



VISION:
To be a world-class school system.

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY – Briefing Meeting / M I N U T E S
Tuesday – March 24, 2009 / 2:30 p.m. (called to order by Dr. Kuckel at 3:05 p.m.)

Attendees: Dr. Jane E. Kuckel, Board Chair
Mr. Robert D. Chilmonik, Board Member
Dr. Elinor C. Scricca, Board Member
Dr. James W. Browder, Secretary & District Superintendent
Mr. Steven K. Teuber, J.D., Vice Chair (arrived 3:22 p.m.)
Mrs. Jeanne S. Dozier, Board Member
Mr. Keith B. Martin, Board Attorney
Mrs. Denise Mangus, Recording Secretary

A. ITEMS WITH GUESTS – none

B. BOARD MEMBERS

- 1. Special Areas of Board Involvement / Reports** – Mrs. Dozier read at several schools for Read Across America; the programs are very successful. Continuous Systemic Improvement committee meeting had a very well received program this month, with questions on parent involvement in schools. She was in Tallahassee last week for Florida School Boards Association's Days in the Legislature. FSBA's message is to be vigilant and watch all; the state is wrestling a tremendous shortfall. Our county's shortfall is unknown to-date but Mrs. Dozier commends those from here. Mr. Cerra believes we need to maintain a presence. Mr. Chilmonik noted his next-week interview with Naples Daily News; he's talked with David Plazas (News-Press) and hopes for that opportunity also. Mr. Chilmonik noted community forums' program of hearing the budget explanation and thanked staff. He spoke at the Lehigh Democratic Club; they wanted budget answers. Re Insurance Task Force, he commended the good decision made on scripts to help employees. After three meetings, he's still learning about the important Smart Growth committee (e.g., sidewalks, bike paths, public transportation); he'll bring back suggestions for the District. He participated in the Lehigh Rotary run (and District staff) and noted Do the Right Thing's. Finance Advisory Committee was mentioned and meeting room to be named after Carl Snipes. SWFL Reading Festival was quite an event; Mr. Chilmonik thanked WINK for sponsorship. Mrs. Dozier noted thanks for Board support of the letter sent to Mayor Humphrey and Council for Edison home speed zone.

Dr. Scricca read at another school for Dr. Seuss' birthday. She attended Lehigh Singers' Board Meeting (conveying arts' support), Do the Right Thing Awards, Lehigh Spring Festival opening; and the FGCU Economic Workshop Sunday night. Dr. Scricca noted the wonderful Carson's lunch/awards (Dr. Kuckel also there) by the Foundation to 48 elementary students who know they have potential (16 schools with students having scholarships in perpetuity); Dr. Carson's presentation was enlightening/enhancing. Dr. Scricca's attending tomorrow's ribbon-cutting at Coronado High School (charter). She noted the three community forums to-date where some parents had disbelief at the educational budgetary money cuts; community's thinking out of the box, and they'll continue to do so (they grasped/supported Pride & Patriotism). Dr. Kuckel acknowledged (present today) the head of the Foundation, Marshall Bower. (Mr. Teuber entered and then presided over the meeting.) She's been meeting monthly with Charlotte and Collier School Board Chairs where there's talk about things we're doing, what's working, budget shortfalls, etc.; Dr. Kuckel brought back several ideas to Dr. Browder. She enjoyed Read Across America at our schools, noting the teachers work so hard. She mentioned the media calls and preliminary list of worst-case budget scenarios (DRAs out to school); we have to plan for balancing budget but don't anticipate this to be final list. She thanked Dr. Browder for keeping the Board up-to-date. Funding is critical and there are strong, rampant emotions out there.

- 2. Legislative Update** – Mr. Teuber was in Tallahassee last week and going again tomorrow; the numbers are slow in coming this legislative session, and the stimulus package has an effect. He mentioned the website: FloridaRecovery.com The stimulus is troublesome for Florida; the 2007 baseline has to be used and we'd have to stay at same spending levels two years. State can do a waiver (not done yet; some don't feel we're short yet). Governor Crist announced over the speaker in Tallahassee his plans to hold back 15%. Mr. Teuber met with Senator Atwater, and the Senate recognizes us being in dire times. Mr. Teuber gave credit to the Cerras; John offered an idea that the appropriate chair's toying with. It's believed Class Size Amendment will bankrupt the state unless flexibility given (many pushing for the latter); there are not funding sources for education. A one-cent sales tax over three years would help as well as class size to school averaging (momentum gaining in the House to present). Collier's begging for .25 mil money back (they've no money to move). A look could be taken at categoricals—instruction material and teacher achievement—to see if we could surplus in these. The issue of audit potential was noted; re several of the bills gone through, there's a focus on appropriations (those bills costing dollars getting much scrutiny). Mr. Teuber thanked two of the legislators (one from our delegation) for the clause put in on the House side and one of our senators going to push on the software/audit.

Mr. Teuber noted a further look at funding; FSBA noted the pact between Governor Crist and Seminole (we get \$200 student lottery subsidy, so we'll get \$99 on other proposal). There's House Bill 2532 on nepotism (can't have relative as supervisor). The state retirement (pension/salary) discussion going through the Senate; House bill's similar. One of our other senators has done work on vets' property tax discounts. Things are to be put on a website for more transparency. A big House bill is one for high school graduation and different degree types (college and non-college bound students). Mr. Teuber was unable to meet with Reps. Thompson and Aubuchon as they were in meetings. By the week's end, Tallahassee budgets are to be on the table. We may have \$70-80 million deficit; people in our county need to contact legislators, especially if they've children in school for the educational things that make school fun/entertaining/interesting/enjoyable for kids. Mr. Chilmonik asked clarification on the computer software matter, as someone quoted him 10% passed; Mr. Teuber feels we can get through appropriate Senate side, and Cerras have spent much time talking (some legislators get it, no cost to the state, felt the passage is highly probable).

Dr. Kuckel noted that with textbooks and Smartboards, less may be needed in some areas (though more in others); she feels an all-out communication piece needed since some don't read newspaper or watch news (e.g., flyer home per Dr. Browder; already been in school newsletters but these are hard/unprecedented times for families). Dr. Browder noted the real numbers aren't known yet but we're praying for offsets; we can't spend one-time money for reoccurring debt. Dr. Browder noted class size amendment putting us in this trap. Re stimulus, there'll be IDEA and Title monies but waiver for remainder not done yet. Art, music, and PE aren't counted in class size (DOE rules). Today, the deficit range to us could be in the middle/\$51 million. The website mentioned earlier has breakdown of years/by money appropriations; stimulus breakdown but website's sparse. Dr. Browder noted the Governor has written the stimulus letter but the official application not completed yet (latter waiting on official document). Dr. Scricca noted, re last night's community forum, that things don't hit people until it concerns them; some think stimulus will solve all. Mr. Teuber noted he and Mrs. Dozier speaking separately with legislators; she commented on having to be in front of committees, speak (e.g., almost a rotation schedule and work with bargaining units), and continue vigilance on watching what's going on, as this isn't like other years. She requested Mr. Martin investigate an all-out media blitz; Mrs. Dozier also noted (after looking into legally) civic organizations and churches be involved (re legislative contact).

C. ACADEMIC SERVICES (Dr. Jones)

1. **Update/Dropouts** – Dr. Jones acknowledged Mattie Young and staff (e.g., visiting teachers to homes) for staying on top of this to keep students in school. Calculation of dropouts and graduation rates differ; dropout based on whole student population and certain codes re who withdraws. (Two-page back-up on file.) Dr. Jones pointed out some of the code differences (may appear meaning something else). Coding issues straightened out though; diligent work continues for students to graduate (standard diplomas or get GEDs). Trend overall is very good. If a student chooses dropping out, exit interview's required by the state. Past year data gathered helps in addressing tech/career academies; there's a look at what it takes to stay in high school and be more engaged to stay in class. There's ACT testing opportunity (if FCAT failed).
2. **Early Head Start Discussion** -- Dr. Jones noted today's plan shares increasing opportunities to work with 3- to 5-year-old students; she acknowledged staff for putting this together, as it increase services for children. Dr. Clark noted Donna Hernandez's work/partnering with Head Start; the Early Childhood Center is near ALC and LAMP, and there's a wonderful opportunity for blending some programs together. Dr. Clarke went through handout (copy on file). LAMP children can be enrolled into Early Head Start so to fill classes (filling current LAMP facility with childhood/toddler programs all together; Head Start stimulus funding, when/if becomes available). There'd be a cost savings (up to \$100K) for the District—some clerk typists absorbed through Head Start, same nurse (needed for moms, babies, and Head Start), one bus on standby for medical appointments (Title 1 van could do, thus a savings), have higher qualified staff in classrooms by required standards, playground at Head Start expense, etc. Dr Clarke noted this opportunity of a lifetime.

Dr. Kuckel noted this as a great CSI committee project. Dr. Scricca noted 90% of brain developed by age 5 and the importance of educating families, especially since language barriers. Mr. Teuber noted seeming to like the proposal; he commented though, re stimulus for capital, of expanding wing and would these be reoccurring operating dollars (he knows it's Title 1). Mr. Teuber wants more explanation (which doesn't mean non-support). Re dynamics of what can be provided for children and families, Dr. Browder noted this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; he explained taking current LAMP classroom and allow some space in LAMP to add more youngsters (just a move and better utilization of space there). Currently, 90 kids in program and 90 more can be added with this; it would be the ultimate pre-k program for us.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE/SUPPORT SERVICES (Mr. McNerney) – none

E. BUSINESS SERVICES (Mrs. Desamours/Mrs. Campbell)

1. **Budget Update** – Mrs. Desamours noted arriving at the \$51 million (see handout); if going to \$70 million deficit, this will change (more things added). Dr. Browder noted several items fall in bargaining are but full disclosure at this point is critical; there's hard work (staff and bargaining units) addressing ways. This is a snapshot of what's being talked about; Mrs. Desamours noted previous discussions with the Board—e.g., 3/10 Briefing, school and department allocations (released last week)—but this brings all info together (talked in general previously), with dollar amounts put to different items. The handout has number of possible positions affected in budget allocation.

The three areas outlined on the handout, “2010 Budget Update, Summary of Budget Reductions/March 24, 2009,” has three sections: 1) potential personnel reductions have approximately 578 positions, totaling \$29 million; 2) items not affecting personnel total \$13.465 million; and 3) bargained issues total \$8.6 million. It was noted the percentage of salary reduction under bargained issues should be three percent (not two), thus changing that sub-amount to \$11 million with the new overall total of possible deficit at \$54 million.

Mrs. Desamours went line-by-line (noting amounts to each)—potential personnel reductions entails: reduction of custodial allocation (talked last Briefing), secondary scheduling change, school flex positions (communicated throughout whole budget process to be more efficient in schools and do with less), above-formula allocations, art/music (elementary), and department personnel reductions. Items not affecting personnel include: transfer for building supervisors, categorical flexibility, school supply allocations, department supply/project allocations, summer school reduction (required by law to do some summer school), and athletic subsidy/after-school activities. Bargaining issues contain the 3% salary reduction and employee insurance waiver. Of department positions, 10% reduction was noted.

In response to Mr. Chilmonik's question on notifying employees (re not having budget from 4/16, in addition to receiving state info), there'll be talks with annual contract folks (SPALC and TALC) as we can't reappoint anyone until budget from state received and contract ratified to know where we're at (1,400 TALC and 250 SPALC—all of these annual). Re Mr. Chilmonik's question on the number of administrators in the 578 number, schools have to make decisions on individual needs and what they can fit in their budget (two support may be cut vs. one instructional). We won't know until schools send back budgets—these are positions based on what we receive. Dr. Browder noted the number of department personnel reductions is 163 of the 578; the retirees estimates this year being used are 200 (retire, move, leave state) as the three-year average is 375 (Dr. Browder doesn't want mis-projections). Re Mr. Chilmonik's question on teachers being notified about positions, the situation is as we know it.

As this plan is done, others are encouraged to be certified. If the District takes a \$70 million hit, we can't afford unless something else taken off page. There's cause and effect; Dr. Browder noted the horrendous feeling but there'll be art and music experiences in schools. We have to know numbers to predict. Principals having been talking to personnel for 30 days and encouraging them to take test re elementary certification; Dr. Browder noted the importance of reading certifications. This community is dealing with, as others in the state, real issues. In response to Mrs. Dozier's question, Transportation is under department personnel reductions (50 of 163 are bus driver positions). Mrs. Dozier noted caution on the retiree numbers (some may not do so as a result of the economy); per Dr. Browder, there's \$3.5 million recouped for every 1% of salary reduction.

Mrs. Desamours noted other items not on the sheet discussed prior (e.g., last meeting—building supervisors and custodians). Re categorical flexibility, textbook dollars is an example of where adoption can be put off until next year. Re Dr. Scricca's inquiry, 4/16 is well in advance in all buildings; HR guidelines agree with SPALC/TALC postings (website utilized; things in budget events calendar), and Dr. Browder will ensure principals notify all. He noted it's annual contract people at this point (re going backwards from 7/1); he has to present a balanced budget with having done all he can with money presented. One fear of Dr. Browder is a June special legislative session; in prior years, we would've already had a House version at this point.

F. HUMAN RESOURCES (Dr. Adkins) – none**G. EXECUTIVE SERVICES (Dr. Browder) – none****H. PUBLIC COMMENT – Sue Jacobse talked generally about the budget woes and the constitution requiring the Florida Legislature's paramount duty to fund education. Mr. Rushlow noted, though not here to attack, a possible concern on the**

standby van mentioned by Dr. Clarke earlier (a bus operator transports LAMP students now); his questions concern who's going to operate and if they fall in same category re drug testing, safety, etc.

I. BOARD ATTORNEY (none) / SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS – Dr. Browder had a handout distributed of the summarized forum feedback; it's for looking/talking re second phase of forums (when it was thought we'd have the real budget numbers from the state). He can have individual discussions with Board Members if to continue those meetings next month since budget numbers won't be received. Class size amendment flexibility is an item inside the Tallahassee talks. The Superintendent reiterated the duty of legislators re funding education, and he mentioned the words of adequacy lawsuit and it starting to ring in people's ears. Dr. Browder feels he can't continue to sit back and the state not do their part; he will have a conversation in a room full of superintendents tomorrow. He expressed willingness to file a lawsuit eventually (depending on results); he noted that, at some point, the Supreme Court will tell Legislature to fund education and how to do it. Separately, Dr. Browder noted U.S. Senator Nelson's 4/6/09 Town Hall meeting locally, with the Board invited. The State Commissioner of Education will visit the District on 4/3, and Dr. Browder will be asking available Board Members to meet at schools (though Golden Apple Day). The Superintendent's confident, re stimulus, that IDEA and Title monies will be received. Dr. Browder noted the Carson scholarship lunch was one of the highlights he's attended the last 30 years; Mr. Carson's story is a tearjerker. Dr. Browder noted there aren't good options out there in reducing the budget and it doesn't make him pleased the next 6-8 weeks re such. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:07 p.m.

/dwm

ATTEST:

Steven K. Teuber, J.D. Meeting Chair

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

An audio/visual tape of this meeting has been produced to provide a verbatim record of the proceedings. Members of the public may obtain a copy of the tape of any meeting by making a request for such through the Communications Department and paying the actual cost of copying the tape. Members of the public may view any Board meeting tape at the Communications Department at no cost. Anyone wishing to view a Board meeting tape should contact the Communications Department at 337-8327 to make such a request.