



VISION:
To be a world-class school system

**The School Board of Lee County
Board Organizational Planning Meeting - Minutes
Thursday, November 4, 2010
The Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, Inc.
2266 Second Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901**

Attendees:

Jeanne S. Dozier, Member
Jane E. Kuckel, Ph.D., Member
Mary Fischer, M.A., Member-elect
Don H. Armstrong, Member-elect
Thomas Scott, Member-elect

Dr. Lawrence D. Tihen, Interim Superintendent
Keith Martin, Board Attorney
Martha Crotty, Coordinator of District Operations
Donna Lesansky, Administrative Assistant to the Board
and Recording Secretary

Guest:

Dr. Wayne Blanton, Executive Director, Florida School Boards Association

Welcome / Opening Comments

The School Board of Lee County met on Thursday, November 4, 2010, for a Board Organizational Planning Meeting. Dr. Tihen welcomed everyone and allowed an opportunity for introductions, after which he introduced Dr. Wayne Blanton Executive Director of the Florida School Boards Association.

Board-Superintendent Issues

❖ **School Board-Superintendent Roles and Responsibilities, Building a Successful Team**

Dr. Blanton provided the Board Members and Superintendent with information regarding the roles and responsibilities of each and how to ensure a successful working relationship. He explained that the community views Board Members as educational leaders and gets its impression of the school system by: (1) how meetings are conducted, (2) how the school system operates on a day-to-day basis, and (3) the physical appearance of school buildings.

Dr. Blanton outlined the two basic premises of school board operations which are:

1. **The Board is a corporate body.** The authority of a board member includes expressing an opinion and casting a vote in a board meeting. Outside a board meeting, a board member has no authority over school matters.
2. **The Board is a policy-making body.** The board speaks through policy. Matters which the board chooses not to address through policy are left to the discretion of the superintendent. School boards make policy and superintendents carry out policy.

Dr. Blanton reviewed the basic principles of board-superintendent relations:

- Principle #1: The education of the children of the district must come first.
- Principle #2: A school board is responsible for ensuring that schools are well-managed, but it does not directly manage them. *It is important that everyone is in agreement regarding communication. The best way is to refer matters to the superintendent so that s/he is aware of the concerns of the community and may direct them to the appropriate staff person to handle.*
- Principle #3: School board members function as a board and not individually. It is a board member's vote along with other board members' votes that has power.
- Principle #4: A primary function of the school board is to establish policies to achieve the district's mission and strategic goals and to reach the objectives desired by the public it serves. *It was suggested that the Board Members be familiar with the District's Policy Manual; Florida Statute 120, the Administrative Procedures Act (Florida Statutes, Chapter 120); the Sunshine*

Law and parliamentary procedure; the District's Collective Bargaining Agreements; and the District's Strategic Plan.

- Principal #5: The school system should operate as a team, with each member respected and given an opportunity to be heard. *It is okay to disagree, but civility must prevail. It is the chairman's job to keep meetings moving so that one board member does not dominate the proceedings. If one board member receives information from the superintendent or staff, the other board members should receive it as well.*
- Principal #6: Observe lines of authority – the superintendent is responsible to the board, principals are responsible to the superintendent and teachers/school staff members are responsible to the principal.
- Principal #7: School boards should be progressive, but changes or innovations should be initiated only after careful consideration of their ultimate effect on the school district.
- Principal #8: Board members should consider the recommendations of the superintendent before making any commitments. *There are three things that a board may do with regard to a superintendent's recommendation – accept it, reject it, or amend it.*
- Principal #9: Board members should be tactful and understanding in dealing with citizens' complaints/concerns. Help them understand the nature of a board member's authority and the avenues available to resolve their concerns.
- Principle #10: Take time to enjoy the work of a board member – striving to enhance the educational opportunities for students.

Dr. Blanton cautioned the Board Members and Superintendent to not cross the line with regard to the roles and responsibilities of each.

School Board	Superintendent
Governs – guides and directs	Administers – operates and manages
Decides what	Decides how
Requests information	Seeks and provides information
Considers issues	Provides recommendations
Creates, reviews, and adopts policies	Implements plans
Monitors progress	Reports progress
Designates positions, approves job descriptions, and acts on personnel recommendations	Directs employees' work, recommends job duties, and nominates personnel for positions
Approves evaluation criteria and procedures for personnel	Supervises and evaluates personnel
Reviews and approves the budget	Formulates the budget
Represents the public interest	Acts in the public interest

With regard to personnel issues, Dr. Blanton clarified that when a superintendent makes a personnel recommendation, a board may only reject it for ethical/moral reasons or if the individual does not meet the job description. In matters of employee terminations, a board sits in the capacity of a quasi-judicial body and should not engage in discourse with the employee prior to the hearing.

With regard to the budget, Dr. Blanton stated that a board may accept it, reject it, or amend it. He added that executive sessions should be employed for the purpose of collective bargaining.

Dr. Blanton reviewed the ways in which conflicts between school boards and superintendents occur and stated that conflicts should be addressed immediately.

A school board can cause conflicts with a superintendent by:

- Trying to be administrators; overstepping authority.
- Making promises as individual board members.
- Becoming involved in labor relations or budgetary minutia.
- Not doing "homework" and failing to prepare for meetings.

- Not following procedures for handling complaints.
- Not keeping executive session information confidential.
- Failing to act on sensitive issues.
- Failing to be open and honest with the superintendent.
- Making decisions based on preconceived notions.
- Springing surprises at meetings.
- Having hidden agendas.

A superintendent can cause conflicts with a school board by:

- Not treating board members alike.
- Not informing board members of the public's concerns.
- Not providing adequate financial data or adequate information.
- Using poor public management practices.
- Making public statements before informing the board.
- Failing to be open and honest with the board.
- Not providing alternatives in an objective manner.
- Not adjusting to the reality of an involved board.
- Not supporting the board – lack of loyalty.
- Springing surprises at meetings.
- Having hidden agendas.

Dr. Blanton briefly addressed the matter of a superintendent search. He informed the Board that hiring a superintendent is the most important decision they will make. Dr. Blanton explained that there are substantial parameters involved in the process and that the most important aspects are the things the Board Members need to decide among themselves including, but not limited to: the type of search to conduct; whether or not to conduct the search internally or hire a professional search firm; the publications in which to advertise and for how long; the professional and personal qualities desired in a superintendent; compensation; how to garner input; interview procedures; and visitations.

Before proceeding to the next item on the agenda, Mr. Marshall Bower (Executive Director of The Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, Inc.) was invited to provide a brief overview of the Foundation.

Board Office

❖ LEE in the Loop Schedule

There was consensus to maintain the status quo for now, but this decision may be revisited at a later date. The article rotation schedule will be finalized following the selection of the Chairman and Vice Chairman at the November 16th Board Meeting.

❖ Accessing District E-mail Off-site

The Board Members were provided a screen-by-screen guide as to how to access their District e-mail accounts from their personal computers. They were informed that their e-mail accounts would be activated effective November 16th, and that additional guidance could be provided if needed.

❖ Board Liaison Assignments

Representation on committees was decided and will be effective November 16th. Representation on Board Advisory Committees will be for two years. Notification letters will be sent to committee contact persons.

Committee	Board Member / 2010-2011
Construction Advisory Committee	Don Armstrong
Continuous Systemic Improvement Advisory Committee	Tom Scott
Curriculum Advisory Committee	Jeanne Dozier
Committee	Board Member / 2010-2011
District Advisory Committee	Mary Fischer
Finance Advisory Committee	Jane Kuckel

Equity & Diversity Advisory Committee	Don Armstrong
Insurance Task Force	Don Armstrong
Instructional Calendar Committee	<i>TBD in September/October 2011</i>
School Health Advisory Committee	Mary Fischer
Quality Improvement Advisory Committee	<i>Chairman & Vice Chairman/TBD</i>
Value Adjustment Board	Jane Kuckel Mary Fischer / alternate
Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council	Jane Kuckel
Horizon Council	<i>Chairman / TBD</i>
Coalition for a Drug-Free Southwest Florida	Mary Fischer
Uncommon Friends Governing Board	Tom Scott
Learning for Life, Inc.	Mary Fischer
Community Sustainability Advisory Committee	Tom Scott
The Foundation for Lee County Public Schools	<i>Chairman/TBD</i>
Southwest Florida & Lee County Fair Board	Tom Scott
FSBA Board of Directors	Jeanne Dozier
Board Legislative Liaison / State	Jeanne Dozier
Board Legislative Liaison / Federal	Jeanne Dozier

Mr. Martin stated that he would prepare an agenda item for the November 16th Board Meeting recommending that Dr. Kuckel serve as the Board representative to the Value Adjustment Board for the coming year and that Ms. Fischer serve as the alternate.

Legal Issues

❖ Legal Services Expenses Annual Report

Mr. Martin reviewed the report of the School District's legal expenses for fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010, highlighting the areas of increased and decreased spending.

❖ Parliamentary Procedure / Sunshine Law

Mr. Martin referred to the documents on the Sunshine Law and parliamentary procedure, stating that they were provided for the Board Members' information and review. He offered assistance should a Board Member need it to draft a motion or proposed policy language. Mr. Martin also stated that he would be happy to provide training in a group setting on the Sunshine Law and/or parliamentary procedure should the Board desire it.

Superintendent

❖ Board Member Needs for Upcoming Year

▪ *Cell Phones*

Dr. Tihen informed the Board Members-elect that the District would be happy to issue cell phones for their use. All three requested that District cell phones be provided.

▪ *Laptops*

Dr. Tihen stated that a laptop is placed in each Board Member's office for his/her use.

▪ *Courier Service*

Dr. Tihen confirmed that Mr. Scott would like to have the courier deliver his meeting agendas, mail, etc., to his office at the Southwest Florida Enterprise Center; and that Mr. Armstrong would prefer his agendas, mail, etc., be forwarded to him via postal mail. Ms. Fischer indicated that she would like her agendas, mail, etc., delivered via courier to her home.

- *Official Photos*
Dr. Tihen informed the Board Members that Prestige Photos is tentatively scheduled to take the group and individual photos of the Board Members and Superintendent on November 16th at the Public Education Center.
- *Security Badges*
Dr. Tihen reminded the Board Members-elect to have their pictures taken for their District security badges.
- *Bios*
Dr. Tihen asked the Board Members-elect to provide a copy of their bio for publication on the District's website as well as for introductions when they are scheduled for speaking engagements.
- *Board Office Staff*
Following discussion of the essential functions performed by the Board Office staff, the Board Members expressed the need to have additional personnel placed in the office to assist with the increased workload. Dr. Tihen was directed to bring back to the Board a recommendation with regard to the Board Office staff.
- *Fax Machines*
Dr. Tihen informed the Board Members-elect that, should they so desire, the District would provide fax machines for their homes. Mr. Scott stated that he would be using the fax machine at his office at the Southwest Florida Enterprise Center.

❖ **Board/Superintendent Communication / Requests for Information**

There was consensus that any communication in which a member of the public shares concerns or makes requests would be forwarded to the Superintendent for handling; and that the Superintendent would provide feedback to the Board Members regarding resolution of the matter.

With regard to this procedure, there was consensus that any communication from a member of the public regarding matters related to a single District issue would be addressed by the Board Member in that District; and that any communication regarding matters related to a District-wide issue would be addressed by the Chairman on behalf of the Board.

There was consensus that when the Superintendent responds (in written form) to questions raised by a Board Member or to requests for information from a Board Member, every Board Member would receive the same information.

❖ **Date for Workshop RE: TransPar Audit and Workshop Priorities**

There was agreement that Board workshops would be recorded for televising at a later date on the District's TV station. However, if the Board agrees that a workshop should be televised live, it would be necessary to hold that workshop in the Board Room.

The following workshops were scheduled:

Friday, December 3rd, 2:00-5:00 P.M., Training Room "D" – TransPar audit/School Choice

Wednesday, December 8th, 8:30-11:30 A.M., Training Room "D" – Superintendent Search

❖ **Board Meeting Issues**

There was consensus to bring forward for approval at the November 16th Board Meeting, the following dates for Board action meetings. There was no change to the start time of the meetings, which is 6:00 P.M.

December 14, 2010
January 11, 2011
January 25, 2011
February 8, 2011
February 22, 2011
March 8, 2011
March 29, 2011

April 19, 2011
May 3, 2011
May 17, 2011
June 21, 2011
July 26, 2011 (Special Board Meeting at 5:05 P.M. to hold the Public Hearing to adopt the FY12 Tentative Budget)
August 9, 2011
August 23, 2011
September 13, 2011 (Special Board Meeting at 5:05 P.M. to hold the Public Hearing to adopt the FY12 Final Budget)
September 27, 2011
October 11, 2011
October 25, 2011
November 8, 2011
November 22, 2011 (includes Annual Organization of the Board)*

Mrs. Dozier is working with Representative Aubuchon to see if Statute may be waived this year since November 22nd falls during Thanksgiving week.

❖ **Annual Organization of the Board**

▪ **Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Consensus was not reached; this will be determined at the November 16th Board Meeting.

❖ **Good of the Order**

▪ **Oath of Office Ceremony**

Ms. Fischer will contact Judge Josephine Gagliardi to make arrangements for her to administer the Oath of Office prior to the November 16th Board Meeting (5:30/5:45 P.M.). Although Mr. Scott and Mr. Armstrong have already been sworn into office in private ceremonies, they expressed a desire to be sworn in publicly at the same time. It was requested that Ms. Fischer see if Judge Gagliardi would be available to swear in all three Board Members.

▪ **Individual Issues**

Mrs. Dozier:

- announced that this year's Lee County Legislative Delegation Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 15th, from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. at Edison College (Taeini Hall, Room S-117);
- distributed a set of draft instructional calendars for 2011-2012; expressed hope that the Committee would come to consensus at next week's meeting;
- announced that the Edison Tree Trail was scheduled for December 7th from 6:00-9:00 P.M. and the Edison Holiday House Preview Party was scheduled for December 8th from 6:00-9:00 P.M.;
- shared a mock up of the proposed 2011 Legislative Priorities card and explained that these are shared with legislators and the public; and
- suggested that the Board Members-elect be provided copies of the Policy Manual, Strategic Plan, and Annual Report.

Dr. Kuckel:

- stated that she looks forward to working with the new team for a new year.

Mary Fischer:

- stated that she found today's proceedings to be very helpful and that she looks forward to working with everyone.

Dr. Tihen:

- stated that since the District has been an "A" district for two consecutive years, the option exists to begin the 2011-2012 school year earlier than usual, which would result in the first semester ending prior to Winter Break;
- cautioned the Board Members to keep in mind when considering alternative schedules that many parents have already chosen their children's schools based on bell times and that any changes would affect those times.

The Board Organizational Planning Meeting concluded at 1:40 P.M.

Thomas Scott, Board Chairman

ATTEST:

Lawrence D. Tihen, Ph.D., Secretary and District Interim Superintendent