



## THE SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY

**School Board Workshop  
Superintendent Search  
Wednesday, December 8, 2010 – 8:30 a.m.  
Board Annex-Training Room “D”**

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### **Attending**

Thomas Scott, Board Chair  
Mary Fischer, M.A., Vice Chair  
Jeanne S. Dozier, Member  
Jane E. Kuckel, Ph.D., Member  
Don Armstrong, Member

Lawrence D. Tihen, Ph.D., Interim Superintendent  
Keith Martin, School Board Attorney  
Georgiana McDaniel, Director, Personnel  
Brenda Wall, Recording Secretary

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

Mr. Thomas Scott, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The purpose of the workshop is to discuss the selection of a new Superintendent. He then asked Dr. Lawrence Tihen for comment. Dr. Tihen stated the District has been working with FSBA and other agencies regarding the Superintendent search. There are a number of timelines to be considered in this process, which will be directly related to decisions made by the Board. Dr. Tihen informed the Board that back-up documents were provided to them, (current Superintendent job description, process document, copy of an FSBA Agreement as well as comparable data from other school Districts). *COPIES OF THESE DOCUMENTS MAY BE FOUND ON FILE IN THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE AS PART OF THE OFFICIAL MINUTES.*

### **II. Discussion:**

Mr. Thomas Scott addressed the Board and asked each of them to give a brief description of what they were looking for in a Superintendent.

Ms. Mary Fischer stated that she is looking for someone who is intelligent, possessing great communication skills and able to grasp the tremendous amount of responsibility required in managing District staff, as well as experience and insight for the total picture.

Dr. Jane Kuckel stated that one of the most important skills is possessing experience at this level. The District is basically a \$1.5 billion corporation which operates several “sub-businesses”, such as the transportation department, food services, construction and maintenance. The candidate would need to possess a cross section of skills, including people skills as well as knowing how to connect with the community. Another important requirement is having an understanding of curriculum and establishing credibility with the principals and administrators and good employee relations.

Mr. Don Armstrong stated that he would like to see the prospective Superintendent not only have experience in the teaching field, but also in the private sector. Great leadership skills are also a very important requirement. Mr. Armstrong stated that he feels that the District should not limit their search to just the State of Florida, but to open it up nationwide.

Mrs. Jeanne Dozier stated that one of the important requirements is experience in working in a large School District. Familiarity with Florida law is very important. The District should obtain community input and schedule public forums. Staff and even student input should be considered. The individual must be very dynamic and have a broad knowledge base in running a large organization as well as knowledge of academics. Communication skills are extremely important. Hiring a “greenhorn” should also be

considered, as many times you can mold them in a way that works best for the District, as long as they possess the basic skills.

Mr. Thomas Scott stated the most important quality he is looking for is experience, whether they are an existing Superintendent or a Deputy Superintendent. He would also like the search to be nationwide. The District is similar to a large corporation and many of the responsibilities that fall upon the Superintendent are management responsibilities. The candidate must also be a great judge of people. Someone who is willing to empower people currently at the District and those they may bring with them. In addition, someone who is unafraid to challenge what is already established, a straight talker, someone who thinks long range and has a mission and vision, as well as being an innovator.

- a. Mr. Scott suggested that the first thing the Board should look at is the job description. Mrs. Dozier stated that the current job description is insufficient. Instead of developing a job description at this point, it is more important to schedule public forums to get a sense of what the community is looking for in a Superintendent. The Board can then use the suggestions from the public in creating the job description. The Board agreed that beginning the process of searching for a Superintendent without including the public would be setting the District up for negative feedback. It is very important that the public know that their opinion is very important in this process. Dr. Tihen stated that the qualifications for the new Superintendent are to be decided by the Board and staff needs that directive in order to place the appropriate advertisement. Dr. Kuckel agreed that the Superintendent's job description should be discussed at a later date. Time would be better spent today putting a brochure together for the search firm. Mr. Armstrong agreed that community input is very important to the process. He would approach in a different way by asking each Board Member to appoint a teacher, a parent or citizen from the community to be a part of the search committee. Something else to consider would be asking students to be a part of the process. Mrs. Dozier agreed with Mr. Armstrong, but stated that there are certain steps the Board should agree on. For instance, if the Board agrees that public forums are needed, the first step would be to schedule those as soon as possible. Each Board Member should hold a forum in their District. The forums should be scheduled at the high schools, as they are able to accommodate large crowds. The public forums will be a tremendous benefit to the Board as they move forward with developing qualifications needed for the new Superintendent. Dr. Kuckel also agreed that obtaining community input is extremely important. She reminded the Board that the District has transponders which may possibly be used at the community forums. She suggested that a list of qualifications be developed and ready by the time of the first forums. The public will assist the Board in prioritizing the list of qualifications. Other groups which may provide input are employee groups, chambers of commerce and the District Advisory Council.
- b. Board Members then reviewed the process document. *A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE FOUND ON FILE IN THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE AS PART OF THE OFFICIAL MINUTES.* Mrs. Dozier made reference to the timeline for filling the vacancy and stated that this is a very important issue. However, the most important thing which should be accomplished first, is scheduling the public forums. The Board requested that Ms. Georgiana McDaniel edit the process document by moving scheduling public forums from page 2, to top of the list on page 1. Mr. Scott asked the Board for a list of groups which they wanted as part of the discussion, i.e., parents, students, chambers of commerce, etc. Mrs. Dozier stated that the public forums must be advertised. She also suggested that the public forums be held as close together as possible, even on the same nights if need be, in order to give the public several choices of locations to attend. (She asked that Ms. McDaniel research the previous Superintendent search to see if the forums were held on the same night). She went on to suggest that community groups be established, as Mr. Armstrong suggested earlier in the meeting. Mrs. Dozier mentioned that in the past a community group had been established that also served as interviewers of the candidate(s). The group consisted of members of the chambers of commerce, business organizations, PTA, staff and teacher representatives. In past Superintendent searches, the top three (3) candidates are chosen and the Board then interviews the tops candidates. Surveys may now be sent out to all staff electronically. Dr. Kuckel also liked the idea of community groups becoming a part of the interview process. Mr. Armstrong stated that the community committees should be established as

soon as possible. There are certain groups of people who do not feel comfortable speaking in a public forum setting, but would feel more comfortable meeting in a smaller group. Mr. Scott then addressed Dr. Tihen and inquired how District staff would be able to assist the Board in gathering information. Dr. Tihen stated that staff would be able to assist by establishing a survey process. The Board would need to decide the components of the survey. Parentlink may be another avenue to think about. The size of the committee has a direct effect on how quickly the information can be gathered. If it is under 25, the transponders may be used and the result will be immediate. If it is over 25, survey assessment and analysis will be used and a report will be provided and sent to the Board. Dr. Kuckel stated that she liked the idea of using transponders and surveys, because you would then get a good cross section of information, rather than just hearing from the "loudest" person in a community forum setting. Dr. Kuckel stated a decision needs to be made with regard to what is to be included on the survey and the timeframe when the information is to be sent out and returned to the District to be analyzed. Dr. Tihen added that the public should be allowed to add qualifications to the survey they feel are needed by the Superintendent. Mrs. Dozier made the suggestion that the surveys be ready to go and public forums be scheduled within the next 30 days, or by the end of January.

- c. Mr. Scott then opened up the discussion regarding the selection of a search firm. All Board members agreed there should be a national search and not just in the State of Florida. Mrs. Dozier stated during the last search for a Superintendent, the District used both FSBA and a national search firm and the District was criticized for doing so. She did not feel it was necessary to use both again. Dr. Kuckel stated that she feels that FSBA would be the best choice, as they know Florida law and all of the information someone would need in order to be a Superintendent in the State of Florida. They are also connected to school board association directors in every state. Mr. Armstrong has concerns using FSBA due to the fact that when he was in Tampa at a meeting, members of FSBA came up to him and stated that the District really needed to hire someone from the State of Florida. Mrs. Dozier stated that FSBA had been used in the past and candidates were brought in from all over the United States, not just Florida. Mr. Scott noted that the cost of using FSBA would not exceed \$6,000.00. The national search firms will charge much more for their services. Dr. Tihen stated he spoke with Wayne Blanton and the typical range is \$3,000.00 with the maximum amount being \$6,000.00. The Board all agreed to move forward with utilizing FSBA as the search firm and to make it a national search.
- d. Mr. Scott asked the Board to propose a timeline as to when they would like to have the Superintendent under contract. Mrs. Dozier stated that the normal amount of time is six (6) to eight (8) months. It would be critical to have them on board by the end of June, so that they may be a part of the budget process. Optimal would be to have the person hired by June 1, 2011 and on site by July 1, 2011.
- e. Timelines need to be established for the survey data. It was decided that would be due by January 31, 2011. Dr. Tihen said that staff would work with FSBA to create the survey document. Mr. Martin said that a contract with FSBA could be prepared by the next Board Meeting and it could go forward as a good cause item at the December 14, 2010 meeting. Mrs. Dozier stated that a Superintendent search budget would need to be established. There will be expenses involved in bringing the candidates here for interviews and also for Board Members to travel to the Districts where the candidate is from. Only the top five (5) candidates will be brought in for interviews and from that group, narrowed down to the top two (2) or three (3) for site visits. Dr. Tihen stated that funds will need to be reallocated for this purpose and requested that the Board give a range of the dollar amount to be allocated. It was decided to look at the budget that was used during the last Superintendent search and bring that back to the Board for their final approval. Mr. Martin reminded the Board to keep the sunshine law in mind for all of these processes. Formal record must be kept of what occurs at the public meetings. Dr. Tihen informed the Board that a project management team will be implemented to help with all facets of the search. The Board agreed that they should view all of the applications received. It was also decided to hold off on creating a job description until a later date. However, the salary range should be decided as soon as possible. Dr. Tihen stated that he had spoken with Wayne Blanton and that FSBA would be able to provide

the Superintendent brochure, as this is considered part of the contracted services. FSBA will also take care of advertising for the position. Mrs. Dozier commented that she thought the District also placed an advertisement in the Wall Street Journal during the last search for a Superintendent. Ms. McDaniel said that she would check into whether they had done so or not and also get an idea of the cost of the advertisement. Mr. Scott also suggested perhaps utilizing one of the job search websites tailored toward executives. It was also suggested to check with the Foundation to see if any of the members would like to contribute to the cost of the search. A suggestion was discussed to contact a large vendor, such as Nike, to see if they would be willing to help with search costs. However, there were concerns that perhaps there may be "strings attached". Dr. Tihen informed the Board that Dr. Blanton would like to meet with each of them to get an idea of what they are looking for in a Superintendent. It was decided to wait until after the public forums to put together the list of qualifications. Mrs. Dozier suggested that the District website include minutes from today's workshop, the tentative hire date, size of the District and number of employees and other general information, for those people who may be interested in the Superintendent position. It was also suggested to maintain regular updates on the District's website with regard to the hiring process and perhaps even have the Board Chair give regular updates on the website, similar to a public service announcement. Discussion was held regarding the interview process of the last Superintendent search. Each of the final candidates will be interviewed by the community and staff groups.

- f. Dr. Tihen stated that direction was needed from the Board regarding whether they wish to schedule a reception for the candidates and if so, a budget will need to be established. Perhaps a large community reception could be scheduled for everyone to attend and then a smaller reception be held in a more intimate setting for Board Members only. The Foundation may be able to assist the District in funding these receptions. Dr. Kuckel stated that a salary range would need to be established before the brochure may be printed. She then referred to her handout and discussion was held. *A COPY OF THE HANDOUT MAY BE FOUND ON FILE IN THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE AS PART OF THE OFFICIAL MINUTES.* Dr. Kuckel asked that Ms. McDaniel review the information provided and ensure that it was accurate, since the information was obtained from the News Press and not by District staff. It was also decided to add Collier and Escambia counties to the list. An additional workshop will be scheduled with Dr. Blanton near the middle to end of January, depending upon Dr. Blanton's availability. Mr. Martin asked the Board to define the memberships on the committees. It was decided that each Board Member would each have six (6) appointees on the committee and they would be identified at the next Board Meeting. A cross section of members will need to be established such as; parents, teachers, staff and even students. After discussion, it was decided that each Board Member would come up with two (2) staff members and four (4) community members for the group. Mr. Martin informed the Board that the community forums need to be advertised. The dates should be decided on very soon, so that they may be advertised before the District goes on holiday break. After discussion, the Board decided to hold the forums at the following schools; Dr. Jane Kuckel, Estero High School, Mrs. Jeanne Dozier, Fort Myers High School, Ms. Mary Fischer, Ida Baker High School, Mr. Thomas Scott, Lehigh Senior High School, Mr. Don Armstrong, Mariner High School. All forums will be scheduled the week of January 17<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

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

None

### **IV. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

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**Thomas Scott, Board Chair**

ATTEST:

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**Lawrence D. Tihen, Ed.D.** Interim 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.*