



VISION
To be a world-class school system.

Board Advisory Committee Chairs' Meeting – N O T E S
Monday, March 24, 2008

Call to Order: by Dr. James W. Browder, Superintendent (at approximately 3:40 p.m.)

Attendees: Ms. Trish Leonard, Construction Advisory Council Mr. David Hall, Finance Advisory Committee
Mr. Keith Martin, School Board Attorney Ms. Brenda Wall, Recording Secretary

Absent: Mr. Nicholas Alexander, Compliance Advisory Committee Dr. Constance Dennis, Curriculum Advisory Committee
Ms. Carrie Chase-Robideaux, District Advisory Council

1. WELCOME FROM SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Browder welcomed the group. He explained that there is a potential budget cut of between \$17 million and \$26 million. He went on to say that if you took a sliding scale, best to worst, worst would be \$26 million, that would be catastrophic and the best would be \$9 million. The staff has taken the Governor's budget and analyzed what it means for the District. He explained that using the Governor's budget, the District would lose between \$3-5 million. It is estimated that it could be up to 5% less than the Governor's budget, which means that it could be upwards of \$25-26 million. Staff has been investigating what Districts of comparable sizes are doing. Manatee and Sarasota School Districts have been talking between \$20-30 million, each having approximately 50,000 students. Orange County is upwards of \$70 million and they are twice as big as our District. Trish Leonard, Construction Advisory Council, (CAC) asked which budget was being used to obtain these figures. Dr. Browder stated that the Governor's budget was being used. He also explained that the Legislative session is ongoing and that the District is waiting on the House and the Senate version, so that the two (2) budgets can be compared to see how close they actually are. The legislative liaisons are saying that the worst case scenario would be 5% below the Governor's budget..

Dr. Browder stated that the big goal at this point was to hold the schools harmless. However, if the District ended up with the \$26 million dollar number, there is no question that schools will be affected. He explained that the class size amendment will not allow the District to make those reductions out of instruction and that means that you have to get it from support staff. In addition, some programs in the schools are going to have to be cut. One example would be a reduction in field trips, although it is a very important part of the educational process, it will save the District money. Trish Leonard, CAC, inquired whether we charged churches and other organizations rent for use of our facilities. Dr. Browder stated that we did and it was being analyzed to see if the fee structure could be raised to generate more funds. In regard to rental fees, in the past, the school would get half the money and the District would receive the other half. Most schools use the rental money as a fund raising venture, so that items can be purchased for the schools. Dr. Browder said that the District is looking at various suggestions that have been brought forward to try and save the District money. All avenues regarding rental of our facilities are being explored. Another way to save the District approximately \$20 million dollars is to eliminate the 7th period. Dr. Browder stated that eliminating the 7th period is not something that he is willing to do, because it would negatively affect the children.

Dr. Browder wanted to give the committee a synopsis of what is occurring in the District. Staff has analyzed what can be cut in the first go around, without major disruption to schools. Staff is also working with the bargaining units inside of the District. The contract is going to have to be re-opened

and analyzed to determine if there are dollars that have already been set aside for raises and renegotiate those funds if possible. This would really help the District with the budget shortfall.

Trish Leonard asked what other Districts are doing in the State. Dr. Browder stated that this is currently being investigated. He also informed the committee that he is going to the State Superintendents meeting on Wednesday, March 26, in Tallahassee. One of the things scheduled to be discussed is what their particular District is doing regarding reductions in budget. Trish Leonard asked Dr. Browder if the State was funding the mandatory Pre-K and Dr. Browder stated that they were not funding it. The District provides the Pre-K classes in the summer. Some private schools offer Pre-K during the regular school year. Also, the private schools do not provide certified teachers teaching their Pre-K classes. The District provides certified teachers when offering the Pre-K classes in the summer. Ms. Leonard also questioned Dr. Browder about the possibility of partnering with large corporations to help with funding. There are incentives to large corporations to partner with School Districts; however, we do not have large corporations in our area to participate in these programs.

David Hall, of the Finance Advisory Committee, asked about “double-sessions” and year round school as a possible way of saving money. Dr. Browder stated that year round school does not save money, it actually costs more money. Normally, Districts participate in year round school because they are out of space. Our District does not have that problem. Year round school generates space but not dollars. One example of this is the Nature Center. The District has had a positive relationship with them for the last 30 years and paid rent for space there for offices for environmental education staff. This amounted to \$45,000.00 per year. These staff are now working at the LCPEC.

Trish Leonard asked Dr. Browder if all of the schools have taken a good inventory of how they are utilizing the lights and water, etc., Dr. Browder informed the committee that it has been agreed that the thermostat will be moved up by three (3) degrees and this is to be done District wide. This amounts to approximately a million dollars worth of savings. Dr. Browder also informed the committee members that it has been decided not to stage Weaver Hipps next year and to schedule the opening for the following year. This amounts to a savings of \$750,000.00 in costs related to opening a new school. The 600 students will be spread in the East zone and to other schools.

Dr. Browder asked each of the advisory committee chairs to discuss any ideas they may have to save the District money and to inform him of these ideas. He would be happy to meet with any of the committees to discuss their suggestions.

At 4:10 Dr. Browder excused himself from the Advisory Committee Chairs meeting to attend the Leading Edge Meeting.

Keith Martin, School Board Attorney, clarified the statement regarding ABC schools (A Business Community). The Statute requires that each school District place an ad in the newspaper every year to advertise availability, inviting businesses to submit proposals for establishing a school. There is a committee which the Statute requires, that considers the proposals. It is for any local businesses that wish to establish a school in their facility. The District would provide the teachers, but they must supply the location. The law has been in place for at least three (3) years, although as of yet, we have not had a company willing to participate.

2. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 28, 2008 MINUTES

Minutes were accepted as submitted. Mr. David Hall moved and Trish Leonard seconded.

3. DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL COMMITTEE INITIATIVES

- A. *Ms. Trish Leonard, Construction Advisory Committee (CAC)* -- The Construction Advisory Committee was put to task last quarter regarding a discussion of guard houses at different high schools.

Since it will take dollars to put this into place, the committee came up with a design concept involving three (3) comprehensive high schools; South Ft. Myers High, Ida Baker High School and East Lee County High School and the three (3) schools are currently completing a design build. A timeline is in place showing when the design has to be submitted. There is a \$500.00 prize for each of the two (2) schools that win, awarded as follows--\$500.00 cash for the best design and \$500.00 cash for the best construction. Sponsors have been secured for both of these prizes.

The CAC is looking at what can be done on the construction end to try and save the school money. Even though the construction is on the capital side, there have been projects that have been delayed or completely cut out. The CAC is looking at what can be done to the existing schools to save the District money. Green design is another hot topic, but it requires a lot of money to go green. Mr. Martin said that there are different proposed Bills in the legislature that would provide incentives to schools who go green. The money is awarded after the fact to those School Districts who can establish that they built new schools with those green standards

- B. Mr. David Hall, Financial Advisory Committee (FAC)** – Mr. Hall informed the committee that Greta Campbell, Director of Business and Finance, spoke to the FAC on processing and paying bills and all of the accounting that it entails. Bill Moore also visited and spoke about construction and reviewed what his department is working on at the current time. Both of these were very informative presentations. Most of the committee's time was spent with Ami Desamours, from budget. Her process begins in November for the following fiscal year, which is July 1. Ms. Desamours has been keeping the FAC committee updated on the budget department. Ms. Trish Leonard of the CAC asked what the current budget was for the District. She was informed that it was a billion five, with about half of that amount being construction and the other half operations.

Mr. Martin asked the committee members if Dr. Jones had contacted them about the accreditation interviews. Ms. Leonard and Mr. Hall stated that Dr. Jones had sent documents to them to review, but they both needed further clarification regarding the accreditation process. Mr. Martin said that he would contact Dr. Jones and inform her that additional information was needed by the committee members.

4. DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Mr. Martin discussed with the committee when the next meeting should be held. Meetings are generally held once a quarter, but due to the accreditation team visit, there were two (2) meetings held this quarter. The committee decided that a meeting would not be held over the summer months, due to a lack of activity by the committees. Trish Leonard inquired whether email meetings could be held, however due to the Sunshine Law, this is not permitted. It was decided that the next scheduled meeting would be held in the Fall, probably in October.

5. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

/blw