provide services for our students, after graduation and maybe during school. The District is recognized as a model interagency in state. Re the dropout rate, the number for students with disabilities is decreasing (see Fast Facts sheet on file) though enrollment increasing; standard diploma numbers are increasing. For students with significant cognitive abilities, DOE has thrown away exit standards/Sunshine State Standards for special diplomas; these have been replaced with access points, and this is a great opportunity for our students as there are now grade-level standards for students. There's the new Florida Alternative Assessment which is the FCAT for those who don't take FCAT (state field test). Access points' training continues and is new, different and rigorous for teachers. The ultimate goal is for the student to function as independently as possible at graduation; coaches work on job skills and even transportation. One of the District's ESE graduates is featured in the Florida Next Magazine (received by all seniors) for self-determination. Re Mrs. Dozier's question on benchmarks beyond the last two years, Dr. Browder will get for the Board (Ms. Turner has data going back to 1998-99). Ms. Turner responded to Mr. Chilmonik's question, re the number of ESE students hired at the District, only the number's available of those through supportive employment due to confidential/disability acts' disclosure; the state provides data on graduates from two years in public sector, number in continuing education, full- or part-time, earnings, and the breakdown of the kinds of disabilities. We have students employed at schools who were in the Lifeskills program and one in the autism program; Dr. Browder noted we have students hired by us. Per Dr. Scricca's question on the Fast Facts, Ms. Turner believes the trend may be that we didn't have as many ESE seniors the past school year.

Theresa Morosco, a Lifeskills teacher at Ida Baker High, noted her 20 years teaching and the love of it (she showed a PowerPoint). At Baker High (similar to other schools' programs) they target life skills curriculum and strive for independence—latter is different things to different students. Technology is used extensively (some students can't speak). An example of a life skills activity is reading/preparation of Easy Mac (macaroni and cheese). Her students run the Baker High school store; some students can fill out the spreadsheet (math activity). The students work with others. The majority of Ms. Morosco's students are embraced by others (there's much communication and education). Many of her students work in the cafeteria. Some of the non-ESE population is going through sensitivity training. There's a mentor program and high profile students have gone through it. Re technology, there are e-mails, wireless word processors for all students, interactive whiteboard, and interactive text reading program. A huge area is independent living skills—cooking, menu planning, household cleaning, etc.; there are also vocational programs, and some of Ms. Morosco's students are in academies; they're included in all school assemblies.

Robin Frink, Coordinator (autism spectrum disorder and supportive behavior), noted 303 students in autism classes and several exceptionalities; self-contained can have more academic/social community needs but some students may only need consultative services. There are new programs this year. There are partnerships created and in-services to all. Ms. Frink noted Scott Bellini will be coming to South Fort Myers High next month for a program. There are collaborative programs; each site has an ESE behavior specialist who helps in positive behavior support and interventions. In response to Dr. Scricca, Ms. Frink noted parent participation is good re in-service (e.g., CARD). Dr. McGeavey visits yearly and there's a night held for parents; there's no degree of negativity and all are positive and accepting, wanting to work together. In response to Mrs. Dozier's question, a teacher can come to Ms. Frink for assistance if they're having a concern—e.g., new strategies to deal with students; there are four program specialists to work with teachers and do model teaching. It was confirmed to Mrs. Dozier that it could include meeting with the teacher and parents; this is done on a daily basis. Dr. Kuckel noted the importance of such.

Tammy Miller, Behavior Specialist (Pelican Elementary), noted visiting classrooms, bus ramps, doing quiet interventions with students, going into the class and sitting with students to help transitioning. A sensory diet is used with kids—e.g., therapy putty. Social skills are taught (e.g., pleasing behaviors); they are getting students ready for middle school. Ms. Miller always tries to use a caring attitude; she hasn't encountered a teacher unwilling to help a child. This is her 11<sup>th</sup> year here. In response to Dr. Scricca's question, Ms. Miller noted never being denied additional training (go up and beyond); Ms. Miller and her colleagues are always encouraged. Mrs. Dozier noted the passion of all who are speaking today and it makes her feel good that our kids are being cared for by loving individuals; she thanked them personally for their daily service.

Tara Kurkimilis, Diplomat Middle teacher (autism spectrum disorder), noted another elective added this year. There are split classes—some students go to home economics and art; different centers are rotated throughout. There is IEP

work. General education students can apply to be a PE buddy. Ms. Kurkimilis has two paraprofessionals to assist; there are some student aides to work on social skills. Her students this year are all verbal. In response to Dr. Scricca's question on regular or intermittent conferences, Ms. Kurkimilis noted there's a daily communication notebook which goes home with students (with writing back and forth); questions are received not criticism. There's access/branching out on curriculum and a new schedule. There are opportunities to speak with the teacher should there be questions or communications; Ms. Kurkimilis talks with parents during her planning period and they can come by school. In response to Mr. Chilmonik's question, she noted 9 students this year.

Becky Cipriani and Ginger Campbell (Diplomat Elementary teachers/supportive behavior) spoke and gave a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file). In response to Dr. Kuckel's question re strategies used when a student is highly disruptive/unruly in the classroom, if it can't be de-escalated, the behavior specialist will help; they don't use timeout in their school. Most of the time it's able to be de-escalated but there have been times and trained staff members help with crisis intervention. Per Mr. Chilmonik's question, training is received for de-escalating (e.g., CPI, team training, etc.); most can be de-escalated verbally. Ms. Cipriani noted there's the basket hold and children must be kept safe as well as staff. CPI only works with verbal; this is what works in supportive behavior classrooms. Others can be called into a room—at least two or more; Ms. Cipriani noted only being able to speak on supportive behavior. Dr. Browder noted the behavior specialist has the ability to assist, de-escalate, and take a student out of the classroom.

Donna Djerf (parent liaison, Parent Services) noted, as a family liaison, it's a lifestyle. She peer mentored since eight, was a peer buddy to a variety (worked summers with them), and an educator 20+ years and one (of three) of her children is ESE. She shared her perspective as a parent of a child with a disability—e.g., her son going to middle school and her having to trust six other professionals. There's collaboration to earn trust. She commends current teachers and their open houses—their technology and being on the cutting edge. Ms. Djerf noted feeling that if something doesn't make a positive impact, don't do or say it; she tries to treat others as she would like and loves what she does. She has three primary responsibilities; first, she takes phone calls and all are different. She even is involved in housing for children with learning disabilities. Ms. Djerf mentioned "erasing lines in the sand." A second area of hers is informal meetings with parents; she meets them wherever, and her job is about the consumers she serves. A third responsibility is attending IEP meetings; it has to be driven from the family for her to be there (she's not mandated yet). Ms. Djerf noted her name given from family to family; some parents didn't want to use her (District paid) but all should be advocates for kids and she respects those who feel that way (will give a list to call). Children are her first priority, and Ms. Djerf still tries to find someone to help. Last year, she talked with approximately 600 parents, had 130 meetings, attended IEPs (lengthy—part 1 and 2); Ms. Djerf noted living life proactive vs. reactive to things. She likes those excellent in education and feels there are solutions to all problems. Ms. Djerf great colleagues and long-term interactions continue with students. She works with many agencies—e.g., Edison Family Transition, Hope Hospice, APD; she tracks people and not folders. Ms. Djerf noted eligibility versus entitlement. Though she works with Mackay, she tells parents about many programs. Re her inquiry, it was noted to Ms. Djerf that half of the Board (including Superintendent) have done sensitivity training. Mrs. Dozier noted keeping a good sense of humor, which Ms. Djerf possesses, when working in school and with parents; Mrs. Dozier thanked Ms. Djerf. Dr. Scricca expressed thanks, stating we must collaborate/work together, and noting the air of criticism the past several weeks; Ms. Djerf noted being uncomfortable in talking about the latter as she knows the parties but she has mutual respect for all. One recommendation of hers would be take things out of the limelight/spotlight and bring it behind doors to talk; there can be issues when the media's involved. Many families are happy. Thanks were given by Dr. Brunick and by Dr. Kuckel (as a Board) for ESE.

#### **C. ACADEMIC SERVICES**

1. **Charter School Applications (4) [9/25]** – Dr. Browder noted if there questions on these to contact him (time was running short so as to start the 5:05 p.m. Final Budget Hearing).
2. **Special Programs and Procedures for ESE [9/25]** – Dr. Browder noted the document to be turned over to the state and the IDEA portion.
3. **Job Description/Supervisor, Adult Ed** – Dr. Browder noted we'll grow 1,000 folks this year.

#### **D. HUMAN RESOURCES** – no items

#### **E. ADMINISTRATIVE/SUPPORT SERVICES** – no items

**F. BUSINESS SERVICES**

- 1. Change Orders/August 2007** – See backup information on file with these minutes.

**G. EXECUTIVE SERVICES** – no items

**H. PUBLIC COMMENT** – none

**I. BOARD AUDITOR / BOARD ATTORNEY / SUPERINTENDENT’S COMMENTS** – Mrs. Nieminski (only one with comments) noted the consultant contract audit she provided in June; District staff addressed five recommendations proactively and professionally. She thanked Dr. Adkins and Ms. Monroe in getting things back. She noted the guidebook as an auditor’s dream and it will be part of the final audit plan (December timing). Meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

/dwm

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MINUTES BOOK NO. 44 - FY08

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**Jane E. Kuckel**, Meeting Chair (for Mr. Teuber)

ATTEST:

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**James W. Browder, Ed.D.**, Secretary and District Superintendent

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