



## THE SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY

**School Board Workshop**  
**Monday, May 11, 2009-3:30 P.M. (following special Board Meeting)**  
**School Board Meeting Room**

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### Attending

Jane E. Kuckel, Ph.D., Board Chair  
Steven K. Teuber, Vice Chair  
Robert D. Chilmonik, Member  
Jeanne S. Dozier, Member  
Elinor C. Scricca, Ph.D., Member

James W. Browder, Ed.D., Superintendent  
Keith Martin, Board Attorney  
Dr. Ami Desamours, Director of Budget  
Brenda Wall, Recording Secretary

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### **I. Welcome/Call to Order**

Dr. Jane Kuckel, Board Chair, called the workshop to order at 4:54 p.m. Dr. Kuckel welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance.

### **II. Discussion:**

Dr. Kuckel informed the attendees that the workshop discussion would center on the FY 2010 budget update. At that point, she turned the meeting over to Dr. James Browder. He first congratulated Dr. Ami Desamours on her doctorate degree. He then informed the Board that he and Dr. Desamours would be presenting a slide show regarding the FY 2010 budget.

Dr. Ami Desamours began her presentation and explained to the Board that the legislature had completed their work and she would be presenting the budget through a slide show presentation. (*A copy of which is on file with the official Board Workshop Minutes*).

Dr. Browder explained the legislature authorized School Boards to impose an additional .25 discretionary millage through a super majority vote. Dr. Browder discussed the effect of the .25 discretionary millage on taxpayers (page 5 of the handout). Dr. Kuckel had a question with regard to the amount of the homestead exemption. She understood it to be \$50,000.00. Dr. Desamours explained that School Districts were exempt from the piece of legislation that raised the homestead exemption to \$50,000.00, therefore, the homestead exemption for school tax purposes, remains at \$25,000.00.

Dr. Browder informed the Board that he would be asking them for their support of the .25 millage. He explained that he needs to set aside money now for future shortfalls, while trying to minimize damage to schools as much as possible. He explained the Governor has not signed the Bill, so there is a possibility the language could change.

Dr. Elinor Scricca asked Dr. Browder whether his recommendations to the Board may be too soon, since all of the language has not yet been finalized. Dr. Browder explained that he has no reason to believe that the Governor would veto any of what had been proposed.

Mr. Robert Chilmonik asked Dr. Browder for clarification on the millage increase. He asked if the .25 millage which would place \$16 million into the budget would require a super majority vote. Dr. Browder agreed that it would require that type of vote. Mr. Chilmonik questioned the language of the Bill regarding the tax increase going to the general election. Dr. Browder explained that the .25 millage was a one time opportunity for School Districts and if it were to be continued on to the next year, it would have to be placed on a referendum and the citizens would have to vote on it. Dr. Browder went on to explain that he was viewing it as a one time opportunity, if it is something different, further clarification would need to be obtained and that information would be shared with the Board at that time. Mr. Chilmonik then asked about the tax rolls and Dr. Desamours informed him that those rolls should be available on or about July 1, 2009. The DOE then takes that information and adjusts the tax millage based on the tax roll. Mr. Chilmonik asked how those numbers would affect those homeowners who were not homesteaded. Dr. Browder stated that you would add approximately \$7.00 in addition to what would be charged to those homeowners who are homesteaded.

Mr. Teuber informed the Board that the legislature also allowed the District to put off adopting new books, when the District deemed appropriate, and this placed money back into the classroom and did not cost the taxpayers any money.

Dr. Scricca requested that Dr. Desamours provide the Board with additional information regarding the different scenarios that would affect homeowners if the tax levy were put into place, i.e., homesteaded vs. non-homesteaded, etc. Dr. Scricca asked Dr. Browder to explain the areas where \$16 million dollars would help. Dr. Browder replied that it would help Art and Music, supplies for children for schools and above formula for magnet schools

Dr. Browder addressed the Board and stated that he had prepared the report for them regarding the .25 millage increase and he was now asking for their support.

Mrs. Dozier stated that the legislature appointed the District as a taxing authority to do what is right for schools in our county. Mrs. Dozier made the point that much of the revenue the legislature is proposing does not even exist right now. Mrs. Dozier informed Dr. Browder and the Board that she is in support of the .25 tax levy.

Mr. Chilmonik stated that he has concerns about raising taxes when the economy is in such poor shape. He informed Dr. Browder and the Board that he would not be in support of any tax increases. He requested that another workshop be scheduled to discuss other options.

Dr. Kuckel questioned the \$27 million in projected revenue, the sources of which have not been approved. Cigarette taxes, gambling, fines and fees are some of the areas where revenue is to come from. She also stated that \$7 million dollars would be taken out of our contingency fund and inquired as to how much money remained in that fund. Dr. Desamours stated that approximately \$20 million remained, which is 3% of new revenue. Dr. Kuckel informed Dr. Browder and the Board that she would support the .25 millage tax increase.

Dr. Kuckel then asked for a consensus of the Board. Mr. Teuber stated that he could not support the millage increase with a divided Board. Dr. Scricca stated that she views the tax increase as serving the District's students and asked Mr. Chilmonik to rethink his

position. Dr. Browder addressed Mr. Teuber and asked him to rethink his position and to base his decision on facts. Dr. Kuckel also asked Mr. Teuber to rethink his decision based upon the facts provided to the Board. Dr. Kuckel suggested that a workshop be scheduled and that facts and figures be presented to the Board by Mr. Chilmonik, to explain the savings claimed in the handout he distributed to the Board. (*A copy of which is on file with the official School Board Minutes*). Mr. Teuber stated that a consensus was requested, but that could not be accomplished unless all five (5) members of the Board agreed. Mr. Teuber informed the Board that a vote could not be taken at the workshop. The vote would have to be done at an action meeting. After some dialogue with Mr. Chilmonik, Mr. Teuber then informed Dr. Browder and the Board that he would consent to the tax increase.

Mr. Martin informed Dr. Kuckel and the Board that an official vote could not be taken at the workshop. However, Dr. Browder is requesting, for planning purposes, an indication of Board Members intentions. The time at which to take official action is at the budget hearings

Mr. Teuber asked Dr. Kuckel to schedule a board workshop and have deadlines for when the information is due so that it can be reviewed by everyone involved. All items will be due at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the workshop. Mr. Chilmonik stated that he wants to have access to obtain the documents necessary for the next workshop, without paying fees.

### **III. Good of the Order**

Dr. Kuckel asked for any Good of the Order Comments. Mr. Chilmonik, no comments. Mrs. Dozier, no comments. Dr. Scricca stated that she felt that what was witnessed by everyone at the Workshop was a "hostage scene" and that she resented it. Mr. Teuber stated that he would be sending a memo out to Mr. Chilmonik requesting a response at a subsequent Board Meeting, to a particular set of questions and given Mr. Chilmonik's response to those questions, perhaps he would be able to better understand his point of view. Dr. Kuckel asked Dr. Browder that if alternative funding was found, would Dr. Browder be willing to adjust the budget accordingly. Dr. Browder stated that he would. Mr. Martin, no comments. Dr. Browder stated that he would like to reschedule the community forums on the following dates, May 19, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. He asked the Board to check their calendars and inform him of their availability. Dr. Browder asked that Bob Cerra be allowed to make his presentation at the School Board Briefing meeting June 2, 2009, at 3:30 p.m.

### **IV. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

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**Jane E. Kuckel, Ph.D., Board Chair**

ATTEST:

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**James W. Browder, Ed.D.** 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.*