



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LEE COUNTY

Curriculum Advisory Committee

January 15, 2008

**6:00 p.m. – Board Annex, Training Room D
Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present: Faezeh Andrews, Kathleen Cherasia, Connie Dennis, Susan Jacobse, Lois Redmond, Alicia Reyes, Charles Spire, John Traube, Karen Wood

Committee Members Absent: Donna Butts, Barbara Chapin, Susan Cook, Patsy Howell, Patti Lochner

Recording Secretary: Sherry Pearsall

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by chairperson, Dr. Connie Dennis. A motion to accept the agenda as presented was made by Lois Redmond and seconded by Charles Spire. The motion carried unanimously.

Reading/Approval of Minutes

A motion to accept the minutes as amended, (to correct the spelling of Piesco), from the December 18th, 2007 meeting was made by John Traube and seconded by Kathleen Cherasia. The motion carried unanimously.

Board Member's Report

Mr. Chilmonik reported on the following:

- Meeting was held today regarding the Superintendent's decision to apply for a DOE position, no action was taken
- The School District is \$626 million in bonded debt; #8 in the State of Florida as far as borrowing money. Monroe County has the largest amount of debt (\$12,000 per student, long term)
- The proposed property tax amendment will also impact revenues.
- The upcoming school year will be the most financially challenging year with State budget cuts. Curriculum and classroom instruction will be impacted.

Old Business

Dropout Prevention Research Discussion-

Dr. Tihen shared a packet of information from which he presented and explained the data gathered. The State's definition of the graduation rate (the percentage of students who graduate in 4 years) and drop out rate were explained. Each of these rates is calculated in November. Comparison data charts were dispersed to members. The District graduation rate has increased over the past three years and is now at the highest percent since 1998. The District drop out rate has declined and is at the lowest rate in the past nine years and is nine percent below the State average. GED and ESE students who receive a diploma in four years are included in the data presented. Our drop out rate may increase if students moving out of state do not request records for transfer. These students are being coded as drop outs. We have a 38-40% mobility rate in our District. The later a student comes to our District, the more likely that student will drop out. 84% of tenth grade students moving into our District cannot pass the 10th grade FCAT. The data shows that the lower socio-economic status of a student, the lower level the

student is reading at. Exit interviews are conducted with students who notify the school they are withdrawing to get input on why they are leaving.

Committee members shared their research on the subject of drop out prevention. A few of the highlights were:

- Florida hasn't invested enough in funding education compared to other states
- No one is tracking middle school drop outs
- Too few social workers serving too many students
- Parental involvement - important support system
- Very high mobility rate – Lee County
- Students transitioning from a nurturing elementary school environment into the exploratory and more independent environment of middle school
- Suggested developing a federal student tracking database to assist in locating drop out students
- Most students drop out due to bad experiences
- Need to pay more attention to students in transition grades (5th to 6th & 8th to 9th)
- Check & Connect – a program where trained personnel interact more directly with students
- Personal development deficiencies contribute to at-risk students
- 3 contributing factors: academic failure, low socio-economic status and behavior problems
- The National Education Association (NEA) has 12 steps – should students attend until the age of 21?
- The constant theme is providing more individual attention – earlier intervention
- Family Involvement
- School hours for high school students – Do these students perform their best at this early an hour?
- Successful schools have engaged their communities for support
- Mentoring
- Are our expectations too high?
- Labeling students
- Tech and Career Ed programs today require higher level reading skills

A motion to continue this discussion (to include the question, “Would we better off going back to the grades K-6, 7-9, and 10-12 school formula?”) at next month’s meeting was made by John Traube and seconded by Alicia Reyes.

Good of the Order

A request was made to permanently meet in Training Room D. If the room is available, this committee will plan to meet monthly in Training Room D.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn at 7:31 p.m. was made by Kathleen Cherasia and seconded by Charles Spire.

The next meeting of the Curriculum Advisory Committee is scheduled for: **Tuesday, February 19, 2008, at 6:00 p.m., at the Lee County Public Education Center, Board Annex – Training Room D, 2855 Colonial Blvd., Ft. Myers, Florida.**