



NOTES  
Meeting of Advisory Committee Chairpersons  
Monday, September 12, 2005  
3:30 P.M. to 4:45 P.M.

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**CALLED TO ORDER:** BY KEITH B. MARTIN **TIME:** 3:30 P.M.

**Present:** Mr. Jack Eikenberg, Compliance Advisory Committee  
Mr. David Hall, Finance Advisory Committee  
Mr. Andy Erickson for Dr. Cynthia Lott, District Advisory Committee  
Mr. Christopher Mills, Construction Advisory Committee  
Dr. James W. Browder, Superintendent

**Recording Secretary:** Mrs. Claire McMasters

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**1. Welcome from Superintendent**

Dr. Browder shared that when the Board asked him if this group should continue meeting, he said this is one of the better meetings. He said the opportunity to talk with the chairpersons helps them to know what is going on within the committees. It's a positive opportunity and he hopes the chairs want to continue to meet.

**2. Approval of June 6, 2005 Minutes**

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

**3. Discussion of Individual Committee Initiatives**

**A.** Mr. David Hall of the Finance Advisory Committee began the discussion by sharing that his committee took a couple of months off this summer. The issues they talked about at the last meeting were:

- The final budget which goes to the Board on Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:05 p.m. at \$1.3 billion; Michael Olliff is leaving the school system and going to work for A.G. Edwards. They talked about staffing and Mr. Olliff's replacement.

Dr. Browder said Friday was the deadline for applications; he and Mr. Olliff will be reviewing applications later this day.

- Sales tax issue. They went through some of the numbers and why we do not need the sales tax at this time due to the strong impact fee numbers.

Dr. Browder explained they projected impact fees for the next 9 years, using a very conservative estimate (based on a \$4,300 impact fee and 14.6% growth). Unless there is a drastic reduction in growth, the estimate is we will have a surplus of \$200 million in 9 years. That amount can be used to pay down debt. He noted that the

last COPS issue was \$60 million at variable rate that can be paid off with no penalty. COPS usually cannot be paid down without penalty. The plan is to pay what we can without penalty, and at the end of 9 years our debt will have been reduced by over 60% because they're 20 year bonds. At that point we will determine what to pay off with penalty.

Mr. Eikenberg noted that with the increase in construction costs and the hurricane losses, it's a good thing to have a 6-month review. He asked if the impact fee number is final, or if it's still in negotiation. Mr. Martin replied the actual number is in the consultant's study. The amount the consultant is recommending is established. The County Commissioners are scheduled to consider it on October 25<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Hall mentioned we were in the spotlight of the nation last year with Hurricane Charley, so we got a lot of resources. We are no longer in the spotlight. The Gulf coast will get precedence now.

Dr. Browder talked about an article Mr. Hall sent him about the housing "bubble" and noted that Frank D'Alessandro, a local real estate expert, anticipates that the "bubble" locally will just result in a leveling of values, not a big reduction in property values. Mr. Hall agreed that the article pointed out that the current increase in housing values cannot keep going due to the increase in construction costs and lack of affordability of housing for working people. Local people believe Southwest Florida will be somewhat protected from that because people want to come here. He asked if we should look at a scenario where tax values decrease somewhat.

Dr. Browder said their estimate is based on a 14.6% increase in tax values which is the 5-year average. This past year the ad valorem tax increase was 28%. The tax collector's office thinks the rate of increase might drop to 21 or 22%, but for the next couple of years it would be at a 20% level vs. 28% and it might come back to 14.6%, which is the average. If the growth rate drops significantly below 14.6%, he would be concerned. Every six months the Board will be updated about the revenue stream.

Mr. Erickson noted that the increase in home values is held to 3% because of the Save Our Homes cap; but that when the property is sold, there is a huge jump in the value. So as people sell, there will be a boost to the system.

Dr. Browder added he is more concerned about the increase in material costs than he is about a decrease in the housing market. We have anticipated the cost to build schools based on a certain level, and if that increases significantly without the tax base expanding similarly, we could be in trouble.

Mr. Eikenberg asked about additional number of buses required because of the Student Assignment Plan. In light of the recent 20 to 30% fuel cost increase, the cost becomes significantly more than it was 2 or 3 years ago. Dr. Browder said fuel cost is the thing that has jumped the most in the last year. We used to get a year-long contract on the futures market on fuel cost. The futures market will only allow a 6-month contract now. In six months, our fuel costs will jump again. Some of those dollars will have to come out of the Contingency Fund. We are transporting 42,000 children by bus. He mentioned that going to school four days a week would save a lot of fuel.

Mr. Erickson asked if students' attention span is long enough to survive 4-day weeks. Dr. Browder wondered what the data would show for achievement in a 4-day versus 5-day week. You would save 20% in fuel cost, and something in electricity, but what would you sacrifice in retention, etc. Mr. Hall asked if there were any studies regarding the maximum effective learning time for students. Mr. Mills asked about having 4-day week school and 3-day weekend school (Fri-Sat-Sun). Wouldn't that double capacity? Mr. Erickson mentioned Sunday would have to be optional. Dr. Browder added Saturday because that's the Jewish Sabbath, etc.

Mr. Eikenberg brought up the prospect of 8-story school buildings if we can't find land. Dr. Browder said he believes the land management plan in this county won't allow us to get that big, like Broward County.

Mr. Mills commented that as the value of Lee County homes escalates, the people who can afford those homes are not those who are sending their children to school. Maybe we don't want 100 facilities and find ourselves 12 years down the road with no children.

Mr. Hall added that some of the contractors are beginning to see subcontractors – carpenters, electricians, plumbers – resign and head towards the Gulf Coast because they think they can get double the salary there. Mr. Mills added the Jessica Lunsford Act with the fingerprinting requirement is also having an effect. Dr. Browder said Bill Moore reported a large portion of his demolition team has left to go to New Orleans because they can make 3 times what they'd earn here.

Mr. Eikenberg noted that in talking with the Smart Growth Commission, every time they build affordable housing, empty nesters from the North come down and buy it up. Mr. Mills commented that Mike Smith has a tough job. He said we are building a duplicate of Collier County - \$700,000 houses – the billionaires have pushed out the millionaires and they're coming to Lee County.

Mr. Hall shared the belief that Greenspan is going to increase interest rates by ¼ percent. He finds that surprising because of Hurricane Katrina.

**B.** Mr. Jack Eikenberg of the Compliance Advisory Committee distributed a handout. He reported that the Board gave them a number of new people and they have had to start over on everything. Their committee chose by ballot 3 primary action plans to follow:

- Graduation rate – The District's graduation rate will exceed the State rate by at least 3% (1B)
- Partnership with families – Build/ strengthen a cultural partnership between school staff and families by developing a trust, a sense of belonging, and a sharing of common goals. (3A)
- Communications – Build/ strengthen methods of communication at each school. (3B)

Their secondary choices were:

- Working conditions – The District's schools and departments will create working conditions that are conducive to recruiting and retaining staff
- Community involvement – Reach out to government, civic groups, businesses and individuals to improve community involvement.

They will be meeting tonight with Larry Tihen about the graduation rate.

They are waiting to see what's going to happen with the Internal Auditor. There is so much money being spent, they are concerned about checks and balances. They support the need for a CFO. Serious financial oversight is needed.

He mentioned the efforts to get dads in school, and said Eddie Felton has been helpful with that. They've been trying to find some funds for him for breakfasts, etc. Mr. Erickson said he has heard about the effort to get parents of underprivileged children into the school for a meal, for instance, to learn about what the school is doing with the students. Dr. Browder added that Marie Dinon has done something similar with volunteers and parental involvement. Eddie Felton was a part of AFCAAM. He is no longer working with that organization. The agreement we currently have is with AFCAAM, and they are at Michigan and Franklin Park. Orange River also has a program.

Mr. Erickson said DAC has been working with 3A., the partnership between community and schools, and especially with parents. He added that it doesn't hurt to have some overlap. They have been going through the SAC committees to work with other parents.

Dr. Browder said that goal was geared toward inclusion of minorities in the community. DAC is more about parental involvement as a whole. Mr. Eikenberg agreed that the biggest need is for the minorities to get involved, especially in the elementary schools.

Mr. Eikenberg said they will contact Greg Adkins and be looking into workers' compensation and health management issues – lost time injuries, investigation of claims, etc. Dr. Browder mentioned that we have made some changes in the workers' compensation program – the number of light duty days, for instance. It is now for a time certain. The light duty issue pretty much comes through SPALC. Greg Adkins can get them data.

**C.** Mr. Andy Erickson, Assistant Chairman of the District Advisory Council, reported that the schools just started their SAC meetings, and will be electing their DAC representatives. Their main concern is to get the new people oriented. There are some carryover programs from last year. Their subcommittees are Elementary, Middle, High School, and District. Each committee has something they are carrying over. Their first meeting is scheduled for Wednesday of this week.

**D.** Mr. Christopher Mills of the Construction Advisory Committee was unable to attend the last meeting. He distributed a handout outlining the meetings from March through September 2005:

- March 2005. They had a presentation on roofing. They decided the District needs a continuing contract for maintenance and roof replacement. Dr. Browder commented that we have done that. Mr. Mills stated that if the District doesn't have a consultant, they need to have one on retainer to help with the annual inspections.
- April 2005. They talked about prototype schools and tilt-up construction; they believe the District needs a Board-driven key policy. Dr. Browder pointed out it

costs \$47,000 to re-key a school. They also discussed electronic swipe card systems; they believe the cost should be looked into. They have noted in project observations (such as the K-Mart's) that some materials have been demolished that could have potentially been re-used somewhere.

- May 2005. They talked about building exterior weatherproofing. The District is using the Tex-Coat system, which is a proprietary system. If Tex-Coat didn't have the color we wanted, which happened twice, we then painted it, which was a duplication of cost and effort. Dr. Browder said he is in favor of bidding, which would give competitors an opportunity. Mr. Mills noted that considering other companies would give a greater choice of colors. Dr. Browder noted that we now require a waterproof barrier on the inside as well as the outside of the tilt-up construction.
- June 2005. They met at South Fort Myers High School. Comments were made about "excessive use of carpet" because the committee recalled the District was getting away from carpet. Dr. Browder stated that he prefers carpet because of maintenance and noise. A discussion followed about carpet, tile, a new type of tile that doesn't require stripping or waxing, and carpet tile.
- July 2005. They got an update on the Five Year Capital Plan from Bill Moore.
- August 2005. They focused on prototype schools again. Attendance was down because of summer vacations.
- September 2005. They met at Harns Marsh, which is a prototype school using tilt-up construction. They don't have block walls inside, but metal stud walls with impact-resistant drywall. They observed quarry tile in the kitchen. In the middle and high school prototypes, the kitchens have epoxy floors. Another item they discussed was classroom electronics being deleted in reuse design. They questioned if this was an equity issue. Dr. Browder explained that we will be going to a more portable system because some teachers do not wish to use the latest technology. The teachers who want to use the technology will check out the portable units vs. having built-ins in each classroom. The members also discussed having an opportunity to review the planned 16 school building additions, and are adjusting their October meeting to coincide with design/build presentations. Dr. Browder brought up the redesign of auditoriums as multi-use facilities, such as using the space for classrooms but being able to convert it to a large auditorium space with a stage.

Mr. Eikenberg asked how much difference there is between prototype schools. Dr. Browder replied not much difference, except for adjustments for a site problem – for example, athletic fields placed differently on the site.

Mr. Mills said one of the last items his committee discussed was performance contracts, for example for energy cost savings. Dr. Browder said he is going to have the financial consultant who reviews COPs, review the FP&L plan for cost-efficiency. The items in the plan are lighting, building envelope, water, and HVAC. 60 to 70% of savings comes from upgrading lighting. Mr. Mills added that the big companies will come in now and not charge for a study. Mr. Erickson asked if they're talking about air conditioning upgrades also.

Mr. Mills brought up the importance of the relationship with local authorities for permits, fire codes, etc. There is still some friction between district staff and fire authorities. A district staff person is now going to their monthly meetings. Dr. Browder said he met with all the fire chiefs and marshals three weeks ago, talked about communication. He's going to meet with them again. Two issues they had

were who has jurisdiction, and who is the contact person. Mr. Mills said the district has assigned a liaison to their group.

Mr. Mills reported they have a membership issue; only 40 to 45% of their membership are in attendance. Mr. Eikenberg said his committee only has 5 of their original members. Mr. Mills said that it was beneficial to meet at various schools.

#### **4. Discussion of Future Meetings**

The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, December 12, 2005 at 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Martin reminded the chairpersons that their quarterly reports will be due to the Board at their September 29<sup>th</sup> briefing meeting.

There was a short discussion about the Transportation Department and then about the future move of administrative offices to the Metro Mall facility.

#### **5. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.