

	<p>THE SCHOOL BOARD OF LEE COUNTY <i>Compliance Advisory Committee</i> Dr. James A. Adams Public Education Center Monday, September 12, 2005 6:00 p.m.</p>
---	---

Committee Members Present: Tim Butts, Jack Eikenberg (Chairman), Marvin Goetz, Charles Gutekunst, James Hebner, Orin Oppermann, Karen Ryan, Richard Young

Committee Members Absent: Ken Caserio, Arlene Franklin (Vice-Chairman), Karin Grant, Gary Griffin, Richard Houlihan, Lynne Lampila

Board Liaison Present: Bob Chilmonik

School District Personnel Present: Greta S. Campbell

Guests: Dr. Larry Tihen, Director of Curriculum & Staff Development

Recording Secretary: Lisa Meo

Welcome

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6:04 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the table.

Opening Remarks

Mr. Eikenberg attended a meeting between the Superintendent and the Chairs of the various Advisory Committees on September 12, 2005, and reported on the following from that meeting:

- Impact fees have done away with the temporary need for a sales tax, but the Lee County Board of County Commissioners still has to pass on this issue. Of note is that increases in fuel prices, building permits, and other costs may take a deep bite out of the Impact Fees, so the School Board will be reviewing/ revisiting these issues every six months.
- The new Executive Director of Transportation will start on Monday, September 19, 2005. He has 20 years of experience and is familiar with privatization. (A brief discussion took place regarding the cost of buses, privatizing bussing, and the use of the public transportation system in transporting public school students.)
- Shared a handout from the Chairman of the Construction Advisory Committee summarizing the issues/ concerns that Committee has been dealing with.
- The District Advisory Committee is working on Strategic Plan area III.A., with an emphasis on minority partnerships. He cautioned that if this Committee also decides to work with this item, we need to be careful not to duplicate their work.
- Shared that he introduced the idea of having a definitive study within the system to see if looping in Grades k-4 is workable.

Public Comment (Agenda Items)

None

Meeting Minutes Approval
(August 8, 2005 Meeting)

The Minutes of the August 8, 2005, meeting were unanimously approved with no changes.

Strategic Plan Choices

As agreed at the August meeting, each Committee member submitted their top three choices of the Strategic Plan for Committee focus. The Committee Secretary compiled a comprehensive list of the choices and provided everyone with a copy. The Chairman reviewed the list at the table and noted that the following areas received the majority of “votes:”

- I.B. Systems of Teaching and Learning: The District’s graduation rate will exceed the state graduation rate by at least three percent.
- III.A. Parent Family Support: Build/strengthen a cultural partnership between school staff and families by developing a trust, a sense of belonging, and a sharing of common goals.
- III.B. Parent Family Support: Build/strengthen methods of communication at each school.

There was extensive discussion. One of the points made was that the Committee should not limit itself to just these three areas, to which the Chairman responded that this is just a starting point and there is plenty of time to focus on other areas in the future. This is a five year plan and the Committee can act on each of the strategies one by one over time.

After further discussion, including ways to approach the work and the possible creation of subcommittees, the Chairman asked for a motion to adopt strategies I.B., III.A., and III.B. (as described above) for initial monitoring. Motion by Mr. Young, seconded by Mr. Goetz, and carried 7-1, with Mr. Hebner abstaining.

Dr. Larry Tihen – Reading Scores and Graduation Rates

Dr. Larry Tihen, Director of Curriculum & Staff Development, spoke about the connection between reading scores and graduation rates. First, he shared data on the Grade 4 and Grade 8 FCAT Reading scores from 1998 to 2005. The Grade 4 data showed that there has been continuous and steady progress over the eight year period, which he attributed to the implementation of intense reading instruction for low-achieving readers, who are now receiving up to two hours of individualized reading instruction per day; and, more recently, mandatory third grade retention for students with low reading scores. The Grade 8 data showed that there has been some progress, but not as much as at the Grade 4 level. Dr. Tihen attributed this, in part, to the fact that there is no national curriculum for secondary reading instruction in the schools and the universities do not train teachers in secondary level reading instruction. However, under the No Child Left Behind legislation, all reading teachers must be “highly qualified” by June 30, 2006. This is good, but it is going to be a major challenge to obtain enough teachers with a certified reading endorsement to offer instruction to the large number of low-achieving reading students at the secondary level.

Dr. Tihen then shared data tracking the FCAT Reading Scores of a specific group of students in Grades 8 through 10 over a three year period, from 2003 to 2005. He noted that most of the students with the lowest scores (Level 1) in 8th grade were gone from the system by 10th grade, having dropped out or left the District. However, he pointed out that, regardless of the reasons they left, there was a direct correlation between reading scores and whether or not the students stayed in school through graduation. He shared that he had actually gone back and looked at the

FINAL – Approved 10/10/05

attendance records of this particular group of students and that daily attendance was not the problem, as there was only a three percent difference in attendance rates between the high scoring (Levels 3, 4, 5) and low scoring (Levels 1, 2) students. Thus, the bottom line was, the lower the reading scores, the more likely the students were to leave the system by 10th grade. Of the lowest scoring students (Level 1) in the study group who stayed through 10th grade, only a small percentage passed the FCAT Reading, but he noted that those students had not been given reading instruction at the secondary level. A slightly higher percentage of Level 2 scoring students passed, with eight percent having attended reading classes.

Dr. Tihen stated that things are not acceptable as they stand. He discussed the challenges ahead and the various District strategies and initiatives to provide support and assistance in improving reading scores at the secondary level, a developmental reading program that will run from grades six through 10, the use of Sterling Quality student self-assessment techniques to chart individual student progress from year to year, District-level training of teachers in intensive reading techniques, and Teacher in-service classes offering certified reading endorsements recognized by the State, among other things.

Dr. Tihen wound up by offering four very concrete ways that the Committee could offer help and support, as follows:

1. Support working with the State and universities to require secondary level reading endorsements for more teachers.
2. Support implementation and funding of the District's certified reading endorsement program in order to have enough "highly qualified" reading teachers on board by June 30, 2006 (per NCLB).
3. Promote formative assessments in reading and math be done on a quarterly basis and work to ensure the process.
4. Support District-wide implementation of Sterling Quality processes, including student self-assessment practices (students chart their own progress), starting in kindergarten and continuing through Grade 12.

Board Member Comments

Mr. Chilmonik reported on the following:

- Announced that he will be making a push to hire and retain business talent in the District over the long term in order to promote better planning, professionalism, and oversight in what we do, and to ensure the proper use of our budget dollars.
- As it currently stands, the job description of the proposed position of Internal Auditor to the School Board states that the Auditor will report to the Superintendent for daily direction, as directed by the School Board. Mr. Chilmonik asked the Committee's general opinion of this chain of command, to which the response was not very favorable. In addition to having to report to the equivalent of "six bosses," the Committee members questioned the soundness of having the position take direction from and report to the very entities to which it is supposed to act as a "check and balance." Mr. Chilmonik then asked the Committee their opinion of an alternate work-flow/ reporting scenario, as follows: The Compliance Committee would meet with the auditor and formulate plans for audits/ work directives for the coming year, the Committee would then submit the proposed work plan to the School Board for a vote, after which the auditor

FINAL – Approved 10/10/05

would work on the Board-approved work directives for the year, and report to one designated Board Member on a daily basis. The Committee supported this concept in general and pointed out that it had been recommended in the OPPAGA Report.

- With regard to the recent issue of increasing the Superintendent's ability to approve purchases of up to \$50,000 (rather than \$24,999 as it now stands), Mr. Chilmonik asked the Committee's general opinion on the following alternate scenario: Increase the Superintendent's spending authority to between \$10,000 and \$50,000, but also have a designated member of the Board sign-off for approval, and then publish the list of purchases on a monthly basis for the benefit of the public. The Committee concurred with raising the Superintendent's spending authority to \$50,000, but had numerous questions and concerns regarding who on the Board would handle the sign-off (Chairman?, Vice-Chairman?, create a Treasurer position within the Board?), the volume and frequency of purchases, and the time required to review each one. Also discussed was how the District currently handles purchases and payments, how other public Boards (such as Lee Memorial Hospital Board) handle their financial matters and financial governance in general. The Committee offered its general support to raising the Superintendent's spending authority to \$50,000. However, at this time, it could not entirely endorse, but in principle did not oppose, adding a Board Member as a second approver.

Future Meeting Dates

No discussion

Public Comment

None

Good of the Order

None

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Compliance Advisory Committee is scheduled for **Monday, October 10, 2005**, at 6:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room on the third floor of the Dr. James A. Adams Public Education Center, 2055 Central Avenue, Fort Myers, Florida.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

:lkm